**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

**SYLVIA LUKE**
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

**STATE OF HAWAIʻI | KA MOKUʻĀINA ʻO HAWAIʻI**
**DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**
**KA ʻOIHANA KUMUWAIWAI ʻĀINA**

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. KANAKAʻOLE**
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
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

# Testimony of
# RYAN K.P. KANAKAʻOLE
# Acting Chairperson

## Before the House Committee on
## AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

## Friday, February 6, 2026
## 9:01 AM
## State Capitol, Conference Room 325

## In consideration of
## HOUSE BILL 2139
## RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

House Bill 2139 allocates funds to the University of Hawaiʻi to research effective treatment methods for reducing Queensland longhorn beetle populations. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure, provided it does not replace or adversely impact priorities outlined in the Executive Supplemental Budget request.**

*Acalolepta aesthetica,* often called the Queensland longhorn beetle (QLB), poses a serious threat to many tropical plant species in Hawaiʻi. QLBs tend to attack stressed, weakened, and dying trees. Larvae bore into trunks and branches as they develop, which can severely weaken small trees. Repeated attacks may eventually kill the trees. Of particular concern to the Department, federal researchers have confirmed that QLBs have been found attacking the native plant alaheʻe. This invasive beetle most often infests culturally important plants in Hawaiʻi, such as kukui and ʻulu. It has also wiped out cacao trees on the east side of Hawaiʻi Island, causing several cacao farmers to abandon the crop.

By 2026, nearly 20 plant species have been identified as larval hosts for QLB in East Hawaiʻi. As this invasive beetle spreads further, the list of vulnerable plants is likely to grow.

There are no well-known traditional pesticides that effectively control tree-larva infestations over the long term. However, when integrated into a pest management program, active systemic

insecticide treatments at the appropriate stage of beetle development, combined with cultural and mechanical controls, may provide reliable management options.

Hawai‘i requires effective long-term management tools and integrated pest management programs to identify, treat, and reduce QLB populations at all life stages. Therefore, the Department strongly endorses funding further research on QLB to properly address this significant invasive threat.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Friday, February 6, 2026 at 9:01 a.m.
By
Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience
and
Vassilis Syrmos, PhD
Interim Provost
University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa

HB 2139 – RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony offering comments on HB 2139 relating to Invasive Species.

The measure appropriates funds to the University of Hawaiʻi to conduct a study on effective treatment methods to reduce populations of the Queensland Longhorn Beetle.

High infestation levels of Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) are reported on several important Hawaiian canoe plants, and increased damage to tropical fruit trees such as avocado and cacao that have detrimental economic impact. Currently, there is no single proven, widely applicable control method for QLB. University of Hawaiʻi College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) entomologists in collaboration with USDA-ARS scientist in Hilo are evaluating treatments against QLB under controlled laboratory conditions with future field trials to validate the laboratory findings. Also, scientists are developing a model to predict the pest's population density across various hotspots on Hawaiʻi Island and understand cyclic patterns of QLB and deploy treatments that would deter their laying of eggs on tree trunks. CTAHR looks forward to continued collaboration with USDA-ARS in developing an effective and sustainable integrated pest management approach to manage the population pressure and the damaging impacts of QLB on Hawaiʻi Island, and prevent further spread of QLB to other Hawaiian Islands. CTAHR appreciates the support of the legislature in the fight against invasive species. The appropriations in HB 2139 will support statewide community assets.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the measure.

**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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2026
9:01 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325 & VIDEO CONFERENCE

## HOUSE BILL NO. 2139
## RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2139 relating to invasive species. This bill appropriates monies to the University of Hawai'i to conduct a study on effective treatment methods to reduce populations of the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai'i.

QLB is a pest that targets not only agricultural crops such as cacao, avocado, and citrus, but also plants of significant cultural value in Hawaiian culture, such as kukui and 'ulu. The Department recognizes the importance of having a diverse range of management strategies and treatment methods to effectively address this threat. This includes supporting research and innovation to identify effective, environmentally responsible solutions. Therefore, the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity supports this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**
**THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE**
**REGULAR SESSION OF 2026**

**COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**
**Rep. Cory M. Chun, Chair**
**Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair**

**Friday, February 6, 2026**
**9:01 AM**
**Conference Room 325 & Videoconference**
**State Capitol**
**415 South Beretania Street**

## RE: HB2139 RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES.

My name is Eric S. Tanouye and I am the President for the Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association. HFNA is a statewide umbrella organization with approximately 350 members. Our membership is made up with breeders, hybridizers, propagators, growers, shippers, wholesalers, retailers, educators, and the allied industry, which supports our efforts in agriculture.

The Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association (HFNA) **SUPPORTS House Bill 2139** appropriates funds to the University of Hawai‘i to conduct a study on effective treatment methods to reduce populations of the Queensland Longhorn Beetle

We appreciate any efforts to help strengthen and enforce Biosecurity. The Long Horn Beetle has started to become a concern for our Floriculture Nurserymen and Women. We support this pro-active attempt to conduct a study so we can better understand how to fight and repel this invasive pest.

We ask that you support our industry and agriculture, so that we may continue to bring the beauty of Hawaii to others through flowers and ornamentals.

If you have any questions at this time, I would be happy to discuss them and can be reached by phone at 808-959-3535 ext 2627, cell 960-1433 and email eric@greenpointnursery.com.

