

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

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026
10:45 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 309 & VIDEO CONFERENCE**

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

Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

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

Testimony of Sharon Hurd

February 19, 2026

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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.



February 17, 2026

To: Chair Jackson Sayama, Vice Chair Mike Lee, and the House Committee on Labor

Subject: **HB2119**, Relating to Coffee Pest Control

Aloha,

Thank you for scheduling a hearing on this bill. We from Hawai'i Food + Policy are **in support of HB2119** and the aid that this bill will offer to coffee farmers across the islands and to other relevant parties fighting the Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) and Coffee Leaf Rust (CLR). We would, however, **ask for an amendment** to include planning for a future where farmers are supported (through education, subsidies, and technology, etc) to move away from pesticide use and towards integrated pest management (IPM), as recommended by CTAHR (1,2).

HB2119 helps coffee farmers address an immediate need of fighting against these pests, which are an existential threat to their crop, and therefore possibly their livelihood (1). The CBB can cause damage such as premature falling of berries, increased susceptibility to fungal infections for the coffee plants, and decreased yield and quality of the final harvest (1). CBB can be economically devastating for coffee growers (3). CTAHR recommends that CLR be treated with at least one spray of fungal pesticide, as well as many other holistic treatments (2). If untreated, CLR can eventually kill the entire plant (3). Both CBB and CLR are rapid reproducers and spreaders (3).

This bill provides rapid relief for farmers who currently suffer, or eventually will suffer, from the damages caused by CBB and CLR, which can be extremely destructive to their plants. **We also propose that additional section(s)** be added to include requirements for a plan, prior to the report and conclusion of the program in 2028, to help farmers move away from pesticide use and towards integrated pest management. CTAHR recommends that IPM be used for these pests when possible, and furthermore that each farm have one person dedicated to learning about and addressing such pests from a holistic perspective. To support our coffee farmers it's important to be proactive in our approach to pest management.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
The Food+ Policy Team

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2026, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.

1. <https://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/site/cbbmanage.aspx>
2. <https://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/oc/freepubs/pdf/PD-125.pdf>
3. <https://www.kauaiisc.org/pests/cbb/>



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February 19, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR

TESTIMONY ON HB 2119, HD1
RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
10:45 AM

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice-Chair Lee, 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.



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Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the House Labor 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



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.

Thank you

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

Ryson Nakamasu
President

HB-2119-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 8:45:08 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/19/2026 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Miles Mayne	Kau Coffee Growers Cooperative	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony – Ka‘ū Coffee Growers Cooperative

HB 2119 – RELATING TO COFFEE BERRY BORER AND COFFEE LEAF RUST PESTICIDE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Hearing: Thursday, February 19, 2026 – 10:45 AM

Committee on Labor & Government Operations (LAB)

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

My name is **Miles Mayne**, submitting testimony on behalf of the **Ka‘ū Coffee Growers Cooperative**, representing farmers and farmworkers in the Ka‘ū District on Hawai‘i Island. We write in **strong support of HB 2119**.

Ka‘ū’s coffee community is made up largely of **former sugar plantation workers** who transitioned into coffee after the closure of the plantations. These are multigenerational agricultural laborers who have spent their lives working the land. Many of our members are older, immigrant, or English-second-language workers who do not have the technical skills or digital access to submit testimony individually. The Cooperative serves as their collective voice.

HB 2119 directly supports **the labor force that keeps Hawai‘i-grown coffee alive**. Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) and Coffee Leaf Rust (CLR) have dramatically increased the workload and financial strain on farmworkers. Controlling these pests requires:

- More labor hours
- More frequent field treatments
- Higher physical demands
- Greater exposure to risk if farmers cannot afford approved pesticides

The subsidy program established under HB 2119 is not simply an agricultural support measure — it is a **worker protection measure**. When farmers cannot afford the necessary treatments, the burden falls on the laborers who must work in infested fields, manage declining yields, and absorb the economic consequences of crop loss.

Reestablishing the subsidy program and the program manager position will:

- **Stabilize employment** for rural agricultural workers
- **Protect the health and safety** of those applying and working around pesticides
- **Reduce economic volatility** for families who depend on coffee labor
- **Support small farms** that cannot absorb pest-related losses
- **Preserve one of the last remaining agricultural industries in Ka‘ū**

For our community, this bill is about **protecting livelihoods**, not just crops.

The previous subsidy program demonstrated clear success and strong demand. Reinstating it is essential to ensuring that Hawai‘i’s agricultural workforce — especially in rural districts like Ka‘ū — can continue to work safely, sustainably, and with dignity.

We respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB 2119.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.
Miles Mayne for Ka‘ū Coffee Growers Cooperative
Pāhala, Hawai‘i Island



February 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: 2/18/2026 9:22:21 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/19/2026 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ralph Gaston	Rusty's Hawaiian Coffee	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Ralph Gaston of Rusty's Hawaiian Coffee in the Ka'u District of Hawaii. On behalf of our company, I would like to join with our fellow coffee farmers in Ka'u, Kona, and all of Hawai'i in support of HB2119.

Our coffee industry has been dealing with rising costs since CBB was first discovered in Hawai'i back in 2010. The appearance of Coffee Leaf Rust (CLR) a decade later just raised those prices even higher - and recently we've also seen the effects of national trade policies cause those costs to rise even more. When paired with a coffee buying public that is changing in tastes and buying power, anything that can help with costs and help farmers is vital.

With this in mind, I add to the support of HB2119.

Mahalo,

Ralph Gaston

Rusty's Hawaiian Coffee

HB-2119-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 8:31:38 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/19/2026 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!!