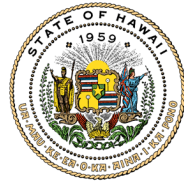


**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson  
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

**DEAN M. MATSUKAWA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY**  
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI A KIA'I MEAOLA  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9560 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026  
3:30 P.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 & VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2119, HD1  
RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2119, HD1, relating to coffee pest control. This bill temporarily reestablishes the Coffee Berry Borer and Coffee Leaf Rust Pesticide Subsidy Program and the program manager position. This bill will require a report to the Legislature and appropriates funds for the operation and implementation of the Pesticide Subsidy Program. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity ("Department") supports this bill and offers the following comments.

The Department recognizes that coffee berry borer and coffee leaf rust are significant pests that impact Hawaii's agriculture and economy for coffee. The subsidy program would help offset the costs of purchasing pesticides to combat these pests and the Department will work directly with coffee growers around the state to provide education and outreach for the appropriate use of pesticides.

The Department recommends that (1) the Pesticide Subsidy Program not be reestablished within the Pesticide Use Revolving Fund (PURF) and (2) §149A-13.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, be amended to remove subsection (a)(3) (i.e., "Funds appropriated for the pesticide subsidy program established under Act 105, Session Laws of Hawaii 2014") and "the pesticide subsidy program created under Act 105, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2014" from subsection (b)(3). The Pesticides Branch ("Branch") is a regulatory agency whose primary focus is compliance with federal and state rules which includes the registration of all pesticide products and uses the funds

Testimony of Sharon Hurd

March 18, 2026

Page 2 of 2

from PURF for the program's needs. The Branch does not want to appear or imply the promotion or endorsement of particular pesticide products.

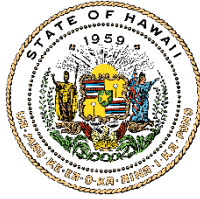
Instead, the Department recommends that the funds be appropriated to the Department's General Use funds to establish the two-year Pesticide Subsidy Program, similar to the compost reimbursement program that was established in Act 302, SLH 2022. The Branch will continue working with the subsidy program manager regarding the list of pesticides referenced in Section 3(f).

The Department is concerned with the current salary allocated for the pesticide subsidy program manager. The salary for the subsidy program manager should be similar to an Administrative Specialist IV position, SR22, Bargaining Unit 13, which totals \$66,324 per year at the lowest step, since the duties are equivalent.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
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ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of  
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
Acting Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Wednesday, March 18, 2026  
3:30 PM**

**State Capitol, Conference Room 224**

**In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 2119, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL**

House Bill 2119, House Draft 1 temporarily reestablishes the Coffee Berry Borer and Coffee Leaf Rust Pesticide Subsidy Program and the program manager position, including the position's civil service and collective bargaining laws exemption. The bill requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) to report to the Legislature and appropriates funds for the operation and implementation of the Pesticide Subsidy Program. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Supplemental Budget request.**

The Department supports the reestablishment of the Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) and Coffee Leaf Rust Pesticide Subsidy Program and the program manager position at DAB. The Department supports the safe and effective use of pesticides to control invasive pests in accordance with label instructions. This includes the use of a fungal pathogen as a pesticide such as *Beauveria bassiana* for CBB. The Department notes that there are also biological control agents including a parasitic wasp, *Phymastichus coffea* that should be propagated and released as a part of an Integrated Pest Management strategy to control CBB.

The Department suggests amending the measure to replace the word "eradicate" on page 5 line 9 with "control" to be more accurate. Treatment will reduce the prevalence of the pest but is unlikely to completely eliminate it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

BIISC  
23 E. Kāwili St.  
Hilo, HI 96720  
(808) 933-3340  
[www.biisc.org](http://www.biisc.org)



March 17, 2026

RE: HB2119, HD1

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

On behalf of BIISC, I am writing in **support** of HB2119, HD1, which temporarily reestablishes the Coffee Berry Borer and Coffee Leaf Rust Pesticide Subsidy Program and the program manager position.