Supporting Agriculture and Hawaii,

Eric S. Tanouye
President
Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association

cgaps
STOP THE SILENT INVASION

COORDINATING GROUP ON
ALIEN PEST SPECIES

House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Friday, February 6, 2026
9:01 AM Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
State Capitol

**Testimony in Support of HB2139**

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

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is **in support of HB2139,** *Relating to Invasive Species*, which provides funds to the University of Hawaii to study effective treatment methods to reduce populations of the Queensland Longhorn beetle (QLB).

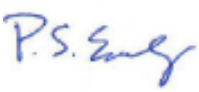
As noted in the bill, QLB can damage or kill a number of agriculturally and culturally significant tree species, including breadfruit, kukui, citrus, cacao, avocado, and many others. At this time, QLB are found in limited areas of Hawaii Island. Unfortunately, there is no treatment for QLB infestation. The only control method is to destroy infested trees, chip them in place, and avoid moving infested material to new areas.

The funds provided in HB2139 will allow the University of Hawaii to study effective treatments for QLB to reduce population numbers, and, hopefully, prevent the spread of the pest to new areas and islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and to support HB2139.

Aloha,

Christy Martin
CGAPS Program Manager



Stephanie Easley
CGAPS Legal Fellow

P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 6, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 2139**
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:01 AM

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice-Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawaiʻi Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawaiʻi's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

**The Hawaiʻi Farm Bureau supports HB 2139,** which appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii to conduct a study on effective treatment methods to reduce populations of the Queensland Longhorn Beetle.

The Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) is an invasive pest that targets many agriculturally important and culturally significant plants, including ʻulu, cacao, avocado, citrus, hibiscus, and kukui. The first known detection in Hawaiʻi occurred in Puna in 2009, and since then, it has expanded its host range and is now established in Hilo and throughout the Hāmākua Coast, with confirmed presence as far north as Honokaʻa and Āhualoa. Once established, QLB infestations can result in severe damage or death of host plants.

Although the Queensland Longhorn Beetle is a relatively newer invasive threat compared to other pests Hawaiʻi has faced, its spread underscores a familiar and concerning pattern. When invasive species are not addressed early and effectively, they become far more costly and difficult to manage over time. Farmers and ranchers are often the first to experience these impacts directly, through lost production, increased management costs, and reduced viability of certain crops.

HB 2139 represents a proactive step by investing in research to identify effective treatment and control methods before this pest becomes further entrenched statewide. Supporting research through the University of Hawaiʻi is consistent with past efforts to

strengthen Hawai‘i’s invasive species response by pairing science-based solutions with on-the-ground agricultural realities.

More broadly, this measure highlights the need for Hawai‘i to continue strengthening its biosecurity and invasive species prevention systems. Without sustained and coordinated efforts to address invasive species at all stages, prevention, detection, research, and response, Hawai‘i will continue to face new pest introductions that threaten agricultural production. This directly undermines shared goals such as increasing local food production, expanding Farm to School and institutional purchasing programs, and strengthening food system resilience.

HFB supports HB 2139 as part of a larger strategy to protect Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, environment, and food security. Addressing invasive species early and effectively is essential if we expect farmers and ranchers to meet the State’s long-term agricultural goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important measure.

HFUU
Hawai'i Farmers Union United
Kaua'i · O'ahu · Moloka'i · Maui · Hawai'i

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems 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 HB2139.**

Since 2014, the Queensland Longhorn Beetle has expanded its host range to nearly 20 species, including critical food security staples like 'ulu, avocado, and citrus. Without the treatment methods funded by this bill, these foundational crops face potential statewide collapse. This wood-boring pest kills mature trees, effectively wiping out the generational equity and economic viability of small-scale diversified farms in Puna and across East Hawaii.

Appropriating funds to the University of Hawaii for population reduction studies provides the necessary data to move from reactive crisis management to proactive eradication, shifting the burden of biosecurity off the individual farmer and onto a coordinated state response.

Invasive species are persistent threat to the economic survival of Hawaii's agricultural sector, early rapid action is the necessary response.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heaivilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

HAWAI'I FOOD+ POLICY
Honolulu, HI 96813
food@purplemaia.org

February 4, 2026

To: Chair Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair Matthias Kusch, and the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Subject: HB2139, Relating to Invasive Species

Aloha,

I am writing in **strong support of HB2139**, which appropriates funding to the University of Hawai'i to conduct a study on effective treatment methods to reduce populations of the Queensland longhorn beetle (Acalolepta aesthetica).

The Queensland longhorn beetle is a highly destructive invasive species that poses serious risks to Hawai'i's agricultural production, native forests, and culturally significant trees. The wood-boring insect has already expanded its host range to important crops such as 'ulu (breadfruit), cacao, avocado, citrus, as well as culturally significant species like kukui. During its larval stage, it bores deep into tree trunks of its host, causing internal damage by feeding, ultimately compromising the structural integrity of the tree that may even lead to plant death.

If left unmanaged, the continued spread of this invasive beetle threatens not only farmers and local food systems, but also broader ecosystem health. Research has shown that invasive wood-boring insects can accelerate forest decline, reduce biodiversity, and undermine land stewardship efforts. Intervention through research-based management strategies is critical to preventing widespread and irreversible damage further from its current state.

