

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025
9:30 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325 & VIDEOCONFERENCE

HOUSE BILL NO. 1237
RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1237 relating to biosecurity, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture (Department) for agricultural biosecurity and the prevention, detection, and control of invasive species in Maui County.

The Department supports the intent of this measure and offers comments. The Department recognizes that Molokai and Lanai in particular have historically not had dedicated Plant Quarantine Branch (PQB) staff, which this measure seeks to rectify. Currently, both these islands do not have dedicated import or interisland movement volumes that would justify dedicated PQB inspectors. It should be noted that independent level inspection work in the PQB inspector series is currently being done at the Inspector III level. As the duties and responsibilities are expansive and diverse, allowing a level I Inspector to do the work to do the work of a level III would likely cause collective bargaining issues. Conversely, to become a level III inspector, the incumbent would either need to be an external applicant with very specialized experience, an existing PQB level III inspector transferring into the position, or a level I inspector that



completes the normal inspector progression to becoming a level III inspector. As this measure places only a single level I inspector on each island, these inspectors would not have access to higher level inspectors to train under and could not progress, or would need to work on another island their 6-month probationary period as a level I inspector and 1-year at the inspector level II, before becoming an independent level III inspector. To attempt to bridge the gap, the Department currently has Maui based inspectors go to Molokai on a routine basis. Additionally, the Maui staff work closely with the Molokai Invasive Species Committee and Pu Lama Lanai as issues arise and the Department is appreciative of the important work they do on Molokai and Lanai.

Regarding Section 3 of this measure, while the Department agrees with the intent to utilize the existing island Invasive Species Committee (ISC) structure, to fill the gaps in biosecurity for coqui on Maui and to create an ISC on Lanai, the Department believes it is not the appropriate vehicle for such a project. The Department has historically not been part of the process to create an ISC, let alone directly fund one, whereas the vast majority of the Hawaii Invasive Species Committee's (HISC) annual funding appropriation has been to the Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit of the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii, and as such the Department believes projects such as these should be effectuated through HISC.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

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TOURISM

DEXTER KISHIDA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Chelsea Arnott, HISC Coordinator on behalf of
HISC Co-Chair Sharon Hurd and Co-Chair Dawn N.S. Chang

House Committee on AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Wednesday, February 12, 2025
9:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1237
RELATING TO BIOSECURITY.

House Bill 1237 appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture (HDOA) for agricultural biosecurity and the prevention, detection, and control of invasive in Maui County. **The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (Council) supports this measure.**

HDOA is the only agency with regulatory authorities to inspect, quarantine, and carry out activities to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species. The establishment of positions to serve Molokai and Lanai will help to improve biosecurity. Both islands have been able to prevent the introduction and establishment of CRB, little fire ants, and coqui frogs through the efforts of the Island Invasive Species Committees and the Pulama Lanai Natural Resource Program.

Invasive species committees are our first line of defense against these threats. These volunteer-based, community-focused organizations are on the ground every day, actively monitoring, detecting, and removing invasive species. The work of Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC), Molokai Invasive Species Committee (MISC) for protecting our unique biodiversity. The establishment of a Lanai Invasive Species Subcommittee seems like a natural step to ensuring the island is safeguarded from new pests.

This measure is an important step to improving biosecurity for Maui County and recognizes that biosecurity cannot be done by one agency alone. The Council recommends that HDOA develop an agreement to ensure funding is moves to the appropriate entities and coordination amongst their department and the Island Invasive Species Committees in addressing shared pests. It is also important that this funding is recurring to support the efforts established in this measure and do not lapse.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.



‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems
Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.

By

Philip Williams

Acting Dean

College of Natural Sciences

And

Michael Bruno, Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1237 – RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 1237 and offers comments regarding this measure. This bill proposes to allocate funding for biosecurity and invasive species management in Maui County.

We appreciate the recognition of the essential role that the Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC) plays in addressing issues related to coqui frogs, little fire ants, and the coconut rhinoceros beetle. MISC, along with its Moloka'i subcommittee (MoMISC), is a project of the University of Hawai'i. To clarify the intent of the bill, we recommend that the language explicitly state that funding will be allocated to the University of Hawai'i, specifically to the Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit (PCSU), for the work conducted by MISC and its Moloka'i subcommittees. This clarification will ensure that the funds are directed towards effective, on-the-ground efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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February 12, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 1237
RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, 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 1237, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for agricultural biosecurity and the prevention, detection, and control of invasive species in Maui County, with a particular focus on Moloka'i and Lāna'i. Strengthening biosecurity efforts on these islands is critical to protecting local agriculture, ecosystems, and rural communities from the devastating impacts of invasive pests.

Moloka'i and Lāna'i currently lack a dedicated state agricultural inspector and quarantine facility, leaving these islands vulnerable to the introduction and spread of invasive species. Without early detection and rapid response measures in place, high-risk pathways such as the importation of plants, mulch, used vehicles, and farm equipment increase the likelihood of invasive pests establishing themselves. To date, pests such as the little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, and coqui frog have not been detected on Moloka'i or Lāna'i, making prevention efforts all the more urgent.

This measure provides funding for two full-time plant quarantine inspectors, one for Moloka'i and one for Lāna'i, to monitor cargo entering these islands. It also establishes a Lāna'i Invasive Species Committee as a sub-branch of the Maui Invasive Species Committee, ensuring that local resources are dedicated to invasive species prevention and response. Additionally, HB 1237 allocates resources to combat the growing threats of little fire ants, coconut rhinoceros beetles, and coqui frogs on Maui, where invasive species management efforts require sustained funding to protect agriculture, the environment, and local communities.

Hawai'i's biosecurity challenges are increasing due to rising global trade and tourism, climate change, and gaps in prevention infrastructure. The cost of controlling invasive species after they become established is significantly higher than the cost of prevention and early intervention. Protecting Moloka'i and Lāna'i from these threats will not only safeguard local agriculture but also preserve these islands as repositories for native species and agricultural biodiversity.

We urge the committee to pass HB 1237 to enhance agricultural biosecurity in Maui County and protect Hawai'i's farmers, ranchers, and natural resources from the ongoing threat of invasive species.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Wednesday, February 12, 2025
9:30 AM Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
State Capitol

Testimony in Support of HB1237

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is **in support of HB1237**, *Relating to Biosecurity*. This bill provides the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) with appropriations to support 2 full-time employees (FTE) Plant Quarantine Inspector positions for Molokai and Lanai and to support contracts or agreements with the Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC) for coqui work in Maui County and to set up a Lanai subcommittee of MISC.

Since its formation in 2001, the Molokai subcommittee of MISC (MoMISC) has provided on-island capacity for pest detection and rapid response and MoMISC is honored to continue this work. However, the on-island presence of a regulatory official is necessary to conduct the official duties of HDOA. On Lanai, partnership work with Pūlama Lāna'i has been critical for pest detection and rapid response, but they cannot fulfill the regulatory duties of HDOA. Funding through HDOA for MISC to continue its work on coqui frogs is also a sound strategy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to support the bill and for consideration of our testimony.

Aloha,

Christy Martin
CGAPS Program Manager

Stephanie Easley
CGAPS Legal Fellow

HB-1237

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:02:44 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Kwan	Carol Kwan Consulting LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1237. I am a small business owner working in the industry.

Carol Kwan



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 325
Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 9:30 A.M.

To The Honorable Kirstin Kahaloe, Chair
The Honorable Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

SUPPORT HB1237 RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS HB1237**, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for agricultural biosecurity and the prevention, detection, and control of invasive species in Maui County.

The Chamber notes that as an island state, Hawaii has the unique advantage of being able to prevent the spread of invasive species through isolation, allowing non-infected islands to serve as critical repositories for native plants and species threatened by infestations elsewhere. This proactive approach to biosecurity will help safeguard Hawaii's environment, economy, and culture.

We support this initiative to address critical gaps in Maui county's agricultural biosecurity and the prevention, detection, and control of invasive species in Maui County by appropriating funds for these purposes.

For these reasons, we strongly **SUPPORT HB1237** and respectfully request its passage.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.