Big Island farmers have been particularly hard hit by invasive species introduced in recent years. In South Kona and Ka'ū, the Coffee Berry Borer, Coffee Leaf Rust, and little fire ant have appeared on coffee farms in the last decade, each new pest adding to the barriers farmers face in producing high-quality crops. Hawai'i's coffee crop is valued at \$48.2 million (USDA 2024), reflecting the economic importance of this industry to our islands. Coffee Leaf Rust can cause severe defoliation, reducing the plant's ability to produce fruit and, if unmanaged, can eventually kill trees. The Coffee Berry Borer damages the beans themselves, lowering both yield and quality of the harvest. Together, these pests pose serious economic threats to small farms, making programs like this subsidy crucial for supporting farmers' livelihoods.

Programs like these are critical for helping farmers address these immediate threats by supporting access to effective treatments and management strategies. By assisting farmers in managing invasive pests like Coffee Berry Borer and Coffee Leaf Rust, the program helps protect crops, sustain farm income, and maintain the economic value of Hawai'i-grown coffee.

I respectfully encourage the committee to pass HB2119. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Franny Brewer'.

Franny Brewer  
Program Manager  
fbrewer@hawaii.edu



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)

March 18, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON HB 2119, HD1**  
RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
3:30 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, 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 2119, HD1**, which temporarily reestablishes and funds the Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) and Coffee Leaf Rust (CLR) Pesticide Subsidy Program and the program manager position within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

Coffee is one of Hawai'i's signature agricultural crops and an important contributor to the State's rural economy. Coffee Berry Borer continues to pose a serious threat to Hawai'i's coffee industry, reducing yields, downgrading crop quality, and threatening the viability of farms across the State. Hawai'i's coffee producers face unique challenges, including high labor costs, climate change, and limited pest-control options compared to other coffee-producing regions worldwide, which place them at a competitive disadvantage.

Coffee Leaf Rust remains an additional and ongoing concern. This highly destructive fungal disease spreads rapidly, causes defoliation, and can result in severe yield losses or tree death. The presence of Coffee Leaf Rust in Hawai'i underscores the need for continued support to help growers manage and mitigate its impacts.

The pesticide subsidy program represents a modest but targeted investment that helps growers access effective tools to manage these pests and diseases. Hawai'i's coffee industry has demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing these challenges through collaboration among growers, the University of Hawai'i, USDA, and State agencies, and through significant private investment. Continued State support is an important component of these coordinated efforts.

HB 2119, HD1 helps stabilize an industry that supports jobs, rural communities, and local agricultural production. Reestablishing this program will help coffee farmers protect their crops and maintain the long-term viability of one of Hawai'i's most recognizable agricultural sectors.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

## Officers

Kaipo Kekona  
State President



Christian Zuckerman  
Vice-President

Maureen Datta  
Secretary

Reba Lopez  
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## Chapter Presidents

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Kohala, Hawai'i

East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Ka'u, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta  
Kona, Hawai'i

Gina Lind  
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer  
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros  
Mauna Kahālāwai,  
Maui

Kaipo Kekona  
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy  
Moloka'i

Negus Manna  
Lāna'i

India Clark  
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman  
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Rachel LaDrig  
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee,

The Hawai'i 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. **HFU supports HB2119.**

The reestablishment of the Coffee Berry Borer and Coffee Leaf Rust Pesticide Subsidy Program is crucial in assisting local coffee farmers, who have long battled these persistent pests. By subsidizing the costs associated with effective pest control, this bill provides financial relief to farmers and strengthens their ability to produce high-quality coffee that is free from the detrimental effects of these pests. The reinstatement of the program manager position further underscores the commitment to structured and organized implementation, ensuring that the program operates smoothly and benefits reach the intended recipients—our hardworking farmers.

The appropriation of funds for operation and implementation underscores the bill's comprehensive approach to addressing the coffee industry's challenges. With coffee being a key economic driver in Hawaii, ensuring its sustainability through such initiatives is paramount for the well-being and prosperity of our agricultural sector and the communities that rely on it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union

**HB-2119-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:13:52 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James Kimo Falconer	Testifying for Hawaii Coffee Growers Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Senate AEN Committee,

The Hawaii Coffee Growers Association asks for your support on this important bill.

The Hawaii coffee industry still depends on this financial support from the State. Growers who were affected early in this invasive epidemic (Coffee Leaf Rust) may have found ways to right their ship by finding the proper methods to live with this pest, however, other coffee growing regions of the State are only now discovering their production losses. They need time to put together their systems for control. Systems and methodologies vary with the different environments of each growing Island. Allowing the support to continue for this extended program will assist every Hawaii coffee region in defeating this pest.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



**RE: STRONG SUPPORT for HB2119; RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

The Hawaii Coffee Association's (HCA) mission is to represent all sectors of the Hawaiian coffee industry. Our members are located throughout the State of Hawaii and positioned throughout the supply chain.

HB2119 extends the existing pesticide subsidy program within the Hawaii Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. This program has been a lifeline for Hawaii's coffee growers in the battle against invasive pests and disease; most notably Coffee Berry Borer and Coffee Leaf Rust. CLR is known to spread rapidly and leads to defoliation and tree death. Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) remains a significant threat in all coffee producing regions.

Hawaii's coffee farmers have the highest cost of production anywhere, particularly with recent labor shortages and inflationary pressures. The cost to manage these compound threat layers caused by invasive species and economic forces are squeezing Hawaii's farmers more than ever before. Yet we still compete in a global market with our counterparts across the globe who do not share many of our high costs. We respectfully ask that the Pesticide Subsidy Program be continued and be adequately funded. Please consider it a wise investment in one of Hawaii's most important agricultural crops. Your support is vitally important to Hawaii's coffee growers and the many families and businesses that depend on our industry.

We respectfully ask you to pass HB2119.

Please accept our thanks on behalf of Hawaii's hard working coffee producers. Please feel free to reach me at [president@hawaiicoffeeassoc.org](mailto:president@hawaiicoffeeassoc.org).

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryson Nakamasu", written over a white background.

Ryson Nakamasu  
President



March 18, 2026

**RE: Support for HB2119**

RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL

HDAB; Coffee Berry Borer; Coffee Leaf Rust; Pesticide Subsidy Program; Appropriation (\$)

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

The Kona Coffee Farmers Association stands in strong support of this Bill. We represent over 180 farms in the Kona districts and our mission is to protect the economic interests of our growers.

Both coffee leaf rust (CLR) and coffee berry borer (CBB) are devastating invasive issues. Economically, many smaller farms struggle to keep up with the cost burdens that CBB and CLR have introduced. This subsidy increases the participation of growers in pest management and has made control much more effective regionally. By lowering the cost of the product, more growers are likely to treat the pest, and the overall quality of the crop increases. This benefits the state in added income to its resident farmers as well as added tax revenue.

My family has a small working coffee farm in Captain Cook and like other members of KCFA we would like to thank you for considering support to this bill. Your attention makes a difference in the lives of hundreds of farmers.

Mahalo nui loa!

Mark Petersen  
President

**HB-2119-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 6:05:03 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

2119 HB RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL.

EVERYONE'S REponsibility TO SUPPORT LOCAL FARMERS THAT PROVIDE  
FOOD! PRODUCTION

**HB-2119-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 9:37:27 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am submitting testimony in **support** of HB2119, which temporarily reestablishes the Coffee Berry Borer and Coffee Leaf Rust Pesticide Subsidy Program.

I want to be clear about my position: I am generally opposed to the widespread use of chemical pesticides due to their potential harms to human health, beneficial insects, and our environment. However, I recognize that we are facing an urgent agricultural crisis, and in the short term, targeted and responsible pesticide use may be necessary to combat the existential threat these pests pose to Hawai‘i’s coffee industry. With that recognition comes a responsibility: any pesticide subsidy program must include robust oversight, clear controls, and a commitment to transitioning toward more sustainable solutions.

**The Threat Is Real and Urgent**

Coffee is one of Hawai‘i’s largest and most valuable agricultural crops, but our industry is under siege. The coffee berry borer (CBB), first discovered on Hawai‘i Island in 2010, is a small beetle that bores into coffee berries to lay its eggs, ruining yields and degrading bean quality. An unchecked infestation can reduce coffee yields by more than 30% per year.

Coffee leaf rust (CLR), a fungal disease first detected in Hawai‘i in 2020, is similarly devastating—it was estimated to have cut the Big Island’s coffee production by nearly 50% in 2022 alone. These pests have spread across the state, infesting crops in Kona, Ka‘ū, O‘ahu, Maui, Kaua‘i, and Lāna‘i.

Farmers are struggling. One Kona coffee farmer reported his infestation rate jumped from an estimated 12% to more than 40% in 2024 alone. Control methods are expensive—a single gallon of the fungal pesticide Priaxor can cost around \$750 and treat only about 15 trees, with effectiveness lasting just 45 days. Without subsidy support, these costs become prohibitive, leading to uncontrolled pest populations that spread to neighboring farms and worsen the problem for everyone.

**The Case for Responsible Pesticide Use**

I believe there is a way to use pesticides responsibly to control this threat while still keeping consumers safe and protecting our environment. Responsible use means:

1. **Targeted application** only where and when necessary, not blanket spraying;
2. **Approved products** that have been vetted for safety and efficacy;
3. **Integrated pest management** that combines pesticides with cultural controls, biological controls, and field hygiene;
4. **Clear oversight** to ensure compliance with safety standards; and
5. **A path forward** that prioritizes long-term solutions over perpetual chemical dependence.

The Department of Agriculture maintains a list of approved pesticides eligible for reimbursement under the program. This list should be subject to ongoing review to ensure that approved products meet rigorous health and environmental standards. Farmers should be required to demonstrate that they are using these products in accordance with best practices, not as a substitute for good field hygiene and other non-chemical controls.

### **What HB2119 Does**

HB2119 temporarily reestablishes the Pesticide Subsidy Program, which has operated intermittently since 2015. Under the program, coffee producers can apply to the Department of Agriculture and, if found eligible, receive reimbursement for pesticide purchases up to \$600 per acre per year for each pest, with a maximum of \$12,000 per farmer annually. The program also funds a dedicated program manager position, including an exemption from civil service and collective bargaining laws to allow for the hiring of someone with the requisite expertise.

The bill requires the Department to report to the Legislature, ensuring transparency and accountability. It also appropriates funds—\$300,000 has been proposed for the 2026-2027 fiscal year—for program operation.

### **The Need for Oversight and Accountability**

While I support this bill as a necessary short-term measure, I urge the committee to consider what oversight mechanisms can be strengthened to ensure that pesticide use under this program is truly responsible. Specifically, I ask:

- How does the Department ensure that subsidized pesticides are applied in ways that minimize harm to non-target species, including pollinators?
- What training or technical assistance is provided to farmers on integrated pest management practices that can reduce reliance on chemicals over time?
- How will the Department track and report not just program expenditures, but also environmental and health outcomes?

The state has invested in complementary strategies, including the importation of parasitic wasps as a biocontrol agent for the coffee berry borer. These biological controls, along with ongoing research into resistant coffee varieties and improved cultural practices, should be prioritized as the long-term solution. The pesticide subsidy program should be seen as a bridge—helping

farmers survive today while we invest in the science and systems that will allow us to rely less on chemicals tomorrow.

### **A Path Forward**

Coffee leaf rust and coffee berry borer are not going away on their own. Farmers are fighting an uphill battle, and they need state support to keep fighting. But that support must come with clear expectations: that pesticides are used responsibly, that farmers are supported in adopting integrated pest management, and that the state is actively investing in the research and biological controls that can reduce our dependence on chemicals in the future.

I support HB2119 as a necessary intervention in a time of crisis. But I do so with the hope and expectation that this program will be administered with the highest standards of oversight and that it will be part of a broader strategy to protect both our coffee industry and the health of our environment for generations to come.

I urge the committee to pass this bill and to commit to the robust oversight and long-term planning our farmers—and our ‘āina—deserve.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-2119-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 6:41:39 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT! MAHALO!