By investing in locally driven research through the University of Hawai'i and supporting their capacity to identify effective treatment methods, we can ensure such research and solutions are ideal to Hawai'i's specific ecological conditions and agricultural realities. This approach can help inform future control efforts, protect vulnerable crops, and preserve Hawai'i's agricultural lands and native ecosystems against this invasive species.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to pass HB2139, which supports invasive species prevention related to the Queensland longhorn beetle, protects agriculture, and helps conserve Hawai'i's lands and resources.

Mahalo,
Brandon Kinard & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

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**[1]** U.S. Geological Survey. (n.d.). Invader of Hawai'i: Queensland longhorn beetle (Acalolepta aesthetica). Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center.
**https://www.usgs.gov/pacific-island-ecosystems-research-center/science/invader-hawaii-queensland-longhorn-beetle#data**

**[2]** Hawai'i Department of Agriculture. (2020). New Pest Advisory: Acalolepta aesthetica (Queensland longhorn beetle).
**https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2020/02/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-2-3-2020.pdf**

**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.

BIISC
23 E. Kawili St.
Hilo, HI 96720
(808) 933-3340
www.biisc.org

BIG ISLAND INVASIVE SPECIES COMMITTEE

Feb 5, 2026

LATE

House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems Hearing
RE: HB2139

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

On behalf of the Big Island Invasive Species Committee (BIISC), I write in strong support of HB2139. We are in dire need of dedicated researchers to assist with battling the Queensland Longhorn Beetle or QLB (*Acololepta aesthetica*) to protect our natural resources on the Big Island.

As an organization that deals with many invasive pests, we must emphasize how alarming the QLB invasion is. While many bugs are fairly host specific - even the high profile CRB has a relatively narrow host profile of palms and a handful of plants - QLB has been confirmed in more than 15 relatively unrelated species of plants in Hawaii, with several more suspected to be hosts. Many agricultural and landscape plants are on the list, including ulu (breadfruit), multiple varieties of citrus, cycads, hibiscus, mulberry, passionfruit, croton, elderberry, but by far the most critically affected species has been cacao. Cacao farmers here tend to be small-scale agriculturalists, supplying a high quality crop to create a unique, value-added product in the form of award-winning chocolate. It is a heartening success story - until those farmers relay stories of grueling hours spent meticulously searching every branch of every tree, trying to yank out the larvae that are girdling trees to death just under the bark. Multiple farmers have told me they either gave up on cacao, or have sold their farms, unable to keep up with the damage and demands of QLB.

A recent study published by USGS researchers in Hawaii found only one tree is more appealing to QLB than cacao - our official state tree, the kukui. Kukui is one of the original species brought by Polynesian voyagers over 1,000 years ago. It holds deep significance in Hawaiian culture and is an integral part of the landscapes that shape Hawaii. At least one native species, the alahe'e, has also been identified as a host for QLB, and the only reason we do not know whether QLB attacks other natives is because there has been no research to determine this. Natural areas have not yet been surveyed to determine the extent of QLB infestation. In the ten years since it was first known to be naturalized here, QLB has rapidly expanded its range from central Puna, through Hilo, and along the Hamakua coast. It is now present in an area of our island that exceeds the size of the entire island of Oahu.

Before QLB arrived in Hawaii, it had never shown up as a pest elsewhere in the world, so there was little knowledge available. Through the generosity and cooperative efforts of several different programs, including USDA ARS and USFS researchers in Hilo and UH-Hilo faculty and students, there have been some gains in learning more about QLB and identifying at least one promising control (entomopathogenic nematodes) has developed. Now is the time to build on those efforts and move forward with dedicated researchers who can tackle this insect and develop the methods needed to find and fight QLB. It is only a matter of time before QLB arrives on other islands, and we should arm ourselves with the understanding and tools that are needed to mount an effective response.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Franny Brewer, Program Manager

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/6/2026 7:24:18 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

LATE

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nancy Redfeather | Ka Ohana O Na Pua | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Mahalo Nui for hearing HB 2139 with the committee of Agriculture & Food Systems.

Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) has had a severe negative impact on agriculture in East Hawai‘i, targeting plants like ‘ulu, cacao, and citrus. And as we know so well, it will onoy be a matter of time before it is Island wide.

Nematode biocontrol offers a promising solution, I listened to the CTAHR workshop last night, but we need to invest in the laboratory facilities that will enable our scientists to expand these new and innovative solutions. The facilities would also be able to test and find solutions for other beetle species that are devastating our food crops. Crops we will need to feed the people here in the future.

if we are to control QLB populations before the beetle spreads to the rest of Hawai‘i and other islands. HB 2139 would support implementing this biocontrol at a larger scale. Please help us fight invasive pests in Hawai‘i by scheduling HB 2139.

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:09:19 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chuck Chimera | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. I am writing in support of H.B. 2139, which would appropriate funding to the University of Hawai‘i to study effective treatment methods to reduce populations of the Queensland longhorn beetle.

This issue is deeply personal to me. In my own yard, I have ‘ulu, kukui, avocado, and several citrus trees—exactly the kinds of trees that are known hosts for the Queensland longhorn beetle. These trees are not just plants; they provide food, shade, cultural connection, and resilience for my household. Knowing that this destructive pest has already been documented attacking ‘ulu and continues to expand its host range is alarming, and it makes the threat feel very real and immediate.

Beyond my own property, I am even more concerned about the statewide impacts if Queensland longhorn beetle populations are left unchecked. This pest threatens agriculturally important crops, culturally significant trees, and the health of our native and agroforestry systems across Hawai‘i. Investing now in research to identify effective treatment and management strategies is a proactive and necessary step to protect our food systems, forests, and communities before the damage becomes irreversible.

