



**HB2546 HD1**  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES  
Senate Committee on Judiciary

April 4, 2024

10:00 a.m.

Conference Room 016

---

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HB2546 HD1**, which proposes a significant amendment to Chapter 141 of the Hawai‘i Revised Statutes, allowing the use of fine-meshed nets for the protection of plants against invasive species. **This legislation is crucial for safeguarding our delicate ecosystems and, by extension, the well-being of the Native Hawaiian community.** OHA also offers comments for this committee’s consideration.

Hawai‘i is also known as the extinction capital of the world. The extinction of plant species has resulted in the end of traditional and customary practices and Indigenous knowledge passed down for centuries that are associated with those plants. Invasive species pose a significant threat to Hawai‘i’s unique biodiversity, impacting both native flora and fauna. The use of fine-meshed nets presents a targeted and environmentally conscious approach to combat this issue. Research indicates that the deployment of fine-meshed nets can effectively serve as a physical barrier, preventing invasive species from encroaching upon vulnerable plant populations.

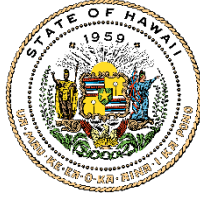
OHA emphasizes the critical need to adopt administrative rules as quickly as possible. These rules will provide needed clarification on the specific conditions and circumstances under which fine-meshed nets can be used. This ensures that the application is well-defined and aligns with ecological best practices. We would also like to encourage the committee to consider providing funding so that—upon enactment—the department will be able to create and disseminate public awareness information that will ensure communities know this option will be available and how to do so appropriately.

By allowing the use of fine-meshed nets, the State of Hawai‘i is taking a proactive and scientifically informed approach to safeguarding our native plants from the detrimental effects of invasive species. OHA urges this body to consider the long-term ecological benefits that this legislation can bring to Hawaii and its unique biodiversity.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** HB2546 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

**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

**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

**Testimony of**  
**DAWN N. S. CHANG**  
**Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on**  
**JUDICIARY**

**Thursday, April 4, 2024**  
**10:00 AM**

**State Capitol, Conference Room 016 & Via Videoconference**

**In consideration of**  
**HOUSE BILL 2546 HOUSE DRAFT 1**  
**RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

House Bill 2546 House Draft 1 allows for the use of fine meshed nets for the protection of plants against invasive species. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) provides comments on this measure.**

While the Department supports the use of additional tools to protect plants from invasive species, such as the use of fine mesh nets against coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB), it does not seem necessary to require a registration program for the purchasers of fine-meshed nets in the State. Requiring such a program could create issues for manufacturers and users of meshed nets; for example, "fine-meshed nets" are not defined in this measure and could include nets used for fishing or other agricultural purposes. The Department already regulates nets used for fishing.

The use of meshed nets to protect plants from pests was brought up to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and they unofficially stated that the netting would not be subject to the EPA's device requirements provided that the product is not made for trapping beetles nor makes any claim to trap pests. This tool is used to protect plants from CRB. This use is unofficial because the EPA has not made an official ruling on this particular device.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

**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

**WRITTEN ONLY  
TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

**APRIL 4, 2024  
10:00 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 016 AND VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2546, HD1  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2546, HD1 relating to invasive species. The bill allows for the use of fine meshed nets for the protection of plants against invasive species. The bill also requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a registration program for purchasers of fine meshed nets in the State. The Department offers comments on this bill.

The Pesticides Branch within the Plant Industry Division is the regulatory authority and state lead agency granted primacy by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) through a cooperative agreement to enforce the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). Through this delegated authority and the authority granted by Hawaii Pesticides Laws (HRS 149A), the Pesticides



Branch implements an inspection and compliance program to regulate the use, distribution, licensing, and certification of pesticides and pesticide applicators statewide.

