

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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEXTER KISHIDA**  
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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

**JANUARY 31, 2024**  
**1:00 PM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2359**  
**RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES, HAWAII ANT LAB**

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2359 relating to the Hawaii Invasive Species. This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources for the Hawaii Ant Lab to mitigate the impacts of Little Fire Ants in Hawaii. The Department of Agriculture has the following comments on this measure.

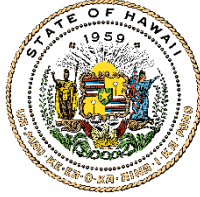
The little fire ant is one of the most devastating invasive species for Hawaii's unique natural resources and agricultural economy. Continuous funding of the Hawaii Ant Lab will secure management of this invasive pest and working on potential eradication tools in the future. The Department would like all data collected by the HAL relating to invasive ant surveys to allow us to better coordinate regulatory, response and control, and research efforts in the State's Standard GIS Data Platform, Esri, ArcGIS.

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

Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on  
AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Wednesday, January 31, 2024  
1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 2359  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Senate Bill 2359 proposes to appropriate funding for the Hawai'i Ant Lab to support little fire ant mitigation and eradication efforts. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure.**

The Legislature declared that invasive species are the biggest threat to Hawai'i's economy, environment, tourism, health, and way-of-life of its residents, and no invasive species encapsulates this devastation better than the little fire ant. This bill would provide desperately needed funding for the Hawai'i Ant Lab (HAL) to fully fund current staff and add new staff on islands that are seeing a serious increase in little fire ant infestations.

HAL was established in 2009 to address the overwhelming need for research and assistance to address and eradicate little fire ant infestations. Effective treatment is labor-intensive and involves surveying, treatment, and long-term monitoring that can take years to document results scientifically. In recent years, the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC), through the Department and the Department of Agriculture, helped fund HAL. Still, current funding levels, including \$500,000 from the Legislature in FY24, was not enough to prevent HAL from furloughing their staff this January. This bill comes at a critical time when infestations on O'ahu are on the rise and moving to a place where continued management is the only option. Kaua'i has two large infestations, one of which is located along a major waterway and will take a dedicated on-island team, which currently does not exist, to manage and control those infestations.

DAWN N.S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
FIRST DEPUTY  
DEAN D. UYENO  
ACTING 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

Maui had one of the most extensive little fire ant infestations in the state, not including Hawai‘i Island, in Nāhiku, Maui. The site was close to 180 acres, running along a major stream and stretching through densely vegetated terrain and private property. With funding provided by HISC and the County of Maui, the Maui Invasive Species Committee hired a dedicated little fire ant team that worked with Hawai‘i Ant Lab to develop an aerial treatment. After several treatment and monitoring missions, this previously infested area is now down to only a few ants. This shows what can be achieved with consistent and adequate resources.

Given the crisis of little fire ant, this bill would help address the short- and long-term needs to control this invasive pest and develop new tools that could be deployed to manage more widespread infestations and increase extension services to support farmers and industries severely impacted on Hawai‘i Island.

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

**SB-2359**

Submitted on: 1/28/2024 4:52:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/31/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nancy Redfeather	Testifying for Ka Ohana O Na Pua	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Ant Lab is the State's most effective Researcher and Educator for The Little Fire Ant. Their loss of funding over the past two years has greatly impacted their Staff and their purpose. Without them, the LFA would have devastaed Hawai'i Island already. I am treating my road in an agricultural area in mauka Kona and it is overgrown and very difficult. Research in this area is paramount for farmers and growers to continue working to create a sustainable community food system, for citizens to have any quallity of life, and for tourists to want to return. This insect is not easy to erradicate. The Hawai'i Ant Lab must receive all the funding they need to help all of us make a difference now and in the future. The funding level in this Bill must be maintained. Mahalo!



# SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

## SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

January 31, 2024      1:00 PM      Conference Room 224

### In SUPPORT of:

**SB2419:** RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL BIOSECURITY

**SB2358:** RELATING TO THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

**SB2359:** RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

**SB2411:** RELATING TO THE TWO-LINED SPITTLEBUG

**SB2559:** RELATING TO INVASIVE PESTS

**SB2560:** RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

---

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS SB2419, SB2358, SB2359, SB2411, SB2559, and SB2560**, which will help to mitigate the ongoing and future impacts of invasive pests on our native ecosystems, cultural practices, food security, public health, economy, and the overall quality of life of present and future generations.

Hawai'i's history provides us with a host of lessons regarding the wide-ranging and potentially irreversible damage that invasive species can inflict on our islands and ways of life. Invasive plants and wildlife have overtaken entire watersheds, impacting not just native habitat but also reducing aquifer recharge, increasing our vulnerability to floods and wildfires, and smothering our nearshore reefs and waters with runoff. Parasites and other pests have impacted local food production and increased the use of toxic pesticides on farms and in home gardens, risking both public health as well as threatening stream and nearshore species critical to our aquatic ecosystems. Invasive animals have also extirpated native species, continue to threaten others with outright extinction, and continue to undermine public health by acting as vectors for zoonotic diseases. Most recently, the spread of invasive pests such as the little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, hala scale, and others will require substantial and long-needed policies and investments over the long-term, to prevent additional and even greater impacts to our islands and our future generations.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club strongly supports the much needed policies and investments contemplated in these measures. More financial support is critical for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council to fulfill its biosecurity mission; funding for targeted campaigns to address the little fire ant and two-lined spittlebug are critical to preventing the ecological, cultural, agricultural, public health, and economic impacts of these pests; and inspection and quarantine authorities for businesses and public land lessees are vital to addressing long-



neglected gaps in invasive pest detection and eradication – gaps that have likely contributed to the establishment of coconut rhinoceros beetle on O‘ahu, and the ongoing spread of little fire ants across the islands.

Much remains uncertain as we continue to reckon with the consequences of Hawai‘i’s longstanding failure to enact critical biosecurity protections. However, it is certain that much stronger action, including but not limited to the proposals in the aforementioned bills, will be necessary to mitigate or prevent the worst of these and other future impacts to our lives and that of our children and future generations.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club of Hawai‘i respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** SB2419, SB2358, SB2359, SB2411, SB2559, and SB2560. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.



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)

January 31, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2359**  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
1:00 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, and Members of the Committees:

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 2359**, which appropriates funds for the Hawaii Ant Lab to support little fire ant mitigation and eradication efforts.

Invasive species have become one of the most devastating problems impacting Hawai'i. Many invasive species are damaging Hawai'i's environment and economy. Agriculture has a vested interest in this matter. Agriculture suffers when invasive species are introduced. Every year, numerous new pests are introduced into the State, such as the coqui frog, coffee berry borer, macadamia felted coccid, little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, small hive beetle, and varroa mite, to name a few. Control measures take time to develop, leaving farmers and ranchers at risk. This is not consistent with the State's goal of increasing self-sufficiency and sustainability.

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. Adequate funding of the Hawai'i Ant Lab funding is critical to support their little fire ant mitigation and eradication efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.



## **NORTH SHORE NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 27**

c/o NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION • 925 DILLINGHAM BOULEVARD SUITE 106 • HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96817  
TELEPHONE: (808) 768-3710 • FAX: (808) 768-3711 • INTERNET: <http://www.honolulu.gov/nco>

January 27, 2024

Sharon Hurd  
Chair  
State of Hawaii, Department of Agriculture Board  
Plant Quarantine Conference Room  
1849 Auiki Street  
Honolulu, HI 96819

### North Shore Neighborhood Board Testimony in Support of Strong HDOA Invasive Species Rules

Aloha Chair Hurd,

The North Shore community on O'ahu is very concerned about the proliferation of invasive species – especially the Little Fire Ants (LFA) and Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) and their negative impact on the foliage, animals, and residents of our area and the entire state.

