

**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 AND FOOD SYSTEMS**

**FEBRUARY 10, 2023**  
**1:00 PM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1150**  
**RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

Chairperson Gates and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1150. The bill appropriates funds to the Hawaii Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the state. The little fire ant is one of the most devastating invasive species for Hawaii's unique natural resources and agricultural economy. Continuous funding of the Hawaii Ant Lab will secure management of this invasive pest and working on potential eradication tools in the future.

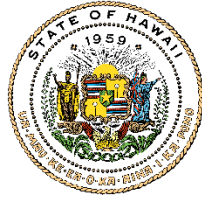
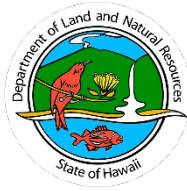
The Department supports this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
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 1150  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

House Bill 1150 proposes to appropriate funds to support the Hawai'i Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State. **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 Department's Executive Budget request.**

The Little Fire Ant (LFA) is designated as one of the world's top 100 worst invasive species by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Hawai'i has no native ant species, making natural ecosystems particularly vulnerable to ant invasions. LFA continue to spread throughout the islands, reducing biological diversity and increasing operating costs for agriculture. The stings from LFA are painful and are a major human health risk. There has been an increase in LFA infestations across the State over the last year, especially on Maui, O'ahu and Kaua'i.

The Hawai'i Ant Lab (HAL) is a project of the Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit (PCSU) with the University of Hawai'i. HAL has a statewide mission to prevent the entry of invasive ants in Hawai'i and manage those already established. The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) is administered through the Department and provides policy level direction, coordination, and planning among state departments for the prevention, control, and eradication of harmful invasive species throughout the State. The HISC has prioritized funding to support the Hawai'i Ant Lab and partner agencies working to control invasive ants throughout the State through its yearly, competitive grant process.

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  
Friday, February 10, 2023  
Room 325, Videoconference  
10:00 AM

RE: **HB 1150 Relating to Invasive Species**

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

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) requests the committee's **support and passage of HB 1150.**

UHPA appreciates the committee's recognition of the importance of funding the Hawai'i ant lab as they work to mitigate the effects of the little fire ants in the State. The appropriations will support the staff in developing and disseminating methods to hold back fire ants. This is a vital investment for our State.

UHPA encourages and appreciates the committee's **support and passage of HB 1150.**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Fern'.

Christian L. Fern  
Executive Director  
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly

9 February 2023  
BIISC  
23 E Kawili St  
Hilo, HI 96771  
[biisc@hawaii.edu](mailto:biisc@hawaii.edu)



Attn: House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems  
RE: HB1150

Aloha,

The Big Island Invasive Species Committee would like to express our support for HB1550, providing funding for the Hawai'i Ant Lab (HAL).

The threat that LFA pose to the environment, economy, and way of life in Hawaii cannot be overstated. Successful treatment in infested areas can take a year or more, and on Hawaii island, where the ants have been established for 30 years, maintaining an ant-free property requires treatment *in perpetuity* as residents must regularly apply barriers and monitor their properties to prevent re-infestation. Already, residents have told us of friends and neighbors who have moved away, unable to live with the constant stings.

A 2015 report by the University of Hawaii predicted that without serious intervention on the Big Island, little fire ants will cost the agricultural industry \$6 billion over the next 30 years. Farmers here report often that they are unable to find workers to harvest when the stinging ants fall from trees onto the faces and the eyes of pickers. LFA carry with them their own food sources: plant pests like aphids, mealy bugs, and whiteflies, a constant bane to farmers and gardeners that bring additional costs for control. In other Pacific islands, farmers have abandoned their ancestral farms due to LFA infestation.

Since 2016, BIISC has offered a community support program targeted at the community level to encourage neighbors to work together and mobilize one another. The research generated by the Hawaii Ant Lab is integral to our program, allowing us to bring up-to-date solutions to our residents to fight LFA. HAL has developed effective, safe, and easy-to-use treatments that the community can embrace and use, and they continue to pursue critical research into new and better methods that can be used in Hawai'i to combat LFA while providing critical assistance in eradication efforts on Oahu, Maui, and Kauai.

We also fear the importation of the deadly Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA), which is spreading across the world. HAL staff monitor ant populations airports and ship ports, forming an early detection system that will hopefully allow us to respond and eradicate any new invasions before the window of possibility slams shut -something that happens far too often with insects, as we've seen many times in recent years.

We strongly support this bill, and hope you will see how essential and important it is to provide this funding. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.

Franny Brewer  
Manager



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

### **Testimony in Support of HB 1150**

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 1150, Relating to Invasive Species.**

House Bill 1150 proposes to provide critical funding for the Hawaii Ant Lab (HAL) for fiscal years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 to conduct research, extension, and control work on little fire ants (LFA) in Hawai'i. LFA can deliver painful stings to humans, infest agricultural fields where they can damage crops and sting workers, promote other plant pests such as aphids and scale insects, sting pets and livestock which can result in eye damage and blindness, and impact recreation, among many other harmful and expensive impacts. When LFA were first detected in the State, there were no registered control products or even application methods that could be used to control LFA in vegetation and trees. HAL has served the State well in this gap-filling capacity, and HAL continues to serve as the lead research and development group on LFA, also advising, training, and working with the public, businesses, Counties, the Invasive Species Committees, National Park Service, Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, and many others to manage or extirpate infestations throughout the State.

Despite being recognized as LFA experts and providing critical assistance to mitigate LFA in Hawai'i, in recent years HAL's funding has been in jeopardy and staff even had to take reduced hours. The funding proposed in House Bill 1150 is critical for HAL to retain its expert staff and continue its work through the biennium to control and eradicate LFA across Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

Aloha,

Christy Martin  
Stephanie Easley  
CGAPS



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921  
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February 10, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1150**  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

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 1150**, which appropriates funds to support the Hawai'i ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State.

Invasive species have become one of the most challenging problems impacting Hawai'i. Many invasive species are damaging Hawai'i's environment and the state's economy. Agriculture has a vested interest in this matter. Agriculture is one of the major casualties when invasive species are introduced. Every year, numerous new pests are introduced into the State, such as the coqui frog, coffee berry borer, axis deer, macadamia felted coccid, little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, small hive beetle, varroa mite, two-lined spittlebug, to name a few.

HFB recognizes the harm that the little fire ant has caused to farms, businesses, and the quality of life of those affected by the pest. We agree the Hawai'i Ant Lab's operational funding is critical to ensure that continued measures to stop the spread of little fire ants are not reduced or disrupted.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



# **HAWAII PEST CONTROL ASSOCIATION**

Century Square – 1188 Bishop St., Ste. 1003\*Honolulu, HI 96813-3304

Telephone (808) 533-6404 • Fax (808) 533-2739

February 10, 2023

Testimony To: House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems  
Representative Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair

Presented By: Tim Lyons, CAE  
Executive Director

Subject: H.B. 1150 - Relating to Invasive Species

Chair Gates and Members of the Committee:

I am Tim Lyons, Executive Director of the Hawaii Pest Control Association, an organization composed of around 85 companies who perform structural pest control.

One of the pests that we commonly run into is the little fire ant. As you know, this is a pest that our operators have had to deal with and it is research, such as that conducted by the Hawaii ant lab, that provides our operators with the kind of information that we need in order to best control this invasive pest for the benefit of Hawaii's residents.

Based on that, we highly recommend your support of this \$550,000.00 appropriation.

Thank you.

**HB-1150**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 2:57:22 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>
Nancy Redfeather	Ka Ohana O Na Pua	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Ant Lab is really the only agency standing between a liviable Hawaii and a place dominated by the Little Fire Ant. This Research and Education group is highly qualified, extremely experienced, and positively realistic all good qualities when going up against such a formidable foe.

Please fund them at the highest levels possible, you will forever be glad that you did.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Aloha, Nancy Redfeather



**HB-1150**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 4:10:15 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 Kahaloha and Committee Members,

I support additional funds for the Hawaii ant lab. The ant lab has been an invaluable source of information and resources for our Waimanalo nursery and orchard. The little fire ant is a major pest for people, pets and plants. Fortunately, although we have had a few scares, we have not identified any infestations at our 2 locations, but we are worried it is just a matter of time, unless sufficient support and education is available.

We would appreciate any help you can give our industry in the way of funding.

Thank you for considering our request.

Susan Mulkern

**HB-1150**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 6:21:45 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 Only

Comments:

I am in full support of this bill HB1150. Invasive species like the little fire ant is at a tipping point on O'ahu. It is critical we fund this otherwise little fire ant will get established on O'ahu. It will affect many people on this island. Agriculture, and peoples lives will be impacted. This is an invasive species that we have a chance at eradicating. Please pass this bill so we can continue efforts in eradicating little fire ant.

Thanks,  
Ryan

**HB-1150**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 7:23:46 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>
Heather Forester	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in SUPPORT of HB1150 relating to invasive species. Though ants are small in size, they pose large problems for our State. I have personally seen the devastating impacts that invasive ants cause the people, pets, and industries of Hawaii. Invasive ants, such as Little Fire Ants (LFA), are changing our way of life, and if left unchecked will forever change Hawaii as we know it.

People become desperate when trying to find solutions to manage invasive ants. Unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation that is spread in the public realm, which can lead to pesticide misuse. People have also been known to go to the extremes of using fire to defend against ants; one such case led to a structure fire.

The Hawaii Ant Lab educates the public on best management practices that are safe and legal. The Hawaii Ant Lab needs your support to continue serving the State by helping to prevent the spread of LFA, providing education on the management of LFA and other invasive ants, and early detection of invasive ants that are not established in Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Heather Forester

**HB-1150**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:16:12 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 Only

Comments:

Please support HB1150.

**HB-1150**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:56:39 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 nui kākou,

Please support the efforts to eradicate this invasive species. We need to stop the movement of materials and there must be a declaration of emergency. This small effort of funding is just a tiny part of what is necessary. The economic disaster that this will be for several industries including agriculture, tourism and above all wellness of our people and place, is great. Please elevate this with appropriate funding and resources, as well as attention and transparency. It is so disappointing that we are literally just waiting for the inevitable. This should have been acted on much more sooner and with much more drive. Lets try to correct the course. Mahalo nui for your consideration.

Kimeona Kane

Mahalo nui,  
Kimeona Kane

**HB-1150**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 2:04:57 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>
Lorraine Waianuhea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kakou,

I am writing in strong support of HB1150.

Little fire ants (LFA) are a serious issue on Oahu and this bill would appropriate funds so that the Hawaii Ant Lab can carry out their job in managing the spread of LFA. Preventing LFA from becoming established on Oahu should be a priority. LFA stings are very painful and so their establishment would affect agriculture and tourism/recreation, in addition to everyday life for residents.

Please pass HB1150.

Mahalo for your time,

Mamo Waianuhea

**HB-1150**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 7:19:54 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>
Melody Euaparadorn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for accepting this testimony in favor of passing HB1150. The loss of funding by the Hawaii Ant Lab comes at a critical time when an increasing number of isolated populations of Little Fire Ants are being identified across the islands. The requested funds will allow continued critical outreach, research, and rapid response to extinguish these outbreaks. I urge the committee to pass HB1150 as these efforts are imperative to prevent Little Fire Ants from spreading throughout our state and wreaking havoc in our agriculture fields, forests, and homes.

**HB-1150**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 8:09:31 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 Only

Comments:

I am a Master of Public Health student at the UH Manoa Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work. On a recent trip to Puna me and other members of my hula halau were attacked by fire ants while trying to cut down baby albizia trees. Needless to say, it was not pleasant. Some were so worried that they needed to go to the doctor because the pain was too much. Luckily 4-5 hours later the pain subsided. But for many of our smaller species like the the native bird population, this pain is excruciating as they are overrun by fire ants. I can't imagine what that type of death would feel like. In public health we look at addressing health using an "upstream" approach as a way to prevent issues from occurring. Well unfortunately the issue is already here but we must look at ways to control and prevent its spread. Supporting this bill is a great first step.



**HB-1150**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 8:21:39 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>
Ozzy Bellwood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because living in Puna I have encountered little fire ants in my yard and in the yards of my friends. I have seen dogs, cats, and chickens blinded by these pests, and the Hawaii Ant Lab is acting to educate the public on the best methods of controlling these ants. The work the lab does is invaluable, especially working as a free resource for the public.

I have many friends whose children are stung just trying to play in the yard, who can't go and trim their trees without getting covered in welts. I've met some farmers and harvesters that dread going out to pick their crops due to them. The lab works to contain these ants and to teach the public how best to push them back out of their land. Thank you.

**HB-1150**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 10:03:57 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>
Catherine Gianna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern;

I am writing in support of appropriation of state funds to support the Hawaii Ant Lab in its mitigation efforts of the invasive Little Fire Ant.

as a citizen, I have received support and personal dealings with ants and have also been given education on identification of possible Little Red Ants at my home by being able to send samples to Hawaii Ant Lab.

I believe it is important to protect our island home from this invasive species.

February 09, 2023

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

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

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Committee Members,

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Committee Members,

My name is Brian Boltz and **I am writing to strongly urge you to pass HB 1149, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program.** I work for a small farm in Waimanalo and have experience in the landscape industry. I am deeply concerned about the spread of the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) in Windward Oahu, particularly in Waimanalo.

HB 1149 proposes to provide additional funds for positions and mitigation efforts to combat the CRB. These funds are critical for the University of Hawaii to support key positions within the CRB response program and help address this devastating insect.

The CRB poses an imminent threat to Waimanalo and its agriculture industry, as the area has seen over ten confirmed cases of the CRB in the last six months alone. The most recent infestation was just last month in a compost pile made from tree trimmings. Many farmers in Hawaii are unaware of the CRB's threat and the best practices for mitigating its spread.

According to the Hawaii Department of Agriculture, the 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. This results in damaged fronds and can cause the tree to die if the growing point is attacked. Tree mortality has been reported to range from 10% to 50%. Dead trees also pose a safety hazard as they may fall unexpectedly after the trunk rots, potentially causing injury or property damage.

The impact of the CRB on coconut trees and palms WILL have disastrous consequences for Hawaii's landscape industry and economy. Popular tourist destinations such as Waikiki's beaches, golf courses, and hotels and resorts could be severely impacted, as well as the state's unique natural landscape. The Oahu's plant nurseries WILL also suffer greatly from this damage.

It is imperative that action is taken immediately to address this invasive pest. I urge you to pass HB 1149 to secure the necessary funding for CRB management and protect Hawaii's coconut trees and palms, as well as its economy and culture. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Aloha

Brian Boltz