

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS**

**MARCH 22, 2023**  
**10:00 AM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**SENATE BILL NO. 1552, SD2**  
**RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

Chairperson Gates and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1552, SD2. The bill appropriates funds to the Hawaii Ant Lab to support research and management efforts to invasive ants in Hawaii, in particular the little fire ant. 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.

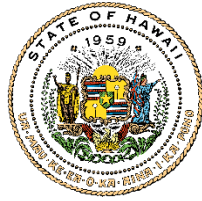
The Department supports this measure.

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 HAWAII'  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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

Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Wednesday, March 22, 2023  
10:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 1552, SENATE DRAFT 2  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Senate Bill 1552, Senate Draft 2 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). 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) has a statewide mission to prevent the entry of invasive ants into Hawai'i and manage those already established. HAL is the only organization solely dedicated to the control of LFA in Hawai'i. HAL is administered through the Department for the prevention, control, and eradication of harmful invasive species, and is well-positioned to support the Hawai'i Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State.

In addition to supporting this measure, the Department encourages increased funding for biosecurity at ports and airports, and for early detection and rapid response of newly introduced invasive species, which is more cost-effective than long term control operations.

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



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March 22, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON SB 1552, SD2**  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Conference Room 325 & Via Videoconference  
10:00 AM

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

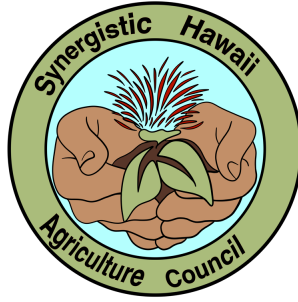
I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural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

**The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 1552, SD2**, 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.



**RE: Support for SB1552 SD2  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

University of Hawai'i; Hawai'i Ant Lab; Little Fire Ant; Appropriation; Department of Land and Natural Resources (\$)

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

The Synergistic Hawai'i Agriculture Council (SHAC) stands in support of this Bill. Our consortium represents 1,500 macadamia, coffee, papaya, and floriculture agribusinesses. SHAC's growers, processors, and shippers stretch across the State.

The Hawaii Ant Lab is a tremendously important contributor to the agricultural community. **Please fully appropriate this vital research and extension service.**

The Hawaii ag industry is being hit hard by an invasive ant species called *Wasmannia auropunctata* (Little Fire Ants or LFA), which is listed as one of the world's top 100 most invasive species ([www.issg.org/database](http://www.issg.org/database)). It is rapidly spreading throughout the Kona Districts and is impacting coffee farms as well as homes. On infested farms, workers will refuse to pick in some instances, because LFA will rain down and sting them when they are harvesting.

Farmers are also seeing a secondary impact of black sooty mold caused by the increase of plant pests (such as aphids, scale insects, and mealybugs) that LFA farm for food. This can lead to plant disease, reduction in the quality of produce, and overall crop loss for farmers. The Hawaii Ant Lab is one of our few lines of defense. They contribute valuable management expertise for homeowners and farmers alike.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support for the Hawaii Ant Lab and the pests that impact the coffee industry.

Suzanne Shriner  
Administrator



# **HAWAII PEST CONTROL ASSOCIATION**

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

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

March 22, 2023

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

Presented By: Tim Lyons, CAE  
Executive Director

Subject: S.B. 1552, SD 2 - 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 appropriation.

Thank you.

**SB-1552-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 11:21:09 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mary Beth Jiko Nakade	Daifukuji Soto Mission	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representing Daifukuji Soto Mission, a Buddhist temple in Kona, Hawaii, I am testifying in support of the Hawaii Ant Lab. Both Heather Forester of Hawaii Ant Lab and Kiyoshi Adachi of Ant Lab Kona have been instrumental in providing information and continuous support in regard to the control of the harmful and highly invasive little fire ants which were found on temple property several years ago. The ants were a threat to our congregation, the community groups which gather here, to the minister and family in residence, and to volunteers working on temple grounds. Thanks to the help which we received from Hawaii Ant Lab, we have been able to successfully control the fire ant population. The services of the Ant Lab are very much needed on this island.

**SB-1552-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 11:10:52 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 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 SB1552. 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

**SB-1552-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 11:32:18 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 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 Hawai'i 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.



