

SCR 38

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



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

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**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committees on
WATER, LAND, AND AGRICULTURE
and
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT, AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Monday, March 28, 2016
2:45 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224**

**In consideration of
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 38
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO CONVENE A TASK
FORCE TO DOCUMENT AND COLLECT DATA IDENTIFYING ECONOMIC,
ENVIRONMENTAL, AND REGULATORY CONSEQUENCES OF CROP
DEGRADATION CAUSED BY INVASIVE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES IN HAWAII**

Senate Concurrent Resolution 38 requests the Hawaii Department of Agriculture to convene a multiagency task force, including the Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources and a representative from the Hawaii Invasive Species Council, to collect data regarding the impacts of invasive and endangered species on crops in Hawaii. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) offers the following comments and concerns.**

With regard to endangered species, the Department notes that the measure describes both invasive and endangered species as “damaging pests.” While “invasive species” are defined as non-native species with negative impacts on the environment, economy, or human health and may be correctly described as “pests,” endangered species are native species and pre-date human agriculture in Hawaii. Endangered species are protected by state and federal law, and the Department is mandated to conduct active recovery programs of these species in certain areas. The Department would appreciate clarity in this measure in describing invasive and endangered species, as we believe that describing these mutually exclusive groups as “damaging pests” sets a bad precedent and may not be consistent with protections afforded to endangered species under Section 195D-4, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). The Department would also like to note that a mechanism to address private landowner concerns about endangered species already exists

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

KEKOA KALUHIWA
FIRST DEPUTY

JEFFREY T. PEARSON, P.E.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
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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

through our Habitat Conservation Plan and Safe Harbor Agreement programs pursuant to Sections 195D-21 and 195D-22, HRS.

With regard to invasive species, the Department notes that there is no formal list or designation of “invasive species” at this time, and that the task force would need to determine which species would be included in the analysis. The Department also notes that production of geographic distribution and population trend data described in this measure would require field surveys and research that would likely require more time than afforded by the measure. The Department suggests amending the reporting date to be no later than twenty days prior to the regular session of 2018.

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

SHAN S. TSUTSUI
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SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
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PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Deputy to the Chairperson

**TESTIMONY OF SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER, LAND, AND AGRICULTURE
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT, AND TECHNOLOGY**

March 28, 2016
2:45 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 38
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO CONVENE A TASK
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DEGRADATION CAUSED BY INVASIVE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES IN HAWAII**

Chairpersons Gabbard and Wakai and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SCR38. This resolution requests the Department to convene a task force to document and collect data identifying economic, environmental, and regulatory consequences of crop degradation caused by invasive and endangered species in Hawaii. The Department supports the intent of the resolution but has strong reservations.

The Department is concerned that the task force is being asked to address a complicated issue within a very short time frame and with no additional resources. One of the tasks being set forth by the resolution is to determine population sizes, ranges, and distributions of pests and endangered species. A study of this type, for just one species, can be costly and take much longer than the time allotted. For example, a study on the impacts of little fire ants that was recently released by the University of Hawaii took years to complete. The resolution has a much larger scope as it is not specific to any one species but for invasive and endangered species in general.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.





UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Agriculture
And
Senate Committee on Economic Development, Environment, and Technology
Monday, March 28, 2016 at 2:45 p.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

SCR 38 – REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO DOCUMENT AND COLLECT DATA IDENTIFYING ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND REGULATORY CONSEQUENCES OF CROP DEGRADATION CAUSED BY INVASIVE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES IN HAWAII.

Chairs Gabbard and Wakai, Vice Chairs Nishihara and Slom, and members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Agriculture, and Senate Committee on Economic Development, Environment, and Technology, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments with strong reservations on SCR 38, which requests the Department of Agriculture to convene a task force to document and collect data identifying economic, environmental, and regulatory consequences of crop degradation caused by invasive and endangered species in Hawai'i.

Although we appreciate that the intent of SCR 38 is to obtain a complete and comprehensive review, evaluation, and recommendations for management of all impacts of all invasive and endangered species with respect to agricultural crops, urban horticulture, and natural resources affecting rural or urban horticulture in Hawai'i, this is an enormous task. Thus, we must express strong reservations about the practicality of implementing SCR 38, which appropriates no funding for this daunting task, and asks that it be accomplished within a very short six month time frame.

Virtually all of the many pests, plant diseases, and weeds impacting agricultural and other resources in the state are invasive species. Moreover, this is a moving target – a recent survey by the Department of Agriculture found that an average of 28 new insects are introduced to Hawai'i each year.

Hawai'i is also commonly referred to as "the endangered species capital of the world." Endangered species are by definition rare and in danger of extinction, although some, and particularly birds, are known to damage crops. Evaluation of all possible scenarios and impacts is a challenging task.

Comprehensive studies of the impact of a single invasive pest generally take from one to three years, depending upon the information available, as was the case with the recently completed economic evaluation of little fire ant in Hawai'i. A much more realistic approach in this case would be to focus on either a single invasive species; or, if endangered bird species are the intended target of this resolution, to craft a resolution requesting the relevant agencies and the federal Department of Fish and Wildlife to evaluate this limited problem, with a longer time frame for such evaluation.

SCR 38 rightly points out the need for a coordinated approach to both mitigation of invasive species, and evaluation of the relationship of endangered species to agriculture and natural resources in Hawai'i. However, with no funds provided and an unrealistically short time frame, we do not believe that the approach described in SCR 38 is practical to implement, nor is it likely to result in production of the information requested.

For the reasons stated above, while we appreciate the intent, we must express strong reservations about SCR 38.



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March 28, 2016

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AND AGRICULTURE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT, AND
TECHNOLOGY

TESTIMONY ON SCR 38
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO CONVENE A TASK
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Room 224
2:45 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Slom, and
Members of the Committees:

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 interests of our diverse agricultural community.

HFB strongly supports SCR 38, which requests HDOA to convene a task force to document and collect data identifying economic, environmental, and regulatory consequences of crop degradation caused by invasive and endangered species in Hawaii.

Hawaii's agriculture industry is vital to the State's economy. Increased self-sufficiency is a priority in the State but currently, farmers and ranchers suffer from the intense burdens of high overhead production costs and a continued battle against not only invasive species, but also endangered species. In order for farmers and ranchers to be viable and provide the food, fiber and energy that is the cornerstone of self-sufficiency, they must be able to contain their costs of production. All of these outside hurdles make this impossible.

Invasive crop pests and endangered species threaten the viability of farming. Throughout Hawaii, farmers are struggling to address crop loss resulting from invasive pests or endangered species, especially when there is no established or accepted method to control them. For example, the Rose Ringed Parakeet threatens various crops on Kauai,

including lychee and rambutan. The Nene Goose has destroyed countless Taro crops on Kauai and has even forced a Kamuela farmer on the island of Hawaii to shut down his farm. Hawaii's farming is clearly being threatened.

Most farmers and ranchers are not trained wildlife biologists, university researchers, or economists who can document the economic and agricultural harms caused by these damaging pests. Farmers and ranchers rely upon the expertise of the Federal, State, and County governments to provide a unified effort on how to address issues such as these.

HFB strongly believes that SCR 38 provides a holistic approach and encourages a solution to this persistent problem that threatens the viability of Hawaii's agriculture. Through SCR 38, the HDOA task force will provide vital documentation of economic, environmental, and regulatory consequences, population assessments, and statewide best management protocols to confront these crop pests which seem to be unrecognized or unnoticed by governmental agencies as threatening our agricultural businesses. If the State truly supports Hawaii's agricultural industry, then measures such as SCR 38 need to be implemented for this economic sector to thrive toward sustainability and food security.

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