



The Senate

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Sen. Solomon Presents Community Hero Award to Volunteers who Combat Invasive Species

Honolulu – Senator Malama Solomon presented Mary Begier and the Hawaii Island of Chamber of Commerce with the 2013 Community Hero Award today during the first annual Hawaii Invasive Species Council Awards.

The Community Hero Award recognizes a community member or community based group that has been a shining example of dedication to prevent and/or manage invasive species. Through more than 110 volunteer days and more than 800 volunteer hours, Mary Begier and the Hawaii Island of Chamber of Commerce helped the Office of Mauna Kea Management reach out to segments of the community which had not previously been engaged in invasive species control efforts, while at the same time provided feedback critical to designing a community volunteer program.

“Invasive species control programs rely on community volunteers and organizations like Mary and the Hawaii Island Chamber of Commerce. Their work is very important to our environment and ecosystem,” said Senator Malama Solomon, (District 4- Hilo, Hamakua, Kohala, Waimea, Waikoloa, Kona).

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The areas of Hamakua, Kohala, Waimea, and Kona -- which Senator Solomon represents -- are known for their rugged landscapes including lush forests and dry grasslands. They face a number of challenges including Coqui frogs and Little Fire Ants in Hilo and along the Hāmākua Coast, invasive plants like miconia and the Poison Devil's Pepper (*Rauvolfia*) and invasive fireweed and ungulates that harm Hawai'i Island's agricultural industries.

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(Photo Caption: Senator Malama Solomon presents Community Hero Award to Mary Begier.)

(Photo Courtesy: The Office of Senator Malama Solomon)