Mahalo for your leadership and for considering this important measure. I respectfully urge your support of H.B. 2139.

Sincerely,

Chuck Chimera
Honoka‘a, Hawai‘i

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:07:19 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Taylor Kim | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**In referring to HB2139, I am in support of efforts to research potential treatments for the Queensland longhorn beetle. Hawai'i is constantly dealing with the potential threats introduced species may pose to humans and to wildlife; In the case of the Queensland Longhorn, which was first found in Puna on the Island of Hawai'i in 2009, the behaviors exhibited by this species display similar destructive tendencies as the Coconut Rhinoceros beetle. The larvae of both are known to bore into wood and weaken the host tree from within, but while the Coconut Rhinoceros prefers Palms, and agricultural plants such as Banana and Sugarcane, The Queensland Longhorn has displayed a preference for tree species like Ulu, Kukui, Avocado, and even ornamental species like Crotons; this gives the beetle the potential to spread through local gardens and markets, and invade beyond Puna with the same kind of destruction the Rhinoceros beetle possesses. By researching this beetle, efforts to reduce and control potential spread and impact can be developed, and further information on the beetle itself and the methods of controlling infestation can be made available for the public to learn.**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:17:40 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:49:35 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sherry Pollack | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support HB2139 that appropriates funds to the University of Hawai‘i to conduct a study on effective treatment methods to reduce populations of the Queensland Longhorn Beetle. We already are seeing the devastation caused by other invasive species. We need to stay on top of this.

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:21:41 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Emma Stierhoff | Individual | Support | Remotely Via Zoom |

Comments:

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

My name is Emma Stierhoff, and I am a Lead Ecological Technician at the University of Hawai‘i Hilo under the Liko Nā Pilina Restoration Project. I am writing to express my support of HB 2139, which will allocate funding to essential research needed to address the growing threat posed by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. As QLB spreads across East Hawai‘i, it has been devastating to farmers who are losing cacao, citrus, avocado, and several other crop plants to these larvae. By targeting many profitable crops on which local farmers depend, QLB has the potential to cause millions of dollars in losses to Hawai‘i farmers. In a 2025 survey by the Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture, the top issue identified by Hawai‘i growers was invasive species and pest management. QLB also has ecological consequences. At our restoration site in Keaukaha, we have seen widespread mortality of kukui and ‘ulu trees as a result of QLB damage. The death of these key canopy trees allows for invasive plants to move in and take over the forest. We must address this issue to mitigate the harm QLB can cause to local farms, forests, and community spaces.

Nematode biocontrol offers a promising solution to the issue of QLB. In an approach developed by scientists at USDA-ARS, locally isolated nematodes, *Heterorhabditis indica,* are injected into QLB-infested trees, where they then selectively target and kill the larvae. Research we did on kukui and ‘ulu trees in the summer of 2025 found that in most cases, nematode treatment either reduces or eliminates QLB infection. Numerous accounts from local growers also reflect the effectiveness of this treatment. Additionally, *H. indica* are non-toxic and safe to other organisms like cattle and their human handlers. This biocontrol gives us an opportunity to proactively control QLB before it spreads across Hawai‘i and to other islands.

While this biocontrol is effective, it remains very time intensive and often more than one treatment is necessary to eliminate QLB in the tree altogether. It is therefore essential that we invest in research on different treatment methods that might be faster or more effective. This kind of testing is necessary to develop procedures to scale up the treatment of trees on large areas of land and to assist local farmers. Such research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawai‘i and support growers in protecting their trees using a non-toxic method. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually makes it to other islands.

Please vote for HB 2139 to help mitigate the spread of Queensland Longhorn Beetle in Hawai‘i, supporting our local farmers and our ‘āina.

Mahalo nui for your time,

Emma Stierhoff

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:34:00 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Vi Girbino | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

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

My name is Vi Girbino, resident of Papaikou on Hawai'i Island and an agroforestry manager for diverse food systems in Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local farms, forests, and community spaces, and it needs to be controlled. **It already forced us to cull over 50 mature kukui trees on our farm last year.**

As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed.

This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H. indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ‘ulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.
However, **more research is needed if we hope to control the spread of QLB. HB 2139 would fund research into different methods of applying H. indica to infected trees to make it less time consuming and more effective for land managers to apply this low-cost approach**. This research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawai‘i and support growers in protecting their trees. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually makes it to other islands. Proactive action at the state level will protect the economic vitality of Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and reduce long-term costs to local growers.

Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural communities.

Sincerely,
Vi Girbino

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:41:56 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Thea Shapiro | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,
My name is Thea Shapiro, and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local farms, forests, and community spaces.
As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed.
This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H. indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ‘ulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.
However, more research is needed if we hope to control the spread of QLB. HB 2139 would fund research into different methods of applying H. indica to infected trees to make it less time consuming and more effective for land managers to apply this low-cost approach. This research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawai‘i and support growers in protecting their trees. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually makes it to other islands. Proactive action at the state level will protect the economic vitality of Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and reduce long-term costs to local growers. Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural communities.
Sincerely,

Thea Shapiro

96778

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:59:13 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lily Stein | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

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

My name is Lily, and I am a resident of Hilo on Hawai‘i. I am writing to urge you to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local farms, forests, and community spaces.

As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed.

This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H. indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ‘ulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.

