

Chair Rep. Cedric Asuega Gates  
Vice Chair Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS  
**House Bill 1149**  
February 10, 2023 10:00 am  
Conference Room 325  
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

### **Testimony in Support of HB1149**

Aloha, my name is Kailee Lefebvre, I am **in strong support of HB1149** *Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program.*

Between 2014 and 2020 I was employed by the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Program and started the outreach and education portion of the program as the Outreach Specialist for 5 of those years. During this time, I had the opportunity to inform and learn from thousands of concerned citizens and individuals from impacted industries, departments, and agencies. I've witnessed members of the public who were genuinely concerned, and took every action they could to eradicate CRB in their backyards and in their community. I've listened to stories of Hawaiian cultural practitioners that were restoring native lands using native and sustainable farming practices who felt as though there were no good solutions because using green waste material like mulch would breed CRB which would then feed on and kill their native plants and crops. I've listened to the frustrations of conventional farmers who have staged, moved, or donated mulch around the island with good intentions of recycling and giving back to the land who then were encouraged to stop these types of handling of green waste and now could be penalized for doing so under the CRB Interim Rule enacted by HDOA in July 2022.

Since it has been acknowledged by HDOA that the goal is to contain CRB to Oahu, I believe the time for legislative action is now. The fact that CRB hasn't been found on any other island 9 years after it's arrival is a testament to the CRB program's efforts. I believe this bill will give the program the chance to prevent CRB from detrimental effects to the people, culture, and environment across the rest of the state. I humbly ask for your support of this bill. I may be reached at [kaileehl@hawaii.edu](mailto:kaileehl@hawaii.edu) for any follow up to my testimony. Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kailee Lefebvre  
Concerned citizen

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 6:16:38 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ryan Chang          | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I am in full support of this bill. Invasive species detection, control, and education is very critical in stopping invasive species like the coconut rhinoceros beetle. We must fund this because it is also not yet detected on the other islands as well.

Thanks,  
Ryan

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 8:50:55 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b>  | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jesse Kealiinohomoku | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Aloha committe on AGR,

Im writing in support to House Bill 1149. The Coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) are currently ravaging our island palm which holds a critical role in Hawaiian culture and the food system. These insects feed on the heart of the niu tree to which sugars attract them as they feast upon new growth and eventually killing the tree. CRB is currently isolated on Oahu island and has not yet reached the outer islands, which poses the questions, what will the state do now? We must invest financial resources to mitigate and even eradicate CRB entirely. The CRB response team has been fighting this insect for many years now but it's time to take them seriously and help them advance their efforts through granting passage of HB1149.

Mahalo nui,

Jesse Mikasobe-Kealiinohomoku



House of Representatives  
Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems  
February 10, 2023  
10 a.m. Conference Room 325  
State Capitol

### **Testimony in Support of HB 1149**

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee,

**The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is in strong support of HB 1149, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program.**

As set out in House Bill 1149, the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) is a devastating invasive pest that impacts palm species, including coconut trees, native palm species, and, potentially, crops in Hawaii. CRB was first detected on O‘ahu in 2013, and the State and Federal Departments of Agriculture launched an immediate and unprecedented multi-agency response. Although the response did not succeed in eradicating this pest, it has kept the population out of the interisland transportation network.

In 2022, the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) adopted an interim rule intended to reduce the risk of spreading CRB in Hawaii.<sup>1</sup> The rule requires businesses on O‘ahu that work with CRB host materials (e.g. nurseries, landscapers, and green waste processors, etc.) to enter into compliance agreements and take steps to prevent inadvertently spreading CRB. The compliance agreements and associated training require businesses to enclose or cover CRB host material when it is moved on O‘ahu and to report detections of suspected CRB. The compliance agreements also require employees that work with CRB host materials to receive training to ensure they understand the compliance agreement requirements, the risks posed by CRB, and how to identify the life stages of CRB and evidence of CRB damage.

HB1149 would provide funding to continue to operate the compliance agreement and training work, to continue operating the response work island-wide, and to continue to develop detection and control methods that can further reduce the likelihood of spread and harm.

The compliance agreement program is new to affected businesses and the CRB Response is doing the outreach and has developed and conducted the training to promote its success. CRB Response provides the boots on the ground to educate businesses and the public on how to detect and prevent the spread of CRB. CRB Response has field crews that monitor thousands of CRB traps and apply treatments to CRB infested areas and researchers working to develop new treatments and best practices to respond to CRB. The work CRB Response does is critical to

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<sup>1</sup> §4-22.1-1 Hawaii Administrative Rules

protecting Hawai'i from the impacts of CRB. In addition, state funds are needed to leverage federal funding to ensure there is no lapse at this critical time as HDOA continues to roll out its permanent CRB program.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

Aloha,

Christy Martin  
Stephanie Easley  
CGAPS

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:14:55 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Will Caron          | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Please support HB1149.

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:21:23 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Kimeona Kane        | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

It is no longer just a random occurrence. Our communities are being overrun with CRB and sadly despite a need to build transparency, some data is being withheld. Our Waimānalo community, agriculture, hawaiian culture, and more are in trouble. We must do more to eradicate CRB. There needs to be a halt on movement of green waste. There must be more resources and funding put into the teams working in the field. This must be declared an environmental disaster. CRB will not stop at Coconuts, they will continue to bore into everything that they can. This is a disaster. Please help.

Mahalo nui,

Kimeona Kane



PO Box 42  
Waimanalo, HI 96795-0042  
<http://waimanaloag.com>

Waimanalo Agricultural Association

February 10, 2023

**Testimony in Support of HB 1149**  
**RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM**

House Committee on Agriculture  
Friday, February 10, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.  
Via Video Conference and CR 325

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Committee Members,

The Waimanalo Agricultural Association (WAA) is writing in **strong support of HB 1149, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program**. WAA was originally formed in 1995 to address agricultural theft in Waimanalo and has since grown to represent agribusiness in Waimanalo, including plant nurseries, flower and turfgrass farms, growers of fruit and vegetables, equestrian ranches, and distributors of agricultural supplies. WAA is dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of agriculture in Waimanalo.

HB 1149 proposes to appropriate additional funds for positions at the University of Hawaii for mitigation activities to fight against CRB. Additional resources to fight this devastating pest is necessary before we have no coconut palms and palm trees.

The threat of the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle is of grave concern to the Waimanalo community as there have been over ten confirmed cases of the CRB in Waimanalo within the last six months alone. The most recent infestation was just last month. WAA recently hosted a Kunia farmer at its November 2022 meeting and was able to hear firsthand of the devastation his farm is facing due to CRB. While some farmers have opted to voluntarily comply with the Hawaii Department of Agriculture's monitoring program, most of Hawaii is not familiar with important best practices that would mitigate the beetle's spread.

Per the Hawaii Department of Agriculture "CRB is a serious pest of palm trees, primarily coconut palms, as the adult beetles bore into the crowns of the palms to feed on the tree's sap. New unopened fronds are damaged in this way and when fully opened, may break and fall unexpectedly. If CRB kill or damage the growing point of the palm, the tree may die. Secondary fungal or bacterial pathogens may also attack the wounds caused by CRB, thereby killing the tree as well. Tree mortality after CRB attack has been reported to be anywhere from 10 percent to 50 percent. Dead trees then become a safety hazard as they may fall unexpectedly after the trunk rots, potentially resulting in bodily injury or property damage." This level of damage to coconut trees and palms could devastate the landscape industry and the Waimanalo plant nurseries in particular. The devastation to coconut trees and palms will have grave impact upon the natural landscape among our most popular destinations in Hawaii including our beaches along Waikiki's gold coast, world class golf courses and hotels and resorts statewide.

More attention is necessary to address this invasive pest and we sincerely request that you pass HB 1149. Thank you for your consideration.



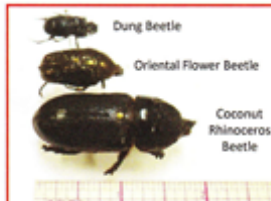
# Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle

## Best Management Practices for O'ahu



CRB are about 2-2.5 inches long

Detected in 2013, Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) is the largest beetle on O'ahu. Native to Southeast Asia, CRB has invaded the Western Pacific Region. Early detection and containment are essential to prevent the spread of CRB throughout Hawai'i.



*Oriental Flower Beetle is a common look-a-like for CRB. However, it's only 1 inch long, has no horn, and is active during the day.*

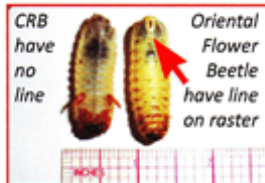
CRB grubs (larval stage of beetles) can grow up to 3 inches long, but look similar to the Oriental flower beetle grubs in their smaller stages. Grubs live in decaying material like dead trees, compost, and mulch. Below are some key differences:



CRB grubs crawl on their sides in a C-shape.



Oriental Flower Beetle grubs straighten out and crawl on their backs.



CRB have no line. Oriental Flower Beetle have line on raster.



Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle-large head. Oriental Flower Beetle-small head.

# Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle

## Best Management Practices for O'ahu

### MULCH

- Chip green waste on site & transport to dump site immediately.
- Do not hold material in trucks overnight.
- Spread mulch **2 inches or less**.
- If mulch and green waste piles cannot be removed:
  - turn piles once a month and check for CRB.
  - keep mulch (including bags) in sealed containers.



### PROPER DISPOSAL AND SANITATION

- Do not move green waste from infested to un-infested areas.
- Inspect trucks, buckets & tools for hitchhiking pests.
- Dump green waste at approved sites listed below:

#### Hawaiian Earth Products

Waimanalo 41-740 Mokulama St. (808) 208-1121  
 Wahiawa 65-1101 Wiliikina Dr. (808) 682-5895  
 Kapolei 91-400 Malakole Rd. (808) 682-5895

### REPORT

Suspect CRB damage, beetles, and larvae should be reported to the CRB Response at **643-PEST (7378)** or email: [BeetleBustersHI@gmail.com](mailto:BeetleBustersHI@gmail.com)



Bore holes caused by CRB



V-Cuts caused by CRB

For the latest information about CRB, visit: <http://hdoa.hawaii.gov/pi/main/crb/>

This publication was made possible with a grant from the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council

Images of CRB Infestation at a Kunia Farm



Images of CRB Infestation at a Kunia Farm



Sandro Toffola  
Natura Nursery

February 10, 2023

**Testimony in Support of HB 1149**  
**RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM**

House Committee on Agriculture  
Friday, February 10, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.  
Via Video Conference and CR 325

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Committee Members,

My name is Sandro Tassan Toffola from Natura Nursery and I am writing in **strong support of HB 1149, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program**. Natura Nursery is located in Waimanalo and we grow palm trees and we are extremely concerned about the coconut rhinoceros beetle infesting Windward Oahu, particularly Waimanalo, which is nestled in Ko'olaupoko, is part of an enterprise zone with fertile soil and with close proximity to the largest markets and transportation hubs on the island.

HB 1149 proposes to appropriate additional funds for position and mitigation activities to fight against the coconut rhinoceros beetle, commonly known as CRB. The funding for the University of Hawaii is to support key positions within the CRB response program to help combat this devastating insect.

The threat of the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle is of grave concern to Waimanalo as there have been over ten confirmed cases of the CRB in Waimanalo in the last six months alone. While some farmers have opted to voluntarily comply with the Hawaii Department of Agriculture's monitoring program, most of Hawaii is unfamiliar with the pest's threat - and important best practices that would mitigate the beetle's spread.

The level of damage that CRB can cause to coconut trees and palms could devastate the landscape industry and particularly, the Waimanalo plant nurseries. The devastation to coconut trees and palms will have grave impact upon Hawaii's unique natural landscape among our most popular destinations in Hawaii including our beaches along Waikiki's gold coast, world class golf courses and hotels and resorts statewide.

More attention is necessary to address this invasive pest and we sincerely request that you pass HB 1149.



Contemporary Landscaping LLC  
5713 Haleola St.  
Honolulu, HI 96821

February 10, 2023

**Testimony in Support of HB 1149  
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM**

House Committee on Agriculture  
Friday, February 10, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.  
Via Video Conference and CR 325

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Committee Members,

My name is Mark Fukui of Contemporary Landscaping, LLC and I am a tree farmer in Waimanalo writing in strong support of HB 1149, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. Our situation with CRB currently favors complacency. It has been declared uncontrollable by the Department of Agriculture and many of its effects aren't visible to the general population. CRB will catch up to us. This bill is essential to bring attention to CRB and bolster efforts to control it.

Treatment of palms for CRB is costly. The reality is only the wealthy will be available to afford control. CRB will disproportionately impact lower income families. Treatment requires chemistry. Once coconut palms are treated, the fruit cannot be eaten. In the future eating a fresh Hawaiian coconut may be a delicacy. With the way things are going, I suspect my grandkids won't get to try a fresh coconut and experience spoon meat or how sweet and fizzy they can be.

Waimanalo already has infestations of little fire ants and coqui frogs, and now there's CRB. But when farmers see a problem, we don't give up. We solve it. It's frustrating to see many throw in the towel. I hope this bill helps change that. Please pass HB 1149.

Mark Fukui  
Manager  
Contemporary Landscaping

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 11:39:29 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sarah Puhr          | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I urge you to support HB1149. We need funds allocated to ensure that these invasive beetles do not spread beyond O'ahu. Thank you



**EAST OAHU COUNTY FARM BUREAU**  
**910 CALIFORNIA AVE., WAHIAWA, HI 96786**

February 7, 2023

Representative Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair  
Representative Kirstin Kahaloe, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
State Capitol, 415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloe, and Members of the Committee,

The East O'ahu County Farm Bureau, which represents approximately 420 farmers and supporters of agriculture from Waimanalo to Kahuku, **strongly supports HB 1149**, "Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle," which would provide funding to support the CRB control program.

First noticed on O'ahu in 2013, the coconut rhinoceros beetle is now widespread on this island. It feeds not only on coconut trees, but also on ornamental palms and on other commercially valuable species including bananas, sugarcane, papayas, and pineapples. The beetle has been found in traps in the Waimanalo area at least ten times since 2021, and two dozen larvae were recently found in a mulch pile nearby. Waimanalo is home to many of the East O'ahu County Farm Bureau's members, including ornamental and fruit growers whose crops are at risk from this devastating pest.

The CRB response program helps to monitor and contain the beetle infestation on O'ahu, reducing damage to crops and ornamental trees, and minimizing the risk of the beetle's spread to other Hawaiian islands. We therefore respectfully urge your committee to support the CRB response program by passing HB 1149.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter of great importance to Hawai'i's agricultural community.

Sincerely,

Frederick M. Mencher  
for Grant Hamachi, President  
East O'ahu County Farm Bureau

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 12:15:57 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Dana Keawe          | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

support





P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921  
e-mail [info@hfbf.org](mailto:info@hfbf.org); [www.hfbf.org](http://www.hfbf.org)

February 10, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1149**  
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference  
10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice-Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

**The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 1149**, which appropriates funds for positions and activities related to coconut rhinoceros beetle infestation control.

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) was first discovered at Malama Bay on O'ahu in December 2013. CRB feed on and damage coconut, royal, date, and fan palms. If these preferred food sources are unavailable, CRB can shift to feed on other palms and tropical crops such as betelnut, Pandanus species, banana, pineapple, and sugarcane. CRB use their front legs and horn to dig into the crown of trees. Then, they use their sucking mouthparts to feed on the juices in the inner spear. Adult CRB damage living palms, either killing the tree due to direct damage, or opening up the tree to fatal damage from other insects or pathogens.

Coconut rhinoceros beetle detections have increased in the last 6 months. High-catch areas continue to be Pearl City Peninsula, Waipi'o Peninsula, West Loch, 'Ewa Beach, and Central O'ahu. We're seeing regular finds on the West Side of O'ahu, increased detection on the North Shore as well as concerning trap finds in new areas of Laie, Kahuku, and Waimānalo. The CRB Response is providing tools for community members to minimize their risk and training businesses to become compliant with HDOA's interim rule.

HFB agrees that we need resources to control the CRB that will protect our important palms and crops, reduce the potential for damage to natural resources, and avoid any negative effects on the health and safety of our residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 1:54:10 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Lorraine Waianuhea  | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha kakou,

I am writing in strong support of HB1149.

Coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) is a serious threat to agriculture and native hawaiian cultural practices. This is not only all practices which include coconut but also weaving practice since CRB has used the hala tree as a host on Oahu and presumably could host switch to our endemic genus of palms, loulu. Wild loulu on Oahu are already extremely rare, and so CRB presents a huge problem to their conservation. The money that would be appropriated in this bill is badly need to establish a competent and efficient team to tackle this issue on O‘ahu as soon as possible and to also prevent CRB from spreading to other islands.

Please pass HB1149.

Mahalo for your time,

Lorraine Waianuhea

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 6:45:10 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Austen Conlon       | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and committee members,

As a concerned citizen and conservationist working with critically endangered Hawaiian palms, I support HB1149. Coconut rhinoceros beetle populations have exploded on O‘ahu this year and threaten culturally and ecologically important loulu (Hawaiian palms), which are already imperiled by invasive species and ecosystem degradation. Eradication efforts have failed on O‘ahu, so it is vital that the CRB response team receives consistent funding to keep the beetles from spreading to neighboring islands. Sufficient funding is also critical to mitigate the devastating impacts of CRB on O‘ahu palm populations. Control by the CRB response team is essential to reduce impacts on O‘ahu and decrease the likelihood of accidental transport off O‘ahu.

Mahalo,

Austen

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 7:16:26 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Jari S.K. Sugano    | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) is a devastating pest to Hawaii's landscape industry. Extensive efforts of CRB management has been ongoing, but the pest is spreading to new areas of Oahu. Additional funding is needed to keep CRB away from neighbor islands and away from our vital diversified agriculture industry.

As a former Cooperative Extension Agent at CTAHR for the past 20 years, I have come to realize that a significant investment is needed ito support Hawaii's overall biosecurity program if we wish to sustain many culturally important crops from pest and diseases such as CRB.

We humbly ask for your strong support of HB1149.

Aloha, Jari Sugano

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 7:38:33 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b>   | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mabel Ann Keliioomalu | Hui Mahi'ai Aina    | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I am a resident of Waimanalo, we farm the land.

This CRB will destroy our palm trees which we use to make baskets. We believe that control as soon as possible will stop CRB from spreading to the neighbor island.

I support HB1149.

Mabel Ann Keliioomalu

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 7:47:38 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Michael Lynn        | The Catered Coconut | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha and good morning,

My name is Michael Lynn. I live on Maui which is currently un-disturbed by CRB. I have been in the palm care business for 10 years and have created a small business and livelihood from this skill. There have been many iterations of this business from; 1) climbing and trimming coconut palms for others, 2) selling coconuts at the beach, 3) making whole coconut and coconut water deliveries to private clientele across the island (of Maui), 4) creating coconut coir pith and coconut coir mulch for public consumption and 5) catering coconuts for weddings, corporate events and private parties.

We are a small, 6-figure a year business, and have experimented with a multitude of successful ventures with ONLY the coconut fruit. We pay our taxes and there are many businesses like us, fully dependent on the coconut palm, that are contributing to the welfare and sustainability of the state of Hawaii.

Agricultural production on Maui has grown to a point that we are importing mulch from Oahu. With the advent of CRB, this is a bittersweet reality. CRB populations have a devastating impact on agriculture, ecosystems and the economies of Hawaii. It is VITALLY important that CRB is controlled and not allowed to spread to the neighboring islands. It is economically sensible and efficient for the state of Hawaii to invest resources into stopping and reversing the spread of CRB on Oahu. Please vote yes to pass House Bill 1149.

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 8:00:55 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Cassandra Park      | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I am a Master of Public Health student at the University of Hawaii Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work. The Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle has had devastating effects on our local coconut palms and other trees. These trees provide sustenance and shade which are essential to Hawai'i. We must work to control their spread so it doesn't impact the entire island chain. Additionally we must hold industries and organizations accountable for not doing their due diligence and preventing their spread.



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
Friday, February 10, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

By

Anna Wieczorek, Interim Dean  
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources

And

Michael Bruno, Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

#### HB 1149 – RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1149 relating to *Oryctes rhinoceros* or coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) which adversely impacts palm species that are important to the State's agricultural economy, cultural heritage, and ecosystems.

CRBs feed on emerging palm fronds that cause damage and often severe enough to cause die back and plant mortality. There exists a CRB response program which is a coordinated partnership with the University of Hawai'i, U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, and other key organizations.

Since the detection of CRB on O'ahu, funding for CRB response has primarily been through federal partners such as USDA and the U. S. Navy. The purpose of this measure is to appropriate \$720,000 or so much thereof out of the general revenues of the State of Hawai'i to support existing CRB response positions and core activities involving research, response, education, and investigative work needed to maintain a successful and effective program to control the spread of CRB.

Specifically, this bill will provide funding for:

- one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) permanent junior researcher to serve as the deputy incident commander under HDOA leadership;
- one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) permanent administrative professional/technician for program administration and maintenance;
- one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) permanent data collection, management, and GIS analysis supervisor;
- three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) permanent data technicians;

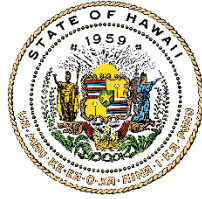


- two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) permanent outreach and education specialists;
- one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) permanent canine supervisor for the CRB response canine program;
- two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) permanent canine handlers for the CRB response canine program;
- administration and other related costs for the CRB response canine program, including kenneling and veterinary support; and,
- supplies for maintaining research colonies and potential biological control agents.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1149, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents approved budget.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Friday, February 10, 2023  
10:00 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 1149  
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM

House Bill 1149 proposes to appropriate funds for positions and activities related to the coconut rhinoceros beetle infestation control. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the University of Hawaii's Executive Budget request.**

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) is a major pest of coconut palms (*Cocos nucifera*) and African oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis*). It can be also found in betelnut (*Areca catchu*), Pandanus species, banana, pineapple, sugarcane, and even the native Hawaiian palm, loulou. Adults damage living palms, either killing the tree due to direct damage, or opening up the tree to mortal damage from other insects or pathogens. On Pacific Islands with no natural enemies of this beetle, the damage can be extreme. In Palau, where the beetle first invaded in 1942, the coconut palm was eradicated entirely on some islands, with overall mortality across the archipelago reaching 50%.

CRB was found on O'ahu in 2013 at the Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam during a routine survey by the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) and the University of Hawai'i-Hilo. An intensive multi-agency effort was initiated and continues to this day. The unregulated movement of green waste has led to this species spreading throughout O'ahu, but the multi-agency efforts to control this pest have been successful at containing CRB to a single island. Continued investment to manage this pest on O'ahu is necessary to keep it from spreading to other islands and protecting both cultural and agricultural important species.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

DAWN N.S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
LAURA H.E. KAAKUA  
FIRST DEPUTY  
M. KALEO MANUEL  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER  
AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES  
ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS



The House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
February 10, 2023  
Room 325, 10:00AM

RE: **HB 1149, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program**

Attention: Chair Cedric Gates, Vice Chair Kirstin Kahaloa and members of the Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in **support of HB 1149**, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle.

HB1149 appropriates funding for ten full-time positions, as well as funding for administrative costs and supplies for the purpose of decreasing the spread of new coconut rhinoceros beetle infestations and other invasive species. This bill provides for the essential staffing vital to the research, response, education, and investigative work needed to maintain the effective program required to tackle the infestation on Oahu.

UHPA supports and encourages the committee to **pass HB 1149**.

Respectfully submitted,

Christian L. Fern  
Executive Director  
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**MORRIS M. ATTA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD**  
**CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

**FEBRUARY 10, 2023**  
**10:00 AM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1149**  
**RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Gates and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1149 relating to coconut rhinoceros beetle program. This bill appropriates funds for positions and activities related to the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) infestation control. The Department strongly supports this measure.

The state has reached a turning point to protect our palm and culturally related resources from the invasive CRB. Utilizing federal funding through a variety of agencies, the department has formed an interagency program known as the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Response (the Response). The Department leads the Response through a unified incident command system. Despite the efforts of the Response over the past nine years, the fight to eradicate CRB from Oahu has not been successful. There has been detection of new breeding sites on the North and windward sides of Oahu (where habitat for CRB is ideal) mediated through the movement of green waste. At the same time, population densities in central Oahu are significantly increasing despite the Responses effectors. Our collaboration with Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam (JBPHH)



has demonstrated through the implementation of a comprehensive green waste management plan, that landscape level control of CRB populations is achievable, especially when combined with the judicious and strategic use of pesticide treatments. The state must follow the Navy's lead in environmental protection through the adoption of a comprehensive green waste management program. The Department, with the passing of an interim rule to Hawaii Revised Statutes 4-72 last year is working toward compliance agreements and a rough legal framework to manage green waste on Oahu. However, the compliance agreements are not as comprehensive as the green waste management plan implemented by JBPHH needed to minimize populations of CRB.

Without significant increases in funding and resources, the Response is forced to shift focus from eradication to containment to the island of Oahu. The Department appreciates the legislature's action in the funding this proposal. Funding core staff and programs will allow the Response to properly leverage resources in a sustained fashion.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 9:39:22 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b>         | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Iiwileo Pacarro     | Na Pale O Kualakai & NiuNow | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

We, the groups Nā Pale O Kualaka‘i (Aloha ‘Āina Club) and NiuNow, strongly believe that Niu (coconut) has a vital relationship rooted in community and Aloha ‘Āina. We support the perpetuation of niu practices as had been commonly sustained by our ancestors throughout tropical island nations, as we all collectively chose this tree to be the "tree of life". Today we must take action to stop the spreading of CRB, especially the potential migrating into the neighbor islands. We encourage that you see this as an issue in our control to which measures could be adopted for effective outcomes.

Kupu ka niu, kupu ke kanaka. (When the Niu flourishes, people flourishes)

An ‘ōlelo no‘eau taken from Pule Niu published in a 1897 nūpepa.

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 9:44:22 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Rouel Velasco       | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Dear Chair Cedric Gates, Vice Chair Kirsten Kahaloa and members of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems,

I am submitting testimony in strong support for HB 1149, which appropriates funds for positions and activities related to coconut rhinoceros beetle infestation control.

The niu or coconut is an important plant to Hawai'i and the world beyond for the many uses for everyday life, nourishment and sustainability as demonstrated by our ancestors. The coconut is the tree of life. The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) is detriment to the growth and advancement of coconut. The coconut has a deep relationship routed in community and aloha 'āina. Now is the time to reclaim coconut as the tree the nourishes and provides for humanity.

Niu Now is a homegrown movement committed to coconut agroforestry. A movement has begun to reframe how we view and treat coconut as vital relative. In order for the coconut to thrive, we as a collective must do our part to care for the land and coconut. Just like the Hawaiian proverb, "when coconuts flourish, humanity thrives." As humanity in deep connection and relationship to 'āina, we must be stewards of all natural resources.

Today, actions must be taken to stop the spreading of CRB, especially the potential migrating into the neighbor islands.

I encourage you view this as an issue in our collective control to which measures could be adopted for effective outcomes.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB 1149.

Thank you,

Rouel Velasco







February 09, 2023

To: Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Subject: **SB1149**, RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM.

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Bryceson G. Keali'iwiwo'oleikamaunaki'eki'e, and I advocate **IN SUPPORT of SB1149**.

Currently I'm a student at University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu, enrolled in the Sustainable Community Food Systems (SCFS) program. I'm also a volunteer with the NiuNow: Uluniu project. Ulu meaning to grow and Niu meaning coconut, it is intended to reclaim the coconut as a food source, a building material and a way to help reinvigorate the West side of O'ahu with its many functions. We classify seed nuts by phenotypic difference, maturity, location and then recording the data **as our ancestors had perpetuated this practice for millenniums collectively choosing the niu to be the tree of life**. We also care for various diversified niu, 'ulu (Breadfruit), and 'Uala (Sweet Potato) groves planted throughout the island. Strengthening Oceania's knowledge, connection, and aloha for cultural food sovereignty by envisioning niu as a relationship rooted in community and aloha 'āina **that holds a key in Hawaii's food sustainability**.

SB 1149 would provide vital funds to access resources necessary for the

As a student, volunteer, and advocate for advancing , I urge the Senate committee on Agriculture and Environment to **SUPPORT SB1149**.  
Mahalo nui for your consideration,

Bryceson Tugade & the NiuNow Team

***Kupu ka niu, Kupu ke kanaka***

Chair Rep. Cedric Asuega Gates  
Vice Chair Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS  
**House Bill 1149**  
February 10, 2023 10:00 am  
Conference Room 325  
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

### **Testimony in Support of HB1149**

Aloha,

I, Arisa Barcinas, am in **support of HB 1149**, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program.

As a cultural practitioner of weaving, and an indigenous Pacific Islander, the coconut tree has always been a core part of my identity. This tree has been referred to by so many as the tree of life. From the ways it has provided sustenance for Pacific islanders in ancient times to the provisions of today, such as aesthetic attraction, fueling tourism, landscape, nursery, and agricultural industries, our islands depend on the existence of coconut trees.

The Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) has the potential to completely devastate palms and other agriculturally important crops on Oahu, and neighboring Hawaiian Islands. This decline of these palms and crops will also negatively impact so many of our largest industries. We begin to see the increased need for continued response efforts on Oahu, as infestation occurs throughout the island and we watch our palms die. Additional efforts and funding toward addressing the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle can only be beneficial for the control of CRB and protection of our ecosystems.

I hope you will consider this bill relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Arisa Barcinas

February 8, 2023

**Testimony in Support of HB 1149  
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM**

House Committee on Agriculture  
February 8, 2023  
X:XX a.m. Via Video Conference and CR XXX

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Committee Members,

My Name is Justin Franzmeier representing Waimanalo Agricultural Association and Island Foodscaping and am writing in **strong support of HB 1149, relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program**. As a landscaping contractor, Waimanalo Agricultural Association Ambassador and farmer in Waimanalo I can honestly say I have been blessed not having to deal first hand with this pest yet and want to keep it that way. We have had other pest scares before from close by neighbors with little fire ants and coqui frogs and due to the **appropriate funding** and quick action from the State Department of Agriculture these pests have been properly managed and or exterminated.

Just last week our first legit infestation in Waimanalo was found just down the road from our farm and I am guessing this is going to be the beginning of more populations found if we don't act with haste. HB 1149 proposes to appropriate additional funds for position and mitigation activities to fight against the coconut rhinoceros beetle, commonly known as CRB. The funding for the University of Hawaii to is to support key positions within the CRB response program to help combat this devastating insect.

This level of damage to coconut trees and palms could devastate the landscape industry and particularly, the Waimanalo plant nurseries. The devastation to coconut trees and palms will have grave impact upon Hawaii's unique natural landscape among our most popular destinations in Hawaii including our beaches along Waikiki's gold coast, world class golf courses and hotels and resorts statewide.

More attention is necessary to address this invasive pest and we sincerely request that you pass HB 1149. Thank you for your consideration.



**ISLANDFOODSCAPING**

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 12:06:44 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Kallie Barnes       | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Our invasive species committees in addition to CRB Hawaii need to be properly funded and have not been from the beginning. Properly funded these programs actually stand a chance to completely eliminate these invasive pests from Hawai‘i.

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 2:25:32 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Keith Weiser        | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support HB1149.

I work for the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Response and have been a part of the effort since 2014. I have seen the progression of damage in affected areas and I have a good sense of what Hawai`i can expect in the future. We were lucky that CRB arrived on the leeward side because the habitat there is generally poorer for CRB due to drier conditions and fewer natural areas. CRB was able to thrive in a few spots likely due to irrigation or local water sources. Now that CRB has reached wetter parts of the island with less development, I anticipate larger populations along the North and Windward areas.

The negative impacts that I worry about most are declines in tourism from the aesthetic decline and death of palms, death of endemic native palms (loulu), economic losses for palm growers, and death of historic or culturally significant palm groves. With an agricultural pest, most people think the impact will be to farmers. Although that's true in Hawai`i, most palms are used for landscaping or small scale production in yards or small farms. Part of the appeal of Hawai`i for tourists includes the tropical aesthetic which features palms. Residents also benefit from the natural beauty that surrounds them every day at their homes, parks, beaches, and natural areas. The natural beauty of Hawai`i may be changed forever by CRB. CRB have only recently been found in native palm forests including high mountain sites in the Waianae mountains and the effects of this invasion on the loulu and native ecosystems remains to be seen. The progression of damage on affected palms takes years and many parts of Oahu are in the early stages of impacts and the health of palms will decline without intervention.

I believe that active management of the CRB populations can keep CRB impacts to a manageable level in key areas and minimize the chance that CRB will spread to other islands. I believe these proposed funds will have a significant impact on economics of tourism, growers, and landscapers. It will improve the quality of life for residents, and will help preserve native palms and native ecosystems.

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 2:36:18 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>       |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| George Fleming      | Individual          | Support                   | Remotely Via<br>Zoom |

Comments:

Aloha,

I would like to testify in support of HB 1149 - the coconut rhinoceros beetle is a threat to the agriculture industry and requires attention now. Please pass this bill! I will share more concerns upon testifying via zoom at the hearing.

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 3:47:28 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b>   | <b>Organization</b>           | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Susan Shaheen Mulkern | Mulkern Landscaping & Nursery | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Committee Members,

We are in support of this bill as the coconut rhinoceros beetle has become a major problem not only in Waimanalo but also in our state. We are not only concerned for our landscape industry but also for our food safety. We have recently started a new orchard and coconut palms are included.

Please help our industry fight this pest by providing additional funds to help combat it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Susan Mulkern

**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 6:40:46 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Mike Wong           | Individual          | Oppose                    | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Based on the failure of the State to contain the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle on Oahu. I strongly urge the Legislature to increase funding for the eradication of this pest before it makes its way to the outer islands and continues its destructive effects on Oahu.



**HB-1149**

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 7:40:06 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Michael Melzer      | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

The coconut is the tree of life in in the Pacific and coconut rhinoceros beetle represents a major threat to the health of coconut and other palms. I fully support any reasonable effort that will help lessen the impact of this damaging invasive pest on Oahu, and preventing its spread to other islands in Hawaii. Hawaii must become the leader in combating this pest that is negatively impacting our State and so many other Pacific Island Communities.