The State of Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) has the sole authority to stop or regulate the movement of invasive pests or material infested with an invasive pest, yet the Department lacks clear, sensible rules that can better address the spread of invasive pests around or within an island. We are now finding that the CRB are moving from palm trees to non-palm trees in our area. Unfortunately, no one seems to have a clue on how to fight or prevent the spread of these evil pests. What will happen next? Infestations of our grass and shrubbery? What about our livestock and pets; not to mention our keiki. We need clear rules and the Department needs funding to fight and fine those who spread these invasive pests.

It should be illegal for nurseries and garden shops to knowingly sell plants infested with LFA or coqui frogs, bags of compost with Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles, or to sell any materials infested with serious pests. Further, HDOA should have the authority to require a nursery infested with a serious pest like LFA to control the infestation before selling infested plants and materials. The proposed changes to chapter 72 are vital to preventing the establishment and spread of the next serious invasive pest.

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture should also pass the rules that re-start the compliance program to manage the spread of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles around O'ahu in greenwaste and other host material.

Mālama 'āina,

*Kathleen M. Pahinui*

Kathleen M. Pahinui  
Chair, North Shore Neighborhood Board #27

Cc: Council Member Matt Weyer, District II  
Senator Brenton Awa  
Representative Sean Quinlan  
Representative Amy Perruso





The Senate  
Committee On Agriculture and Environment  
Wednesday, January 31, 2024  
1:00 PM Conference Room 224  
State Capitol

### Testimony in Support of SB2359

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is **in support of SB2359**, *Relating to Invasive Species*, which provides funding for the Hawaii Ant Lab (HAL) for fiscal year 2024-2025.

These funds are urgently needed to support HAL's work across the State. HAL is a world leader on researching the methods and tools for the control and eradication of little fire ant (LFA). As LFA is spreading across the State, this research is needed to support existing control needs and to develop new options for LFA response. HAL also provides extension services to help communities control impacts on their properties on Hawaii island.

For locations where LFA are not widely established, HAL's staff provides on-the-ground response to control LFA infestations or to support each island's control efforts. To achieve the local eradication of an infestation, at least eight applications of ant bait must be made at intervals over a period of a year. These baits must be placed throughout the affected area, including in trees, a process that most community members cannot meet to achieve local eradication.

HAL has struggled to secure funding for its critical work and had to furlough and reduce hours for its existing staff. LFA is still spreading on Hawaii Island, is rapidly spreading across Oahu, and there are large infestations that will need significant efforts on Kauai. On Maui, the Maui Invasive Species Committee receives significant support from the County and is able to take the lead on all LFA infestations in the County, but relies on HAL's research, tools, and collaborative help. HAL should be adding staff to address these newly infested areas while eradication may still be possible, and providing much-needed support to Hawaii Island businesses and residents, not furloughing or cutting hours for staff due to lack of funding.

It is critical that HAL has sufficient funding to staff its operations and continue research on LFA management. The additional funding for HAL proposed in SB2359 will support HAL's activities and allow HAL to retain its current staff and continue its work across the State.

Mahalo for the opportunity to support SB2359 and for consideration of our testimony.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Christy Martin".

Christy Martin  
CGAPS Program Manager

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephanie Easley".

Stephanie Easley  
CGAPS Legal Fellow



**LATE**

January 23, 2024

Subject: Testimony to the Hawai'i State Senate regarding Senate Bill 2359 "Relating to Invasive Species"

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, and Esteemed Committee Members,

I am submitting testimony on behalf of the O'ahu Invasive Species Committee (OISC) in **strong support** of Senate Bill 2359 which would appropriate funding to the Hawai'i Ant Lab (HAL) to cover funding shortages and increased staff to help manage the expanding little fire ant (*Wasmannia auropunctata*) populations statewide and protect from other injurious ant species that threaten our state.

The HAL is one of the lead agencies tasked with managing a response to little fire ants (LFA) on O'ahu and is a close partner of OISC. Together and along with other partners including the Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS), the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC), the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA), community groups, neighborhood boards, and others, the on-going multi-agency response to the expanding populations is critical to minimizing the impacts of LFA. This pest delivers a painful sting that severely threatens the agriculture and tourism industries especially, but will drastically change everyone's way of life if left to fully establish.

Ensuring that HAL cannot only maintain, but also increase staff needed to sufficiently respond to LFA, will be critical to the success of the response. If our island and our state have any chance at containing this outbreak, response efforts will need to be increased substantially.

We very much appreciate your continuing leadership and support for invasive species management. For these reasons I lend OISC's full support behind SB 2359 and thank the Committee for providing our organization with the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

---

Nate Dube  
Manager, O'ahu Invasive species Committee



# **HAWAII PEST CONTROL ASSOCIATION**

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

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

January 31, 2024

Testimony To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Presented By: Tim Lyons, CAE  
Executive Director

Subject: S.B. 2359 – RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

I am Tim Lyons, Executive Director of the Hawaii Pest Control Association and we support this bill.

The Hawaii Ant Lab has done great work in the past, providing research and methodologies regarding little fire ants. This is a very important function, not only for individual citizens but also for the industry.

Based on that, we support this bill and respectfully request your favorable consideration.

Thank you.

**SB-2359**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 11:56:54 AM

Testimony for AEN on 1/31/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joseph Wat	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As of right now, Hawai'i Ant Lab is the only organization that acknowledges a responsibility to eradicate Little Fire Ant infestations. Dependable and consistent funding for the Ant Lab is essential to managing this invasive species to prevent the immense and horrible cultural, environmental, and recreational impacts of LFA.

Unless the Department of Agriculture or Division of Natural Resources will take this kuleana on... then the small and underfunded Hawai'i Ant Lab is the only barrier to the wide establishment of this species.

Thank you for considering this bill.

**SB-2359**

Submitted on: 1/29/2024 4:30:06 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/31/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Una Greenaway	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard and Vice Chair Richards

I have been an organic coffee farmer in Kealahou for 46 years. In 2010-2011 when I was the president of Kona County Farm Bureau, the Little Fire Ant was found in a Kailua Kona residential subdivision. Myself and a few other board members, made it our mission to help the HDOA and Hawaii Ant Lab to do outreach and help educate folks in North and South Kona about LFA. That continued for a few years, but we hit many stumbling blocks. Now fast forward to 2024, and our island is in serious trouble. A large percentage of properties in Puna, Hilo and Hamakua are infested with LFA. Surfers are being stung in the water in Hilo. If that doesn't scare you, how about the fact that LFA blinds all four legged mammals, dogs, cats, horses, cows, after repeatedly stinging their corneas. One of our coffee researchers can no longer enjoy her yard near Hilo, must keep her dog indoors, and she sees LFA in the sidewalk cracks in downtown Hilo. Another researcher told me that she can no longer take her children to the parks in Hilo. Many properties in the Kona districts now have LFA infestations too. I have recently heard that they are on Oahu too.

Unfortunately, many homeowners and businesses resort to calling pest control companies to treat their properties. Many of them use contact poisons, which kill some of the ants, but do not tackle the problem in an effective way. The Hawaii Ant lab has a protocol which works better than any others.

The Hawaii Ant lab does amazing work with very little funding. They desperately need our help for further research and outreach to the public.

If you think this is someone else's problem, think again. All tree/fruit agriculture will be impacted. Coffee, ulu, cacao, mac nuts. Ants will rain down and no one will be there to harvest the fruits. Tourism too. If you are a visitor, and are stung at a resort, you will think twice about returning. Car mechanics are getting stung.

Please, please please, support this bill. All of Hawaii's future depends on it.

Mahalo,

Una Greenaway

Kuaiwi farm

**SB-2359**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 12:36:21 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/31/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Councilmember Esther Kia'aina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2359.



**LATE**

**SB-2359**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 11:40:24 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/31/2024 1:00:00 PM

<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.

**SB-2359**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 1:20:24 AM

Testimony for AEN on 1/31/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

Mahalo for supporting the Hawai'i Ant Lab in their efforts to eradicate Litte Fire Ants from our Communities. We must continue to implement, review and renew efforts that will assist in the full eradication and prevention of future incidents.

Mahalo nui,  
kimeona kane