However, more research is needed if we hope to control the spread of QLB. HB 2139 would fund research into different methods of applying H. indica to infected trees to make it less time consuming and more effective for land managers to apply this low-cost approach. This research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawai‘i and support growers in protecting their trees. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually makes it to other islands. Proactive action at the state level will protect the economic vitality of Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and reduce long-term costs to local growers.

Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural communities.

Sincerely,
Lily Stein

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:44:22 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| raine pacifico | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

1. Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee, My name is Raine Pacifico, and I am a resident of Hilo on the big island. I strongly support this bill because the health of our islands are deeply important to me. I am writing to urge you to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local farms, forests, and community spaces. As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed. This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H. indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ‘ulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.
2. However, more research is needed if we hope to control the spread of QLB. HB 2139 would fund research into different methods of applying H. indica to infected trees to make it less time consuming and more effective for land managers to apply this low-cost approach. This research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawai‘i and support growers in protecting their trees. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually makes it to other islands. Proactive action at the state level will protect the economic vitality of Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and reduce long-term costs to local growers. Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural communities.

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:38:51 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| kimberly patterson | Hawaii Academy of Arts and Science PCS | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

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

My name is Kimberly Patterson, and I am a resident of Pāhoa in Lower Puna on the island of Hawai‘i. I am also a garden teacher at Hawai‘i Academy of Arts and Science, where I work closely with our students to care for our campus gardens and trees. I am writing in strong support of House Bill 2139, which would provide critical funding to address the growing threat of the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i.

At our school, the impact of QLB is not abstract—it is something our students see every day. We have been actively working to save our kukui and ‘ulu trees across our campus and in our school garden. These trees are central to our learning spaces, our cultural practices, and our sense of connection to ‘āina. Watching them decline due to this invasive pest has been heartbreaking for our students, many of whom have grown up with these trees as part of their daily school experience.

The nematode biocontrol program has already made a meaningful difference for us. Through this work, our kukui and ‘ulu trees have shown signs of recovery, and students have been able to witness firsthand that science-based solutions can protect our environment. However, this insulation and treatment work must continue. Without sustained funding and research, we risk losing these trees entirely—especially our kukui trees, which are being heavily impacted and are dying across our region.

This program has also become a powerful educational experience for our high school students. They are not only learning about invasive species and ecosystem health in theory—they are learning the science behind biocontrol methods and applying them themselves. Our students have participated directly in insulating and treating infected trees, collecting observations, and monitoring tree health over time. Through this hands-on work, they have developed a deeper sense of kuleana and a stronger commitment to being stewards of the land here in Hawai‘i.

QLB targets many agriculturally important crops, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees such as kukui. As larvae burrow into mature trees, they cause severe damage that often leads to tree death. In East Hawai‘i, this has resulted in increased losses for farmers and land managers, and as QLB continues to spread, it poses a serious threat to food security and community green spaces statewide.

HB 2139 would allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo to continue their important work studying Heterorhabditis indica, a locally sourced nematode originally collected from Hilo Bay sands, as a biocontrol for QLB. USDA ARS research has demonstrated its effectiveness, and early results from a 2025 University of Hawai‘i at Hilo pilot study showed that nematode applications reduced or eliminated QLB infections in 74.2% of kukui trees and 80% of ‘ulu trees. For such a new approach, these results are extremely promising.

Additional research is still needed to improve application methods and ensure this low-cost, environmentally responsible solution can be widely used. HB 2139 would help make this work more effective and accessible, not only protecting trees in East Hawai‘i, but also preparing our state should QLB spread to other islands.

For our students at Hawai‘i Academy of Arts and Science, this work represents hope—hope that the trees they care for will survive, and that their efforts to protect the land truly matter. Supporting HB 2139 is an investment not only in our forests and farms, but in the next generation of environmental stewards.

Mahalo nui loa for your time, consideration, and commitment to protecting Hawai‘i’s ‘āina and communities.

Respectfully,
Kimberly Patterson
Pāhoa, Hawai‘i
Garden Teacher, Hawai‘i Academy of Arts and Science

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:59:32 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Waileia Tupou | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

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

My name is Waileia Tupou, and I am a resident of Kaimukī, Oʻahu. I am writing to urge you to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawaiʻi. QLB targets many agriculturally important plants, including ʻulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawaiʻi is causing increasing damage to local farms, forests, and community spaces. As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east Hawaiʻi are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to food producers across Hawaiʻi and must be addressed.

This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawaiʻi in Hilo to continue research on the effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H.indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawaiʻi at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ʻulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.

However, more research is needed if we hope to control the spread of QLB. HB 2139 would fund research into different methods of applying H. indica to infected trees to make it less time-consuming and more effective for land managers to apply this low-cost approach. This research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawaiʻi and support growers in protecting their trees. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually makes it to other islands. Proactive action at the state level will protect the economic vitality of Hawaiʻi's agricultural sector and reduce long-term costs to local growers.

Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for

generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural communities.

Sincerely,

Waileia Tupou

96816

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:34:13 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Collin Cabatbat | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

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

I am a resident of Kea'au on the Big Island. I am writing to urge you to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local farms, forests, and community spaces.

As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed.

This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H. indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ‘ulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.

However, more research is needed if we hope to control the spread of QLB. HB 2139 would fund research into different methods of applying H. indica to infected trees to make it less time consuming and more effective for land managers to apply this low-cost approach. This research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawai‘i and support growers in protecting their trees. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually makes it to other islands. Proactive action at the state level will protect the economic vitality of Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and reduce long-term costs to local growers.

Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural communities.

Sincerely,

Collin

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 7:40:40 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Johnnie-Mae L. Perry | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry Support

2139 HB RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES.

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:11:18 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elizabeth Scott | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

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

My name is Elizabeth Scott, and I am a resident of Puna on Big Island. I am writing to urge you to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local farms, forests, and community spaces.

As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed.

This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H. indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary

results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ‘ulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.

However, more research is needed if we hope to control the spread of QLB. HB 2139 would fund research into different methods of applying H. indica to infected trees to make it less time consuming and more effective for land managers to apply this low-cost approach. This research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawai‘i and support growers in protecting their trees. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually makes it to other islands. Proactive action at the state level will protect the economic vitality of Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and reduce long-term costs to local growers. Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural communities.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Scott

96778

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:41:01 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| skyler | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is [SkylerFaught], and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

**such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local**

**farms, forests, and community spaces.**

**As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east**

**Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or**

**death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to**

**food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed.**

**This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the**

**effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be**

**proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes**

**widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H. indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ‘ulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.**

**However, more research is needed if we hope to control the spread of QLB. HB 2139 would fund research into different methods of applying H. indica to infected trees to make it less time consuming and more effective for land managers to apply this low-cost approach. This research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawai‘i and support growers in protecting their trees. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually makes it to other islands. Proactive action at the state level will protect the economic vitality of Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and reduce long-term costs to local growers.**

**Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural**

**communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**[SkylerFaught]**

**[96778]**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:41:03 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Farrah hamilton | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is Farrah Hamilton, and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

**such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local**

**farms, forests, and community spaces.**

**As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east**

**Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or**

**death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to**

**food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed.**

**This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the**

**effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be**

**proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H. indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ‘ulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.**

**However, more research is needed if we hope to control the spread of QLB. HB 2139 would fund research into different methods of applying H. indica to infected trees to make it less time consuming and more effective for land managers to apply this low-cost approach. This research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawai‘i and support growers in protecting their trees. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually makes it to other islands. Proactive action at the state level will protect the economic vitality of Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and reduce long-term costs to local growers.**

**Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for**

**generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**Farrah Hamilton**

**96778**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:43:21 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arianie Pavao | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is Arianie Pavao, and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

**such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local**

**farms, forests, and community spaces.**

**As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east**

**Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or**

**death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to**

**food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed.**

**This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the**

**effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be**

**proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes**

**widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H. indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ‘ulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.**

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**Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural**

**communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**Arianie Pavao**

**96778**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:43:22 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| ayana | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is Ayana-ray, and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

**such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local**

**farms, forests, and community spaces.**

**As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east**

**Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or**

**death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to**

**food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed.**

**This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the**

**effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be**

**proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes**

**widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H. indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ‘ulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.**

**However, more research is needed if we hope to control the spread of QLB. HB 2139 would fund research into different methods of applying H. indica to infected trees to make it less time consuming and more effective for land managers to apply this low-cost approach. This research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawai‘i and support growers in protecting their trees. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually makes it to other islands. Proactive action at the state level will protect the economic vitality of Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and reduce long-term costs to local growers.**

**Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural**

**communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**Ayana**

**96778**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:43:50 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nakoa | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is [Your Name], and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

**such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local**

**farms, forests, and community spaces.**

**As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east**

**Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or**

**death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to**

**food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed.**

**This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the**

**effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be**

**proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes**

**widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H. indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ‘ulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.**

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**Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural**

**communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**Nakoa Maldonado**

**96749**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:43:56 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Issmita Turner | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is Issmita Turner, and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

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**Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural**

**communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**Issmita Turner**

**96778**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:44:11 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ha'ena-Ann McCormick | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is [Your Name], and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

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**communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**Ha'ena-Ann McCormick**

**96749**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:44:23 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ocean Luther | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is Ocean Luther, and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

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**Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural**

**communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**Ocean**

**96749**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:44:31 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lola Wiegele | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is Lola, and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

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**As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east**

**Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or**

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**Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural**

**communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**Lola Wiegele**

**96778**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:45:27 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Makolo Mahuka | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is Makolo Mahuka, and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

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**Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for**

**generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**Makolo Mahuka**

**96778**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:45:30 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Heirama | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is Heirama Hanohano, and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

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**farms, forests, and community spaces.**

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**generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural communities.**

**Heirama Hanohano**

**3911700702**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:45:52 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Adelaide Jose-kaleopaa | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

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

My name is Adelaide Jose-Kaleopaa, and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you

to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local farms, forests, and community spaces.

As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed.

This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H. indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops.

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Sincerely,

Adelaide Jose-kaleopaa

96749

Follow me on instagram at addy_the_cowgirl .

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:46:21 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| khalil imagire | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is [Your Name], and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

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**As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east**

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**communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**[Khalil]**

**[HB2139]**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:47:16 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dream | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is Dream, and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

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**As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east**

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**However, more research is needed if we hope to control the spread of QLB. HB 2139 would fund research into different methods of applying H. indica to infected trees to make it less time consuming and more effective for land managers to apply this low-cost approach. This research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawai‘i and support growers in protecting their trees. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually makes it to other islands. Proactive action at the state level will protect the economic vitality of Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and reduce long-term costs to local growers.**

**Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural**

**communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**Dream**

**96778**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:47:53 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ola, Delgado-Stolk | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is Ola, Delgado-Stolk, and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

**such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local**

**farms, forests, and community spaces.**

**As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east**

**Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or**

**death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to**

**food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed.**

**This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the**

**effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be**

**proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H. indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ‘ulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.**

**However, more research is needed if we hope to control the spread of QLB. HB 2139 would fund research into different methods of applying H. indica to infected trees to make it less time consuming and more effective for land managers to apply this low-cost approach. This research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawai‘i and support growers in protecting their trees. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually makes it to other islands. Proactive action at the state level will protect the economic vitality of Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and reduce long-term costs to local growers.**

**Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for**

**generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**[Ola, Delgado-Stolk]**

**[96778]**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:49:16 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cory Kekauoha | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is [Cory], and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

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**farms, forests, and community spaces.**

**As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east**

**Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or**

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**This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the**

**effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be**

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**widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H. indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ‘ulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.**

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**Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural**

**communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**[cory]**

**[96778]**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:51:25 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Martin | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is [Martin wirtz], and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

**such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local**

**farms, forests, and community spaces.**

**As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east**

**Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or**

**death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to**

**food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed.**

**This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the**

**effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be**

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**Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural**

**communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**[martin wirtz]**

**[96778]**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:52:08 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Phineas Winter | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is [Your Name], and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you**

**to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed**

**by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally**

**important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees**

**such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local**

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**As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east**

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**This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the**

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**Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural**

**communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**[phineas winter**

**[96778**

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:58:26 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Skink Carrero | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

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

My name is Skink Carrero, and I am a resident of Puna, Hawai'i. I am writing to urge you to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local farms, forests, and community spaces.

As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed.

This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. H. indica, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary

results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ‘ulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.

However, more research is needed if we hope to control the spread of QLB. HB 2139 would fund research into different methods of applying H. indica to infected trees to make it less time consuming and more effective for land managers to apply this low-cost approach. This research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawai‘i and support growers in protecting their trees. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually makes it to other islands. Proactive action at the state level will protect the economic vitality of Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and reduce long-term costs to local growers. Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural communities.

It is important that we listen to the indigenous people of our state and making sure we put resources into protecting the aina they have been stewards to for generations.

Sincerely,

Skink Carrero

96778

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

My name is Lichun Huang, and I am a resident of the Island of Hawaii. I am writing to urge you to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local farms, forests, and community spaces.

As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in east Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB is rapidly expanding, it poses a threat to food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed.

This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i in Hilo to continue research on the effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes widespread devastation like we have seen happen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. *H. indica*, a local strain of nematode that was originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary results from a pilot study carried out by the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo at a site in Hilo in 2025 show that for most kukui (74.2%) and ‘ulu (80%) trees, nematode application either reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in the tree. For this being such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.

However, more research is needed if we hope to control the spread of QLB. HB 2139 would fund research into different methods of applying *H. indica* to infected trees to make it less time consuming and more effective for land managers to apply this low-cost approach. This research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawai‘i and support growers in protecting their trees. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually makes it to other islands. Proactive action at the state level will protect the economic vitality of Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and reduce long-term costs to local growers.

Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i’s agricultural communities.

Sincerely,
Lichun Huang
Pinapinao Farm
Papaikou 96781

**HB-2139**
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 5:33:09 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

LATE

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lilah Shapiro | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,**

**My name is Lilah Shapiro, and I was raised in Puna, Hawai‘i. I work with Liko Nā Pilina, a forest restoration project through UH Hilo, where my focus is on the Queensland longhorn beetle and the use of nematodes as a biological control.**

**I am writing to urge you to support House Bill 2139 to provide funding for projects addressing the growing threat posed by the Queensland Longhorn Beetle (QLB) in Hawai‘i. QLB targets many agriculturally important plants, including ‘ulu, cacao, avocado, and citrus, as well as culturally significant trees such as kukui. Its continued spread across East Hawai‘i is causing increasing damage to local farms, forests, and community spaces.**

**As a result of QLB larvae burrowing into mature plants like cacao and citrus, farmers in East Hawai‘i are facing increased crop losses, higher management costs, and severe damage to or death of established crop plants. As the range of QLB rapidly expands, it poses a growing threat to food producers across Hawai‘i and must be addressed urgently.**

**These islands are incredibly special places, home to an extraordinary amount of biodiversity. Within my own lifetime, I have watched invasive species spread and overwhelm our fragile ecosystems. While it can feel like we are already too late to stop many invasives, that is not the case with QLB. We still have a chance to act—and we know what works.**

**This bill will allow researchers at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo to continue research on the effectiveness of nematodes as a biocontrol for QLB. This biocontrol offers an opportunity to be proactive about managing QLB populations before it spreads to other islands and causes widespread devastation like we have seen with the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. Heterorhabditis indica, a local strain of nematode originally collected in Hilo Bay sands, has been shown by USDA ARS to successfully reduce populations of QLB in tropical orchard crops. Many farmers applying this biocontrol have seen the health of their trees improve. Preliminary results from our pilot study at UH Hilo in 2025 show that nematode application reduced or completely eliminated QLB infection in 74% of kukui and 80% of ‘ulu trees. For such a novel biocontrol effort, these results are extremely promising.**

**I have seen firsthand the devastating impact QLB has had on our forests. At the Liko Nā Pilina restoration site, many canopy trees have been lost to QLB, reducing shade and worsening the encroachment of invasive plants. With this nematode treatment, I witnessed trees go from being covered in oozing infection and losing all their leaves to completely recovering. It is remarkable to finally have a tool that actually works to fight one of our most destructive invasive pests. The most rewarding part has been working with farmers and community members who have experienced devastating losses from QLB. Seeing their relief when they learn this treatment works underscores just how urgent this crisis has been and how much this solution means to our communities.**

**However, more research is needed if we hope to control the spread of QLB. HB 2139 would fund research into different methods of applying H. indica to infected trees to make application less time-consuming and more effective for land managers while remaining low-cost. This research will contribute to reducing QLB populations in East Hawai‘i and support growers in protecting their trees. In addition, a low-cost, effective treatment that is scalable will be extremely valuable if QLB eventually spreads to other islands. Proactive action at the state level will protect the economic vitality of Hawai‘i's agricultural sector and reduce long-term costs to local growers.**

**Taking action against QLB is essential to our environmental health, local food security, and cultural heritage. HB 2139 would make a meaningful difference in our community for generations to come. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Hawai‘i's agricultural communities.**

**Sincerely,**

**Lilah Shapiro**

**96778**

HB 2139 Written Testimony in Support

Ke Aloha Representative Chun and members of the Agriculture & Food Systems committee,

We are very small 'town farmers' with an agroforestry orchard of over 40 different species of fruiting trees, and donate over a ton of food every year to the Hawai`i Island community- including food banks, public outreach events and neighbors. We are actually doing the Food Security work that many legislators are calling their constituents to do.

In 2020, our little Keaau neighborhood was hit with Queensland Longhorn Beetle (*Acalopepta aeshetica*) – QLB, and our orchard trees began to show the indications of impact by March of 2020, just before the lockdown. In the beginning of our infestation, the only treatment was to go through our orchard and physically check each and every limb for a soft area & dig out the larvae. We have lost a few citrus trees and all of our lilikoi, and we have had to cut back many infested limbs from our remaining host trees.

Deb Ward, a good friend, introduced us to the nematode treatment BIISC was investigating, and we have used this for a few years with success, to a point. We have neighboring unattended properties (fallow orchards) that allow re-infestation of QLB to our small orchard. At each re-infestation, we inject nematodes into our infested trees.

I am not sure if you are aware, at this point, there are no nematodes available for the public from BIISC, and we have a new outbreak. We know there have been funding hiccups over the past few years that have made the consistent supply of nematodes not something farmers can count on.

With each time we are re-infested with QLB, this infestation can grow in strength, expanded host preference and in range of infestation around Hawai`i.

This should not be new information for any legislator. You have seen this in other pest infestations, however the host plant selection of QLB (attached) is extensive. Local news covered the devasting effects of QLB in 2019, and National news in 2025 (links below).

In a USGS survey in 2023, QLB was identified around Honoka`a. QLB can spread from tree to tree, also at the speed of any vehicle, as Stacey Chun (DOAB - entomology) has noted: that larvae can emerge from logs that have been in his facility for months, so all firewood and smoke-meat wood can spread QLB.

I have attached the most recent QLB host list, more host species have been added every year. This list includes native, canoe, culturally significant, agriculturally significant and ornamental trees used around Hawai`i.

I cannot understand any legislator that would have this information and not make sure there is funding to halt, and possibly even reverse the spread and agricultural impact of this pest species.

A hui hou!

Carey Yost (808)987-3461

Hawai`i News Now 10/30/2019 coverage of QLB:
https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/video/2019/10/31/farmers-scramble-contain-invasive-beetle-attacking-big-island-crops/

USNews 11/07/25 Coverage of QLB: https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/hawaii/articles/2025-11-07/farmers-want-hawaii-to-tackle-the-tree-killing-queensland-longhorn-beetle-before-it-spreads

Dept. Of Ag. 12/10/2023 Updated Pest Advisory with QLB distribution range in Hamakua:
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2023/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-13-2023.pdf

# Queensland Longhorn Beetle- A.aesthetica (QLB) Host Plants

## Trumpet tree (Cecropia obtusifolia)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## Cacao (*Theobroma cacao*)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## ʻulu (*Artocarpus altilis*; breadfruit)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## Citrus (*Citrus* sp.)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## Avocado (*Persea americana*)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## Kukui (*Aleurites moluccanus*)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## Queen sago (*Cycas circinalis*)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## Cacao (*Theobroma cacao*)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## Mulberry (*Morus alba*)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## Norfolk pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## Avocado (*Persea americana*)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## Moringa, kalamungay (*Moringa oleifera*)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## Gunpowder tree (*Trema orientalis*)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## Hibiscus (*Hibiscus sp.)*
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## Croton (Codiaeum variegatum)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## Lilikoi, passion fruit (*Passiflora edulis*)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## -Cycads -ornamental (order Cycadales)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## -Durian (*Durio sp*.)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## -Tree spinach,chaya (*Cnidoscolus aconitifolius*)
https://dab.hawaii.gov/pi/files/2025/12/Acalolepta-aesthetica-NPA-12-08-2025-2.pdf

## -Jade Plant (*Crassula ovata*)

***NATIVE AND ENDEMIC NOT ON STATE LIST:

“Host preferences of non-native *Acalolepta aesthetica* (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae) on the Island of Hawai‘i” Sofaer et.al. 2025. **https://resjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/afe.70015**