Fine meshed nets identified in this bill fall into the category of pesticide devices as defined by FIFRA. Federal law requires devices which intend to trap, destroy, repel, or mitigate a pest be manufactured at a US EPA registered establishment. All manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of these fine meshed nets for Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle entrapment will be subject to pesticides distribution laws as laid out in HRS 149A.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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)

April 4, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**TESTIMONY ON HB 2546, HD1**  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Conference Room 016 & Videoconference  
10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

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 HB 2546, HD1**, which allows for the use of fine meshed nets for the protection of plants against invasive species and requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a registration program for purchasers of fine meshed nets in the State.

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 inconsistent with the State's goal of increasing self-sufficiency and sustainability.

Fine-meshed nets have proven to be an effective trapping tool for coconut rhinoceros beetles. This measure will allow access to resources to farmers and ranchers to help control and hopefully eradicate certain invasive species in Hawai'i.

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



### Officers

Kaipo Kekona  
State President

Anabella Bruch  
Vice-President

Maureen Datta  
Secretary

Reba Lopez  
Treasurer

### Chapter Presidents

Clarence Baber  
Kohala, Hawaii

Odysseus Yacalis  
East Hawaii

Puna, Hawaii

Andrea Drayer  
Ka'u, Hawaii

Kona, Hawaii

Fawn Helekahi-Burns  
Hana, Maui

Mason Scharer  
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros  
Mauna Kahalawai,  
Maui

Kaipo Kekona  
Lahaina, Maui

Rufina Kaaui  
Molokai

Negus Manna  
Lana'i

India Clark  
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman  
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich  
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kauai

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

The Hawaii Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports HB2546.**

HB2546 is a vital piece of legislation that will greatly benefit Hawaii farmers in their continued fight against invasive species. By allowing for the use of fine meshed nets for the protection of plants, our farmers will be better equipped to prevent the spread of harmful pests and diseases that threaten their crops. These nets will serve as a barrier, effectively keeping out invasive species and reducing the need for harmful pesticides and other chemical interventions.

The Hawaii Farmers Union fully supports HB2546 and believes that it will not only protect our local agriculture industry, but also preserve our unique ecosystem. By taking proactive measures to prevent the spread of invasive species, we can ensure the health and sustainability of our plants, crops, and environment for generations to come. We urge the legislature to pass this bill and support our farmers in their efforts to combat invasive species and protect Hawaii's agricultural heritage.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF



**WAIANAЕ COAST  
COMPREHENSIVE  
HEALTH CENTER**

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

I am Ian Ross, representing Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC), a Federally Qualified Health Center in West O'ahu. We stand in **strong support** of HB2546 HD1, an important measure which moves us closer towards allowing the use of fine meshed nets to protect plants against invasive species, notably the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB). This will have a positive impact in helping to support our local ecosystem, especially the indigenous niu, against the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB).

Our center, committed to the health and environmental well-being of West O'ahu, has established Hawai'i's largest coconut nursery. We recognize the CRB not only as a pest but as a catalyst for broader ecological threats, disrupting native ecosystems and compromising cultural legacies. CRB's presence has turned the lifecycle of our niu from one of growth to a cycle of death, necessitating urgent and effective control measures.

Fine meshed nets represent a significant advancement in our fight against CRB. They provide a barrier to prevent these beetles from drilling into the crowns of coconut trees, which is crucial not only to mitigate attacks but also to prevent secondary infections that often follow the beetles' damage. Integrated pest management, including the use of these nets, is a proactive, readily deployable solution. The ability to deploy fine meshed nets aligns with common-sense environmental management practices, integrating multiple pest mitigation strategies to protect against CRB and ensuring the long-term viability of our niu.

This proactive approach not only preserves the physical trees but also safeguards the cultural and economic sustenance they provide for our communities. It is not just a matter of conservation; it is a matter of public health and cultural preservation. Our vision of Comprehensive Care recognizes that the environment, culture, and food systems have profound impact on the health and wellbeing of the residents of West O'ahu.

We commend the Senate Committee on Judiciary for considering this legislation. We urge you to pass HB2546 and support our ongoing efforts to protect the land that sustains us.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Ian Ross  
Public Affairs Director  
[ianross@wcchc.com](mailto:ianross@wcchc.com)

**HB-2546-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2024 4:03:36 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/4/2024 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kaitlynn Felipe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kaitlynn Felipe  
91-1490 Ulaula Loop  
Ewa Beach, HI 96706  
kholt22@hawaii.edu  
March 29, 2024

Dear Senator Karl Rhoads and Senator Mike Gabbard,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for HB 2546, which proposes vital measures to safeguard the well-being, precious environment, and cultural heritage of our beloved Hawaiian Islands. As a resident deeply connected to our community and environment, I am acutely aware of the importance of preserving our coconut trees and palm trees like our beautiful lauhala, and other indigenous plant sources, which are not only essential for our sustenance but also integral to our cultural identity.

Coconut trees, palm trees like lauhala, and other indigenous plants have been fundamental to the sustenance of our island communities for generations. They provide us with nutritious food, materials for traditional crafts, and contribute to the unique biodiversity of our islands. These plants are not just resources; they are symbols of our heritage and a connection to our ancestors who cultivated and revered them. If not mistaken these plant sources are symbolic in our tourism industry.

However, the invasive rhinoceros beetle poses a significant threat to these vital plant species and, by extension, to our environment, health, and cultural heritage. These destructive pests can devastate coconut and palm trees, leading to economic losses and ecological imbalances. Furthermore, their unchecked spread jeopardizes the integrity of our delicate island ecosystems, putting native flora and fauna at risk not only to O‘ahu but to the other islands as well. The fact that we allow invasive species like the beetles and other species like the red-ringed parakeets to become naturalized is baffling. These species are changing Hawai‘i into a completely different ecosystem in what makes us completely unique in comparison to the world.

HB 2546 offers a crucial defense mechanism against the invasive rhinoceros beetle by providing for the installation of meshed nets to protect our coconut trees, palm trees, and other vulnerable plant species. These nets serve as a barrier, preventing the beetles from infesting and damaging our precious flora. By implementing this proactive measure, we can mitigate the threat posed by



the rhinoceros beetle and preserve our environment, health, and cultural heritage for future generations. Consistent education and community efforts to mitigate these invasive species and stronger reinforced measures through our DLNR and agricultural checks at ports and airports should also be considered and enforced.

In conclusion, I urge you to support HB 2546 and its efforts to safeguard our coconut trees, palm trees like lauhala, and indigenous plant sources. By taking decisive action to combat the invasive rhinoceros beetle, we not only protect our environment and economy but also honor and preserve the rich cultural heritage of our islands. Mahalo nui loa for your attention to this critical issue.

Me ke aloha nui,  
Kaitlynn Felipe

**HB-2546-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2024 8:21:06 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/4/2024 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

ANYTHING THAT WILL HELP IS A GOOD IDEA.

MESH IS NOT POISONOUS.

MAHALO!

Submitted By                      Organization                      Testifier Position                      Testify

Sage Keller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only
-------------	------------	---------	------------------------

Aloha,

I am writing to express my support for H.B. NO. 2546. This bill offers a practical solution to address the issue of invasive species in Hawaii.

Invasive species pose a serious threat to our environment and economy. H.B. NO. 2546's provision to allow fine-meshed nets for plant protection against invasive species, along with a registration program, is a sensible step forward. It inspires individuals and businesses to take proactive measures while supporting broader invasive species management efforts.

I encourage you to support H.B. NO. 2546 for the benefit of our state's ecosystems and economy.

Sincerely,

Sage Keller, Kilauea, HI, 96754

**HB-2546-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2024 11:24:16 AM

Testimony for JDC on 4/4/2024 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carol Kwan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure.