

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
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SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

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

Before the House Committee on
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Wednesday, February 11, 2026
9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2207
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

House Bill 2207 requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish rules permitting the sale and distribution of fine mesh nets, including monofilament netting, within the State to protect plants from the coconut rhinoceros beetle. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure as long as its passage does not replace or negatively affect priorities outlined in the Executive Supplemental Budget request.**

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) is a major pest across the Pacific Region. Its primary host is the coconut palm (*Cocos nucifera*), which contributes to soil stabilization, helps prevent coastal erosion, serves as a food source, and is a cultural icon in Hawai'i. However, these beetles can also attack native forest species such as the native palm loulou (*Pritchardia spp.*), which are already threatened or endangered. They can also target hala (*Pandanus tectorius*), an essential part of native lowland wet forests. Hala was used to weave sails for the original Hawaiian voyaging canoes and to make practical items like baskets and mats, making it an important resource in Hawaiian culture.

According to Hawai'i CRB Response, one of the most effective non-chemical methods to protect palm trees (and other CRB target species) from CRB is using a physical cover of monofilament,

fine mesh nets (with 1-3-inch holes) to wrap the crowns of palm trees and to cover breeding materials like mulch piles and compost.

The Department supports this bill and its provision for netting to control the spread of CRB to palm trees and potential breeding materials. Although netting with 2-3-inch holes is currently allowed, this bill would approve netting with smaller mesh sizes for use in protecting against invasive species. Smaller-holed netting is more effective at preventing CRB from passing through.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026
9:30 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325 & VIDEO CONFERENCE

HOUSE BILL NO. 2207
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2207 relating to invasive species. This bill requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish rules allowing the sale and distribution of fine mesh nets, including monofilament netting, in the State to protect plants from the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB). The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (Department) supports this bill and offers comments.

The Department understands the need for more tools to mitigate the impacts of CRB due to the devastating damage the insect has caused within the State and in other parts of the world such as Guam. Proper netting has been proven to be an effective, nonchemical method that can enhance the repertoire of control methods for CRB.

CRB Netting that is not used for surveillance purposes or distributed with a substance, such as an attractant or repellent, would be a nonchemical device that is regulated under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. The Department recommends including the following in Section 2, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §141-17 (b) "provided that...rhinoceros). Nets that are regulated under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act are subject to the requirements of Title 40, Chapter I, Subchapter E, Part 152.500. If the nets meet the definition of HRS §460J, then the nets would also have to be approved by Pesticides Branch." Alternatively, the Department will incorporate any federal and state regulations when establishing requirements for the lawful sale and distribution of CRB netting.

The Department will continue to encourage and provide support for the development of tools to combat CRB.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify to this measure.



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February 11, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2207
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

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

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 2207, which allows the use, sale, and distribution of fine-mesh nets, including monofilament netting, for protecting plants from the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB).

Invasive species continue to pose one of the most serious threats to Hawai'i's agricultural economy and environment. The coconut rhinoceros beetle has the potential to cause significant damage to palm species that are important to agriculture, landscapes, and cultural resources across the State. Farmers and land managers need access to effective, non-chemical tools to prevent the spread and impact of this pest.

Fine-mesh netting has proven to be an effective tool for preventing CRB damage. HB 2207 provides the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity with clear authority to establish rules governing the responsible use of these nets, while incorporating safeguards to protect birds, native species, and aquatic environments.

Providing farmers with lawful access to effective pest control tools is critical to protecting agricultural operations and supporting the State's broader biosecurity efforts. HB 2207 represents a practical and targeted response to an urgent invasive species threat.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



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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 HB2207.**

HB2207 is an essential measure to address the persistent threat posed by the coconut rhinoceros beetle to Hawaii's agriculture. The bill empowers the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish rules that allow the sale and distribution of fine mesh nets, including monofilament netting. This measure will provide an effective and environmentally friendly method for farmers to protect their plants from the destructive impact of these invasive pests. Fine mesh nets serve as a physical barrier, significantly reducing the likelihood of beetle infestation without the need for chemical interventions.

The economic ramifications of unchecked coconut rhinoceros beetle infestations are significant, threatening the livelihoods of local farmers and the broader agricultural sector. By safeguarding plants with readily available and efficient netting solutions, the bill supports not only the immediate crop yields but also the long-term viability of Hawaii's agricultural industry. Moreover, it represents a commitment to ensuring that farmers have access to necessary tools and resources, better enabling them to effectively manage pests. This legislation reinforces the collaboration between government agencies and the farming community towards shared goals of protecting Hawaii's ecosystem health and food security.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



11 February, 2026

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

Subject: HB2207, Relating to Invasive Species

Aloha,

Hawai'i Food+ Policy is writing in **support** of HB2207 with comments. This measure allows the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) to establish rules permitting the sale and use of fine mesh nets, including monofilament netting, for the purpose of protecting plants from the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB).

CRB poses a serious threat to Hawai'i's agricultural economy, cultural resources, and ecosystems, particularly palm species that are foundational to both food production and cultural landscapes. Providing effective, non-chemical tools to prevent beetle access to vulnerable plants is an important step toward strengthening invasive species response and agricultural resilience.

Physical exclusion and trapping methods like monofilament netting have been demonstrated as effective tools in Hawai'i's integrated pest management for CRB. University of Hawai'i Cooperative Extension guidance notes that monofilament netting of approximately ½" mesh and ~0.33 mm thickness can effectively catch or deter adult CRB when wrapped around palm crowns or mulch piles, helping to prevent feeding damage and reduce local beetle populations when combined with other practices.

We do want to emphasize the importance behind strengthening safeguards to ensure that monofilament netting is used only for CRB prevention and does not create unintended harm to wildlife or the environment. Rules set by DAB should be clear on product approval, labeling, controlled distribution, installation standards, and enforcement to prevent misuse, especially given the known risks of monofilament netting to birds and other non-target species if improperly applied.

With strong regulation and oversight, HB2207 can achieve an appropriate balance between effective invasive species control and environmental protection. For these reasons, I urge the committee to pass HB2207 with suggested recommendations that reinforce clear limitations, accountability, and ecological safeguards while supporting timely action against CRB.

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

[1] Joshua Silva. (2023). Netting for Physical IPM of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. University of Hawai'i Cooperative Extension Service. https://cms.organictransition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/HanaiAi_CRB_Netting_Aug2023.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.

HB-2207

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 1:42:17 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/11/2026 9:30:00 AM

LATE

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Angela Young | CARES | Support | Remotely Via Zoom |

Comments:

support