

SB 591

DAVID IGE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

POST OFFICE BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of  
CARTY S. CHANG  
Interim Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committees on  
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT  
and  
WATER AND LAND**

**Friday, February 6, 2015  
2:50 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224**

**In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 591  
RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT**

Senate Bill 591 proposes to appropriate funds out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) to support strategic control of albizia trees along critical emergency services and transportation routes. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget request.**

The Department recognizes the environmental and public safety threats posed by the invasive tree *Falcataria moluccana*, commonly known as albizia, and supports control of albizia where feasible. As noted in SECTION 1 of this measure, the Department recognizes that the interagency HISC (which is administratively housed within the Department) is working with the Big Island Invasive Species Committee on a plan for strategic albizia control. The Department recognizes that albizia control along critical transportation routes used for emergency services should be prioritized, and looks forward to working with partners on this complex problem.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments.

**CARTY S. CHANG**  
INTERIM CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**DANIEL S. QUINN**  
INTERIM FIRST DEPUTY

**W. ROY HARDY**  
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

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON SB 591

PRESENTATION TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
AND THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

BY

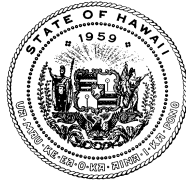
DOUG MAYNE  
ADMINISTRATOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
February 5, 2015

Chairs Gabbard and Thielen, Vice Chairs Green and Galuteria, and Members of the Committee.

I am Doug Mayne and I am the Administrator of the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency. I am testifying in **SUPPORT** to SB 591.

Senate Bill 591 appropriates funding for the control of Albizia trees along critical roadways and utilities. This is a very important emergency management initiative which will greatly increase the resiliency of our communities. By removing these weak and dangerous trees, we will reduce transportation and power interruptions and enable first responders and the population to move around more freely after disasters strike. And, in the long run, it will save money.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in **SUPPORT** to SB 591.



STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY CONTROL  
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**Testimony Supporting Intent of SB 591  
RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT**

SENATOR LAURA H. THIELEN, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND  
SENATOR MIKE GABBARD, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Hearing Date: February 6, 2015

Room Number: 224

1 **Office Testimony:** The Office of Environmental Quality Control (OEQC) strongly supports the  
2 intent of SB591, which appropriates funds for the Hawaii invasive species council to coordinate  
3 the management and removal of albizia trees that threaten access to critical emergency services  
4 and transportation routes. In addition to being costly to the economy, damaging to infrastructure,  
5 and a threat to public safety, albezia is highly invasive and displaces native plants.

6 The eradication of invasive species promotes the conservation of our native species. OEQC  
7 strongly supports sound measures that help fight or eradicate invasive species.

8 **Fiscal Implications:** OEQC takes no position on the appropriations request, deferring to the  
9 Governor's Executive Budget Request for fiscal priorities.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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**Date:** Thursday, February 05, 2015 2:51:07 PM

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**SB591**

Submitted on: 2/5/2015

Testimony for ENE/WTL on Feb 6, 2015 14:50PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Teya Penniman	Maui Invasive Species Committee	Support	No

Comments: Thank you for your consideration. Teya M Penniman

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Testimony of the O'ahu Invasive Species Committee  
Supporting S.B. 591 Relating to the Environment  
Senate Committees on Energy and Environment and Water and Land  
Friday, February 6, 2015, 2:50PM, Room 224

The O'ahu Invasive Species Committee (OISC) supports S.B. 591 that would provide funding to remove albizia trees in high priority areas. Albizia, introduced to Hawai'i in 1917 and planted across the state as part of reforestation efforts in the mid-1900s, has proven to be a danger to Hawai'i's infrastructure and public safety. The Hawaii Invasive Species Council supports many important projects including all the state's Invasive Species Committees, little fire ant projects, and Hawai'i's weed risk assessment. In order to ensure the funds for these projects remain intact, we encourage the Legislature to *add* the albizia funding to invasive species appropriations and not make it a portion of the \$6 million proposed in S.B. 1046 and S.B. 544.

Thank you for your continued support in the fight against invasive species.

Sincerely,  
The O'ahu Invasive Species Committee



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

February 6, 2015

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON  
WATER AND LAND  
and  
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON SB 591**  
RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Room 224  
2:50 PM

Aloha Chairs Thielen and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Galuteria and Green, and Members of the Committees:

I am Christopher Manfredi, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,932 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau supports SB 591. Along with other pressing invasive species control initiatives, our farmer and rancher members across the islands could benefit from a well-coordinated and cost-effective effort to manage and remove albizia trees that threaten access to critical emergency services and transportation routes.

We have noticed that there are other bills that would also allocate significant funding for invasive species control. Given that there are finite resources, HFB trusts that due consideration of each of these proposals will be afforded and that an effort will be made to prioritize the needs and equitably divide the available budgetary resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i  
Supporting S.B. 591 Relating to the Environment  
Senate Committee on Water and Land  
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment  
Friday, February 6, 2015, 2:50PM, Room 224

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*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 in these islands depends. The Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i. Today, we actively manage more than 35,000 acres in 11 nature preserves on Maui, Hawai'i, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and Kaua'i. We also work closely with government agencies, private parties and communities on cooperative land and marine management projects.*

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The Nature Conservancy supports S.B. 591 and its proposed funding to control albizia trees.

Invasive weeds, insects, diseases, snakes, and other pests are one of the greatest threats to Hawaii's economy, agriculture, natural environment, and the health and lifestyle of its people. With favorable conditions and limited competition, non-native species arrive in the Hawaiian islands to find an easy environment in which to thrive.

Furthermore, Hawai'i is exhibiting all the telltale signs of climate change, including higher air and ocean temperatures, decreasing rainfall, and more extreme weather. A 2014 report from the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant Program notes that the rate of air-warming in the islands has quadrupled over the past 40 years, and sea surface temperatures are rising. Northeasterly tradewinds have decreased, as has rainfall over the past 30 years. This past September 2014 was the second-hottest in Hawai'i since the 1940s. Three hurricanes taking aim at Hawai'i fortunately devolved into tropical storms, but Iselle still hit the Puna region of Hawai'i Island hard. In its aftermath, albizia—a beautiful but massive invasive tree that topples easily in high wind—was fingered as the primary culprit for leaving Puna a quagmire of damaged houses, blocked roads and downed power lines. At the same time, native 'ōhi'a and koa forests in the area were virtually undamaged. These same native forests are also showing that they are better at capturing rain water and recharging aquifers than invasive species.

The take home message is that maintaining healthy and resilient native ecosystems is one of our best defenses against severe weather and drought. They provide the best chance for a stable environment.

We support providing the necessary and critical funding for albizia control, but hope it will be additive and not prevent the Legislature from also devoting appropriate attention and funding to the full range of invasive species and forest management issues across the islands.

Thank you.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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## Hawaiian Shores Community Association

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Website: [www.hawaiianshores.org](http://www.hawaiianshores.org)



Date: Feb. 1, 2015

To: Senator Laura Thielen, Chair of WTL  
Senator Brickwood Galuteria, Vice Chair WTL  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair of ENE  
Senator Josh Green, Vice Chair of ENE  
Members of the WTL and EEN Committees

From: Hawaiian Shores Community Association  
Board of Directors  
M. Eileen O'Hara, President

RE: **SB591** – RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT: Makes an appropriation to the Hawaii invasive species council for the coordinated management of albizia trees on Hawaii island and throughout the State.  
Joint **Committees on Water & Land (WTL) and Energy and the Environment (ENE)**: 2/6/15: 2:50 PM, Rm #224

Dear Senators:

**Please support the passage of SB591!** The Board of Directors of Hawaiian Shores Community Association (HSCA) represents a subdivision with a well-based public water system (PWS-156) serving 1294 residential lots in lower Puna. We were hard hit by Tropical Storm Iselle on August 7, 2014; losing electricity for two weeks and water service for more than two days due to underground main lines being ripped up and broken by toppled 150' Albizia trees. Property owners in our subdivision sustained considerable **economic losses, due to damage from Albizia trees** which is continuing due to the fact that many large trees were destabilized by the nearly hurricane force winds suffered during Iselle and continue to topple and drop large limbs endangering homes, vehicles, fences, pets, and human beings.

We have been making the case for many years about the potential threat of Albizia trees which are one of the fastest growing hardwoods in the world growing up to 16' a year. In the lava type soils of the Big Island, the trees do not put down tap roots to sustain their rapid above-ground growth. In ten years, an Albizia tree can reach 150' and have a canopy of the same width due to its dependence on surface roots. This causes the Albizia tree, heavy with foliage, to be highly susceptible to any significant winds. While the Tropical Storm Iselle was downgraded from hurricane status upon reaching landfall, it came ashore with gusts of up to 90 MPH. There would have been minimal structural damage in the community, as well as minimal impacts to utility corridors, if Albizia trees had been kept in check. **The Iselle event is best described as an Alien Species Disaster since over 90% of damages**

**reported were due to the unchecked presence of this tree; not only along roadway, but throughout the small lot subdivisions of lower Puna.**

It is the role of government to intervene in market failures such as the unchecked growth of Albizia on both private and public lands that puts neighboring properties at risk of substantial damage and threatens the safety of our residents. **We urge you to do your duty as publically elected officials and pass sufficient funding to affect the control of this unchecked alien tree invasion.** Kahakai Boulevard is the main corridor into our subdivisions of Hawaiian Shores and Hawaiian Beaches; home to over 5,000 small residential lots of which nearly 50% are built out. It is a government road, not private, and one can count nearly two dozen large Albizia trees growing within the right of way (shoulders) of the roadway. How can the population be safe from harm from this escaped alien species when government is not doing its duty and removing these threatening trees from roadways and utility corridors? Three nights ago, one of these trees toppled causing an electric outage that lasted 5 hours and fried the booster pump at the water yard leaving us with repairs that will cost nearly \$3,000. These are just some of the costs of inaction by State government in dealing with this market failure.

**Please pass this bill to provide for the future safety of the communities in the Puna District on the Big Island and other areas of the State effected by the spread of Albizia!**

Mahalo,

*M. Eileen O'Hara, Ph.D.*

M. Eileen O'Hara, Ph.D. (Natural Resource and Environmental Economics)  
President, Board of Directors  
Hawaiian Shores Community Assn.

**Testimony before the Senate Committee On Water and Land and Senate  
Committee on Energy and Environment**

**By Jay M. Ignacio  
President, Hawai'i Electric Light**

**Friday, February 6, 2015  
2:50 p.m., Conference Room 224**

**Senate Bill No. 591 –Relating to the Environment**

Chair Thielen, Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Galuteria, Vice Chair Green, and Members of the Committees

My name is Jay Ignacio and I am testifying on behalf of the Hawaiian Electric Company and its subsidiaries, Hawai'i Electric Light Company and Maui Electric Company (collectively, the "Hawaiian Electric Companies") in strong support of SB 591.

SB 591 would appropriate funds for the Hawai'i invasive species council to coordinate the management and removal of Albizia trees that threaten access to critical emergency services and transportation routes. The Hawaiian Electric Companies support the bill for the following reasons:

- Albizia trees are a hazard to public safety and critical infrastructure.
- Stands of brittle, invasive Albizia trees up to 250 feet tall grow along many roadways, highways, and electric utility lines statewide. Tropical Storm Iselle brought down many of these trees, blocked roadways, and caused millions of dollars in damage to homes and important electric utility lines. Broken tree trunks continue to send out new growth creating even more unstable conditions, while seedlings are rapidly germinating in disturbed areas.
- A coordinated interagency strategy to remove narrow bands of hazard trees and surrounding source populations of non-hazard trees can prevent similar damage in future storm events, providing substantial net savings in avoided future maintenance costs and ensuring long-term control.
- A strong partnership between agencies and federal, state and county governments is essential to mitigating Albizia hazards and ensuring that Hawai'i's public safety and critical infrastructure needs are met.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

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**Cc:** [buckleyw@hawaii.edu](mailto:buckleyw@hawaii.edu)  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SB591 on Feb 6, 2015 14:50PM  
**Date:** Thursday, February 05, 2015 11:19:01 AM

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**SB591**

Submitted on: 2/5/2015

Testimony for ENE/WTL on Feb 6, 2015 14:50PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bill Buckley	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I support this bill. Albizia is a significant threat to important infrastructure and human safety on the Big Island. Albizia threats need to be addressed proactively and this bill will help significantly in that process.

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**Subject:** SB 591 Albizia  
**Date:** Thursday, February 05, 2015 1:47:52 PM

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I would like to offer support for SB591. Kauai has a growing issue with Albizia forests. HDOT is currently doing a good job of targeting the highest risk areas on the road system. However, In order to increase support for HDOT, as well as Kauai's electricity co-op, SB 591 would provide funds for large scale analysis to scope the full extent of the risk posed by this highly invasive species

Mahalo,

Bill Lucey  
Manager Kauai Invasive Species Committee

--

Bill Lucey  
Kauai Invasive Species Committee  
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**SB591**

Submitted on: 2/6/2015

Testimony for ENE/WTL on Feb 6, 2015 14:50PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Daniel Kelly	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Was hit by falling branch near Lava Tree State Park. Below is News article with a video and pictures. 808.854.1690  
<http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/25509489/falling-branch-crushes-big-island-mans-car>

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**Cc:** [DonnaBall7591@aol.com](mailto:DonnaBall7591@aol.com)  
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**Date:** Friday, February 06, 2015 5:00:03 AM

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**SB591**

Submitted on: 2/6/2015

Testimony for ENE/WTL on Feb 6, 2015 14:50PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Donna Ball	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: Please support this important bill to appropriate funding for the Hawaii invasive species council to coordinate the management of albizia trees on Hawaii island and throughout the State.

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02-5-15

Aloha Legislators

Please accept my testimony in strong and unqualified support of SB #591 that makes an appropriation to the Hawaii invasive species council for the coordinated management of albizia trees on Hawaii Island and throughout the state. Hurricane Iselle struck Hawaii Island on August 7, 2014. It was the third strongest storm to impact Hawaii since 1950, exhibiting heavy rain, sustained winds of 80 m.p.h., and gusts greater than 110 m.p.h. Estimates of the costs of damage from Iselle reached into the tens of millions, primarily due to damage to papaya crops, roads and power lines. The bulk of the damage was caused by trees felled by Iselle's high winds; which overwhelmingly consisted of 100 to 130 ft. tall stands of the highly invasive, fast-growing *Falcataria moluccana* (a.k.a. Albizia). In days immediately following Iselle the Hawaiian Electric and Light (HELCO) spent nearly \$1 million to clear roads of downed trees in the devastated areas so that HELCO employees and contractors could begin the process of restoring operation of the power grid, a process that took weeks to complete and cost many more millions of dollars. Similar costs were incurred by state and county departments of transportation, and costs to residents of the impacted areas were incalculable but comparably substantial.

As a result, a broad coalition of Hawaii's residents, national, state, and county legislators, governmental agencies, and public and private utility companies have galvanized around the need to eliminate stands of Albizia that may currently, or in the future, pose threats to public health and welfare. An Albizia Task Force has been organized and directed to provide a comprehensive strategy to eliminate Albizia stands from priority areas and control their spread and establishment. At its core, this strategy will remove hazard trees (i.e. those posing an immediate threat to infrastructure) using the most economical and effective means available (e.g., cutting down or trimming suitably and killing with herbicide), and kill non-hazard trees using herbicide applications that are highly successful and cost effective. Based on our previous and ongoing research, we are confident that the proposed control measures both will be cost-effective and will achieve the goals of protecting the health and welfare of Hawaii's citizens.

The Big Island Invasive Species Committee (BIISC) have been playing an integral role along with Hawaii County, State, utility, and private stakeholders to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to control Albizia in critical areas (e.g., energy and transportation corridors), and reduce its spread over larger areas (e.g., forest reserves and fallow land). As such, BIISC is the logical, and in fact ideal, party to implement this overall Albizia control strategy.

Support will provide the funding to BIISC to support the critically needed efforts relieve and protect Hawaii's communities currently living under the serious threats posed by Albizia. Thank you for allowing me to express my unreserved support for SB #591 and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about my testimony.







**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

**Forest  
Service**

**Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry  
60 Nowelo St., Hilo, HI 96720  
(808) 933-8121 FAX (808) 933-8120**

Mahalo and Aloha,

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Research Ecologist  
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USDA Forest Service  
60 Nowelo Street, Hilo, HI 96720  
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**Caring for the Land and Serving People**

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**SB591**

Submitted on: 2/5/2015

Testimony for ENE/WTL on Feb 6, 2015 14:50PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Hiipoi Kon	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I do not live near falling Albizia trees however I have seen and felt the impact in my community. Please pass this bill.

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**Date:** Wednesday, February 04, 2015 8:18:15 PM

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**SB591**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for ENE/WTL on Feb 6, 2015 14:50PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Julie Tulang	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Our community has tried to keep the albizia trees away from our only road in and out of our community. However, it is most helpful to the volunteers to have the "Milestone" provided. The trees are on DHHL and not our private property, so it is a lot to ask for volunteers to also purchase the "Milestone" and do the work.

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**Date:** Tuesday, February 03, 2015 4:54:45 PM

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**SB591**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for ENE/WTL on Feb 6, 2015 14:50PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kerrith King	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I support SB591

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**SB591**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for ENE/WTL on Feb 6, 2015 14:50PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rosemarie Patronette	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**Date:** Thursday, February 05, 2015 11:59:39 AM

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**SB591**

Submitted on: 2/5/2015

Testimony for ENE/WTL on Feb 6, 2015 14:50PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sherry Campagna	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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