

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
WATER & LAND**

**Friday, February 12, 2016
9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2675
RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH**

House Bill 2675 proposes to appropriate \$325,000 to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) for research related to Rapid Ohia Death. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that this appropriation does not adversely impact appropriations for other priorities in the Executive Supplemental Budget request.**

The recent spread of Rapid Ohia Death (ROD) on Hawaii Island threatens the state's most important forest species and requires urgent action. Recent surveys conducted by the Department preliminarily found 34,000 acres of ohia forest affected by this disease, which is more than double the area mapped in 2014. The Department is working closely with DOA, United States Department of Agriculture-Forest Service and the Agriculture Research Service, University of Hawaii-College of Tropical Agriculture, and others to understand ROD; as well as develop mitigation measures where possible. Due to the lack of knowledge about this disease, many questions still need to be answered before effectively managing the outbreak or providing information and suggestions to the public.

While the appropriation (\$325,000) in this bill is appreciated, it is not sufficient to cover the entire scope of planned research, but it would help sustain efforts already underway by state, federal, and private organizations. Other priorities identified by the partner agencies include planning, survey/monitoring, and coordinated outreach.

Despite a lack of full understanding about this disease, all of the activities mentioned are vital to an effective response; therefore funding needs will be ongoing. The Department will continue to work closely with DOA and other partners to share knowledge and coordinate actions so resources are used efficiently.

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
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LAND
STATE PARKS



**Department of Land and Natural Resources
Aha Moku Advisory Committee
State of Hawaii
Post Office Box 621
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809**

Testimony of
Piilani Kaawaloa
Aha Moku Advisory Committee – Moku O Keawe (Hawaii)

Before the House Committee on
Water and Land

Friday, February 12, 2016
9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

**In Consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2675
RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH**

House Bill 2675 appropriates funds for research to combat rapid ohia death. **The Aha Moku SUPPORTS this measure.**

The Aha Moku encompasses the eight main Hawaiian Islands, which in turn is comprised of 47 moku and 607 ahupua'a, each one of which is individual and unique with its own natural resources. The commonality among all of them is that the ohia tree is unique and sacred to the Hawaiian culture as a whole and with the exception of Kahoolawe and Niihau; the other islands have them where the people have used the ohia in their traditional practices for generations.

The focus of the Aha Moku System, as stated by this Legislature is to assist the State in the protection and sustainability of its distinctive natural and cultural resources by bringing forward Native Hawaiian empirical resource methodology that together with scientific expertise may further protect our natural assets. However, in the case of the ohia, we do not know where the disease came from. We do support every effort to find this out, and find a cure for this as soon as possible.

Today, it is often difficult to protect these resources because of the influx of invasive species which, because they are not native to Hawaii, often causes irreparable harm to our endemic and indigenous flora and fauna. This in turn does great harm to our cultural resources. We believe this measure is greatly needed. On our island, Moku O Keawe (Hawaii), alone, we currently have to deal with the rapid demise of our sacred ohia trees. In time, if a cure is not found, this will eventually spread to all islands. All of this directly impacts our native Hawaiian resource practices. We need to find a way together, to find a cure for this deadly disease.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony and we urge this committee pass this measure.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2016 6:22 AM
To: waltestimony
Cc: brian@hfbf.org
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2675 on Feb 12, 2016 09:30AM*

HB2675

Submitted on: 2/11/2016

Testimony for WAL on Feb 12, 2016 09:30AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Randy Cabral	Hawaii Farm Bureau	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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The House of Representatives
Committee on Water & Land
February 12, 2016
9:30 a.m., Conference Room 325
State Capitol

Testimony in Support of HB 2675

Aloha Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Cullen, and Committee Members,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) **is in strong support of HB 2675, Relating to Rapid ‘Ōhi‘a Death.**

As this Committee is aware, Rapid ‘Ōhi‘a Death is a new fungal disease that was recently detected on the island of Hawai‘i, and it is killing ‘ōhi‘a at an alarming rate. ‘Ōhi‘a is Hawaii's most important and widespread forest tree and is central to watersheds, serves as habitat for many native species, and has tremendous cultural importance. Research shows that once this microscopic fungal disease enters an ‘ōhi‘a tree, it can take a few weeks or even months for the tree to symptoms, but once the fungus moves into the tree’s vascular system, it quickly cuts off water, quickly leading the tree to dry out and die.

It is not yet known all of the ways that the fungal pathogen can be spread, although it can spread through infected soil (in the lab, 40% percent of seedlings succumbed within 6 months of infecting the soil with the disease). The fungal pathogen has also been found in wood from an ‘ōhi‘a tree that had died from the disease a year prior. The pathogen was still alive and capable of spreading with the movement of the wood. There is also some evidence that ‘ōhi‘a roots growing into each other, waterways such as streams, and even feral animals may carry and spread the pathogen from tree to tree.

The strain of this pathogen affecting ‘ōhi‘a is new to science--it has not been documented or studied anywhere else. From intensive studies of ‘ōhi‘a trees in the 1980’s we can say that this pathogen was not present in ‘ōhi‘a at that time. Therefore, researchers are racing to learn as much as possible about its biology, all of the ways that the pathogen can spread, and to identify and test quarantine methods to detect and kill the pathogen in small amounts of soil (such as potted plants shipped from Big Island nurseries) and ‘ōhi‘a wood to protect neighbor islands from these known pathways for spread. However, at this rate of spread and with the tens of thousands of acres considered infected, there are virtually no options for landscape-scale protection of ‘ōhi‘a trees in natural areas on the Big Island. Faced with this sobering information, researchers are also looking at management actions that can and should be taken to mitigate impacts.

We should note that plant diseases such as these are extremely difficult to successfully address. For example, two well-documented accounts of widespread iconic U.S. tree species being wiped out by plant diseases include the disappearance of American chestnuts from an

introduced fungal disease in the early 1900's (nearly 4 billion trees were killed and only a handful of trees remain in the wild, even today), and the 2003 discovery of an introduced beetle which is spreading a new fungal disease that is killing red bay/laurel in the south eastern U.S. The disease is on track to drive two species of red bay trees in the south eastern U.S. to extinction, and also impact the avocado industry. These tragedies and their impacts are ongoing, and we in Hawai'i need to shift our emergency-response framework and mind-set to the idea that this disease is not going away, and that we must find ways to mitigate the impacts over the long term.

The most urgent need is funding to support research positions. The current estimated need to support the priority positions and work is \$1M/year. For calendar year 2016, we have \$750,000 secured: 40% private, 40% state, 20% federal. However, the majority of these funds will be depleted by the end of 2016. The multi-agency and NGO team working on ROD are working on grant requests from federal and private foundations. State support of this work through passage of HB 2675 is integral to the success of these grant requests. Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,
Christy Martin
CGAPS

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting H.B. 2675 Relating to Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death
House Committee on Water and Land
Friday, February 12, 2016, 9:30AM, Room 325

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a private non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which life depends. The Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i. We manage 40,000 acres in 14 preserves and work in 19 coastal communities to help protect the near-shore reefs and waters of the main Hawaiian Islands. We forge partnerships with government, private parties and communities to protect Hawai'i's important watershed forests and coral reefs.

The Nature Conservancy supports H.B. 2675. We appreciate the crisis situation that exists with respect to Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD) and the acute circumstances on Hawai'i island with this disease and other pests of the environment, agriculture, and human health and well-being. We support a strong and coordinated response to ROD that is threatening the dominant native tree species in the Hawaiian forest—a tree that is central to the forests' ecological, cultural and watershed values statewide.

We also hope that providing the necessary and critical support for Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death will be additive and not prevent the Legislature, the Administration and partners from also devoting appropriate attention and funding to the full range of pest issues across the islands. We are concerned about unintended financial impacts of a piecemeal approach to invasive species funding. For example, in Fiscal Year 2007 the Legislature's provision of specific funding for coqui frog control was really a shifting of existing funds from other important invasive species programs, which then caused layoffs in the Island Invasive Species Committees and a hiatus in the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council's research grant program.

Therefore, we respectfully ask that the Committee and the Legislature also take a comprehensive approach of providing significant and consistent funding to address invasive species prevention, early detection, rapid response, control, research, and outreach priorities across the state. The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council—or the proposed Hawai'i Invasive Species Authority ([HB2270/SB2799](#))—is the appropriate multi-agency venue for this broader effort. This approach necessarily results in prioritization based on a variety of issues including human health, safety and well-being, economic harm, and the threat to the health and function of the environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2016 9:08 AM
To: waltestimony
Cc: stacy.crivello@mauicounty.us
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2675 on Feb 12, 2016 09:30AM*

HB2675

Submitted on: 2/10/2016

Testimony for WAL on Feb 12, 2016 09:30AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Councilmember Stacy Helm Crivello	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2016 7:49 AM
To: waltestimony
Cc: shyla.moon@ymail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2675 on Feb 12, 2016 09:30AM*

HB2675

Submitted on: 2/10/2016

Testimony for WAL on Feb 12, 2016 09:30AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shyla Moon	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 09, 2016 7:18 PM
To: waltestimony
Cc: jparish@hawaii.edu
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2675 on Feb 12, 2016 09:30AM

HB2675

Submitted on: 2/9/2016

Testimony for WAL on Feb 12, 2016 09:30AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Julia Parish	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Supporting HB 2675 Relating to Rapid Ohia Death House Committee on Water and Land Friday, February 12, 2016, 9:30AM, Room 325 Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD) has killed hundreds of thousands of 'ōhi'a trees on Hawai'i Island and affected over 30,000 acres. 'Ōhi'a trees are a keystone species in Hawaii's forests and are one of the first plants to colonize new lava flows. They are essential to native plant and animal life and support healthy watersheds across the State. 'Ōhi'a are an important cultural symbol for the State and the Hawaiian community. The scientific community has the dedication and smarts to combat this deadly fungus, the Legislature only needs to provide funding to support the research. The State was able to effectively support the lovely Wiliwili, now we need to protect the 'Ōhi'a.

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DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

SHAN S. TSUTSUI
Lt. Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Deputy to the Chairperson

LATE

TESTIMONY OF SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

February 12, 2016
9:30 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

HOUSE BILL NO. 2675
RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH

Chairperson Yamane and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2675. This bill appropriates general funds to support pathology research on rapid ohia death. The Department supports this measure.

Rapid Ohia Death (ROD) is known to infest at least 35,000 acres on the Big Island and continues to spread throughout that island and has not been found on other islands. It has left a devastating impact to the forests killing 50-90% of the trees in infested areas. The Department of Agriculture (HDOA) established a quarantine on August 25, 2015 to prevent its spread from the Big Island to the neighbor islands. This is under HDOA authority which enables the Department to create an interim rule to govern the transport of flora and fauna into and within the State to protect agriculture and the environment.

ROD is a serious disease of Hawaii's ohia forests and the loss of these trees would have a devastating impact on our forest lands and natural resources. The purpose of this bill is to fund research to study the pathogen that causes ROD. This research is critically needed in order to move forward with the control and mitigation of this disease.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.





UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

LATE

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Water and Land
Friday, February 12, 2016 at 9:30 a.m.

By

Robert Bley-Vroman, Chancellor

And

Maria Gallo, Dean

And

J. Kenneth Grace, Associate Dean

College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2675 – RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the House Committee on Water and Land, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 2675, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for research to combat rapid ohia death.

Rapid ohia death, caused by a fungal pathogen first identified in 2014, has spread extremely rapidly on the Big Island, from 15,000 acres of ohia forest infected by the disease in 2014, to 34,000 in 2016. Ohia makes up half the acreage, and half the woody biomass, of all the forests in Hawai'i. Loss of ohia across the state will severely impact our endangered forest birds that depend on the trees for nesting sites, and will intensify invasion of the forest by invasive plant species such as strawberry guava that use more water than ohia, with negative impacts on the watershed. From a cultural standpoint, it is difficult to imagine Hawai'i without ohia and the lehua flowers. Further, forests of dead trees will greatly damage tourism, particularly on the Big Island, and greatly increase fire hazards.

The nursery industry in Hawai'i has also been impacted by rapid ohia death, since it has been necessary to impose a quarantine on soil movement from the Big Island to prevent possible spread of the disease.

Researchers from state and federal agencies and the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) are working to address the spread and management of this severe plant disease, but their efforts are limited by resources and by the absence of prior information on this devastating and very rapidly spreading forest disease. HB 2675 would appropriate \$325,000 to increase these research efforts before the disease devastates Big Island forests, and spreads across the state.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2675.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

LATE

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Water and Land
Friday, February 12, 2016 at 9:30 a.m.

By

Robert Bley-Vroman, Chancellor

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We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2675.



Conservation Council
for Hawai'i

Hawai'i's voice for wildlife
Kō Hawai'i leo no nā holoholona lōhiu

LATE

Testimony Submitted to the House Committee on Water and Land
Hearing: Friday, February 12, 2016 9:30 am
Conference Room 325

In Support of HB 2675 Relating to Rapid 'Ohi'a Death

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the Committee.

Aloha. Conservation Council for Hawai'i supports HB 2675, which appropriates funds for research to combat rapid 'ohi'a death. However, we urge you to increase the appropriation of \$325,000 to an amount that is sufficient for research and protection of our watersheds.

'Ohi'a lehua is a dominant forest tree in our watersheds and habitat for rare and endangered species. Rapid 'ohi 'a death/wilt is a major threat to our native forests and watersheds, but it is not the only threat. Even if we are able to control or slow ROD, our native forests and watersheds will continue to decline as a result of additional threats, including introduced feral and game mammals (pigs, goats, sheep, and deer), invasive plants (such as strawberry guava, miconia, and others), plant pests, and diseases. Water and watersheds are important.

Our native forests and watersheds are worth way more than \$325,000. Please do a better job of protecting our public lands and trust resources for future generations. Provide more funding for watershed protection and invasive species control. Ask your colleagues to stop nickel and diming important land conservation programs under the Department of Land and Natural Resources and Department of Agriculture.

Please support SB 2271. Water is important.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Marjorie Ziegler



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

MĀLAMA I KA HONUA. *Cherish the Earth.*

LATE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Friday February 12, 2016 9:30AM Room 325

In Support HB2675 Relating to Rapid Ohia Death

Aloha Chair Yamane and Members of the WAL Committee:

On behalf of our 12,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **strongly supports** HB2675 to appropriate funding to combat Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death. This bill is crucial to the health of our native forests.

What HB2675 will do

This bill will help the Department of Agriculture combat the deadly and dangerous disease rapidly spreading through our forests by appropriating \$200,000 in general funds for critical research and emergency abatement and control measures. The bill also requires a report to the next Legislature.

Why We Must Save the 'Ōhi'a

'Ōhi'a is the prime constituent of Hawai'i's native forests; found in almost every ecological niche from sea level to 7,000 feet elevation. The loss of 'ōhi'a trees would devastate our forests, trigger rampant spread of invasive species, and ultimately suffocate the fledgling native tree market.

'Ōhi'a are the cornerstone of native upland ecosystems. Our forest watersheds can absorb and retain the water we use for drinking because of 'ōhi'a trees. Endangered forest birds feed on the nectar of 'Ōhi'a blossoms, snails graze on algae and fungi on its leaves, and insect communities live in its foliage. We would lose all of this if Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death is not controlled immediately.

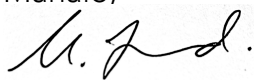
'Ōhi'a are a defense against the spread of invasive species. Because of their strength and versatility, 'ōhi'a grow in a wide range of climates and conditions. This makes them a key warrior in the battle against albezia, eucalyptus, and strawberry guava, which are known threats to Hawai'i's natural environment, public health, and safety. This dangerous, harmful trees would take over if the 'ōhi'a is lost to Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death.

'Ōhi'a is sacred to several deities of Hawai'i: Ku, Pele, Hi'iaka, and Laka. The wood was used to make ki'i, temple carvings, altars, and other ceremonial structures. The plant is used in traditional herbal medicine and to make leis – could you imagine the Merrie Monarch Festival without lehua leis? Not only would the loss of 'ōhi'a trees be detrimental to our island ecosystem but would be a huge cultural loss to Hawai'i.

‘Ōhi’a are also helping to cultivate new markets in native trees. The beauty and diversity of this tree make it a favorite choice for commercial and residential landscapes. Native plant nurseries have built whole businesses around the sale of ‘Ōhi’a. These markets would be lost if Rapid ‘Ōhi’a Death goes unchecked.

We cannot afford to lose the battle against Rapid ‘Ōhi’a Death. For these reasons, we strongly urge this Committee to move this measure forward. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. J. d.", is placed over a light gray rectangular background.

Martha Townsend
Director



LATE

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

February 12, 2016

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

TESTIMONY ON HB2675
RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH

Room 325
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the Committee:

I am Randy Cabral, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,900 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community.

HFBF **strongly supports HB1597**, seeking to manage Ohia Wilt.

Watersheds are the lifeblood of our communities. It is important not just to agriculture but to our social and environmental health. The spread of Ohia Wilt has been alarming and its' management before spreading to other islands is very critical. Many of the other islands depend on surface water for their drinking and irrigation needs. Loss of trees will severely impact watersheds.

HFBF **respectfully requests your support** of this important matter.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this important matter.

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2016 3:03 PM
To: waltestimony
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Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2675 on Feb 12, 2016 09:30AM*

HB2675

Submitted on: 2/11/2016

Testimony for WAL on Feb 12, 2016 09:30AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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waltestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2016 10:51 AM
To: waltestimony
Cc: konia808@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2675 on Feb 12, 2016 09:30AM

LATE

HB2675

Submitted on: 2/11/2016

Testimony for WAL on Feb 12, 2016 09:30AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Konia	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Honorable Committee Members, I write in full support of this measure. The loss of the ohia would be catastrophic for Hawaii in terms of the cultural meaning for Hawaiian people in particular and overall ecosystem functions. Thank you for considering my support of this measure. Sincerely, Antoinette Freitas

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