**SB-1552-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 11:50:35 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
kathleen mishina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a homeowner and resident of Hawaii, I support SB 1552 for funding in order to continue the excellent work of the Hawaii Ant Lab. I have personally benefitted by their help and was able to eliminate LFA nests on our property. I continue regular mitigation practices, through their most current recommendations. Their staff are readily available to assist anyone who needs help. Without this valuable public service and community resource, we will be over run by this highly invasive ant within years.

Thank you,

Kathleen Mishina



TESTIMONY OF  
CASPER VANDERWOUDE  
HAWAII ANT LAB, HILO

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS  
22 March 2023, 10:00 am  
325 & videoconference

**SENATE BILL NO. 1552**  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

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**Chair Gates, vice chair Kahaloa, and honorable members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on Senate Bill 1552. This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources [LNR402] for the purpose of funding the Hawaii Ant Lab to continue the statewide battle against the Little Fire Ant.

Since 2009, the Hawai'i Ant Lab, a project of the Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit (RCUH), has supported Hawaii residents and agricultural industries with significant technical advancements in control technology, using fewer and less toxic baits and pesticides, improving application methodologies, providing extensive training programs for residents and industry that reduces costs and labor while improving outcomes. HAL also operates statewide to eradicate, contain and manage infestations on O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i as well as Hawai'i island.

Hawai'i Ant Lab is unfunded beyond the 2022-23 fiscal year. Until 2021 the Hawaii Department of Agriculture provided funds for this purpose. However, recent administrative changes to the governance of source funds have changed access to the resources originally used to fund this project. For the 2022-23 fiscal year, the legislature made an appropriation that maintained staffing levels. Without ongoing funding, Hawai'i Ant Lab will no longer be able to provide services to residents and agriculture in Hawai'i. The funds initially appropriated by this bill will maintain Hawaii Ant Lab capacity at present levels for 2023-24 and 2024-25 budget years.

In 1999, The Little Fire Ant was detected on Hawai'i island by the HDOA entomologist in Hilo. From this date, the Little Fire Ant has spread throughout Hawai'i Island and onto the neighbor islands of O'ahu, Maui and Kaua'i. A recent paper in journal Ecological Economics (vol 111) estimated the economic impacts to Hawai'i

Want more info on Little Fire Ants?

Go to [www.littlefireants.com](http://www.littlefireants.com)

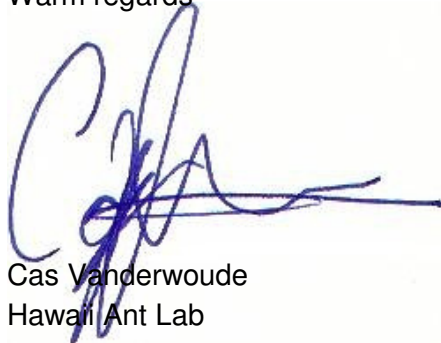
island alone exceed \$100 million dollars annually and the total impact to state of Hawaii is expected to be much greater. A relatively small annual expenditure can significantly reduce these impacts.

The staff at Hawaii Ant Lab work tirelessly with sister agencies to mitigate the impacts of Little Fire Ants by

- Preventing their movement between islands,
- Slowing their spread within islands,
- Providing advice, instruction and guidance for residents and affected industries,
- Developing better, safer and more effective treatment methodologies.
- Searching for solutions suitable for organic agriculture and pest control

Hawaii Ant Lab does this by working closely with other agencies with similar or overlapping mandates to contribute to the over-arching biosecurity strategy for Hawaii, deliver best-practice response and management of invasive ant incursions and developing better and safer control methodologies to industry and residents of the state. Over the past 14 years, the lab has been at the forefront of innovation, developing specific control products and application equipment for this species, tools to assist in early detection and prevention and broad networks of industry and resident stakeholders. The extension team do a fantastic job of training and guiding not only affected people from the agricultural industry but every day residents who are often frustrated by their inability to control this new pest.

Warm regards



Cas Vanderwoude  
Hawaii Ant Lab

**SB-1552-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 2:54:10 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 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 SB1552 SD2.

**SB-1552-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 11:29:42 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Donlon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support funding of the Ant Lab, an essential entity in the control of Little Fire Ants (LFA). Without their expertise, our macadamia farm in Ka'u would have been severely impacted. We hand pick our nuts and take them to the processor. Not only would our pickers stop coming but I dread thinking about spreading LFA to the processing plant.

Mahalo,

susan Donlon

**SB-1552-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 10:46:18 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
J Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure.