



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 10:31 a.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience

and

Vassilis Syrmos, PhD
Interim Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2551 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

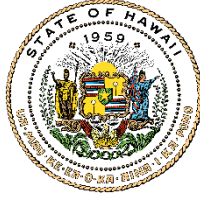
Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony offering comments on HB 2551 HD1 SD1 which appropriate funds for the Area-Wide Fruit Fly Suppression Program.

College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) respectfully offers the following comments. Fruit flies pose a pervasive threat to over 300 host species, driving up food costs and threatening Hawai'i's goal of food self-sufficiency. The challenge of control for fruit flies is because maggots live inside fruit and adults are highly mobile which standard pesticide spraying is ineffective and impractical for residential areas. Effective area-wide suppression requires a long-term approach that combines sanitation such as removing fallen fruit, with specialized tools like protein baits, male lures, and the release of sterile insects. CTAHR has organized a coordinated effort involving experts, farmers, and State and federal partners to monitor pest levels, update control techniques and launch public outreach campaigns. The appropriation in HB 2551 HD1 SD1 will support statewide community assets.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

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

Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS

Tuesday, April 7, 2026
10:31 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2551, HOUSE DRAFT 1, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

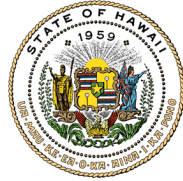
House Bill 2551, House Draft 1, Senate Draft 1 allocates funds for the Area-Wide Fruit Fly Suppression Program. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure, as long as its passage does not replace or negatively affect priorities outlined in the Executive Supplemental Budget request.**

The Department supports funding to continue fruit fly suppression efforts in Hawaii. Fruit flies are a widespread invasive species on the islands. As primarily an agricultural pest, they have a significant economic impact on produce growers in Hawaii. Research indicates some effects of fruit flies on native Hawaiian fruit-bearing plants; however, it remains unclear how much they influence the overall reproductive success of these plants. Forests invaded by non-native fruit trees like strawberry guava can be important refuges for fruit fly populations. The Department suggests that reducing fruiting through the biological control of strawberry guava, *Tectococcus ovatus*, could be a key strategy to suppress fruit flies in agricultural areas near these invaded forests. With less wild fruit to breed in, controlling fruit fly populations on nearby farms would become much more effective.

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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026
10:31 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 211 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2551, HD1, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 2551, HD1, SD1, relating to agriculture. This measure appropriates funds for the Area-Wide Fruit Fly Suppression Program and is effective 7/1/3000. The Department supports this measure.

Fruit flies are one of the most destructive pests in the State, attacking hundreds of plant species, with many being crops of economic significance. The allocation of funds for this program would enable the Department to begin reducing fruit fly populations, lessening impacts on a wide range of food crops. Depending on the program's success, this could be one way to increase local agricultural production and food sustainability in the State. Increased yields could also help local producers be more cost competitive with similar imported goods, further reducing the State's reliance on imports.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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April 7, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2551, HD1, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
10:31 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, 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 2551, HD1 SD1, which appropriates funds to support an area-wide fruit fly suppression program.

Fruit flies remain one of the most significant and persistent agricultural pests in Hawai'i. They directly impact fruit and vegetable production, reduce marketable yields, increase production costs, and limit diversification opportunities for local farmers. Hawai'i's continued federal fruit fly quarantine also restricts export potential and creates additional compliance burdens for producers.

Area-wide suppression programs have demonstrated success in reducing infestation levels and improving crop quality by using coordinated, science-based pest management strategies that integrate multiple tools and approaches. These programs help farmers manage pests more effectively and efficiently across entire growing regions. Such coordinated efforts are far more effective than isolated treatment at the individual farm level. By investing in an area-wide strategy, the State strengthens agricultural productivity, supports diversified farming operations, and enhances long-term food security.

HB 2551, HD1, SD1 represents a practical and necessary investment in Hawai'i's agricultural infrastructure. Continued suppression efforts will benefit growers across multiple islands and commodities while strengthening long-term pest management capacity statewide.

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



Date of Hearing: 7 April, 2026

To: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Subject: **HB2551 HD1 SD1**, Relating to Agriculture

Aloha,

Hawai'i Food+ Policy is writing in **support of HB2551 HD1 SD1** which appropriates funds for the Area-Wide Fruit Fly Suppression Program.

The fruit fly federal quarantine that exists today due to the presence of fruit flies in the State and their threat to the continental United States' agricultural sector, is a major hindrance to the State's expansion of diversified agriculture and ability to export product. For the last 114 years, Hawai'i has been subject to a federal agricultural quarantine that impacts Hawai'i-based farms to the tune of \$760 million annually. That's greater than the value of Hawai'i's total agricultural sales in 2022 (which was \$673 million).¹

The species of fruit fly being introduced to Hawai'i have no natural predators so intervention is necessary to mitigate impacts. In 1999, the United States Department of Agriculture's Agriculture Research Service (ARS) funded a five-year area-wide fruit fly pest management system. The area-wide fruit fly program used a combined approach of *field sanitation, protein bait sprays, and male-lure traps* to combat fruit fly infestations. The program successfully lowered infestation rates to below five per cent for many crops, increasing yields and marketable products, and significantly reduced insecticide use in some areas.

With the ability to encourage the expansion of local diversified agriculture, increase future earnings potential for our local producers, reduce the cost of maintenance/production, and increase our food systems resiliency against invasive pests, we support the additional appropriation of funds to continue efforts initiated through Act 231, SLH 2024, and urge the committee to pass HB2551 HD1 SD1 and establish an appropriate appropriation amount which was previously "\$1,000,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for an area-wide fruit fly suppression program."

Mahalo,

Brandon Kinard & the Food+ Policy Team

#fixourfoodsystem

[1] Hawai'i Food Alliance. (n.d.). *Hawai'i's federal quarantine: A century-old barrier to agricultural growth*. Hawai'i Food.
<https://hawaiifood.com/articles/hawaiis-federal-quarantine-a-century-old-barrier-to-agricultural-growth/>

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-2551-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2026 5:17:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mae Nakahata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Areawide Fruitfly Suppression Program is critical to increasing reliability of local fruit and melon production to meet market demands including the school lunch program. It also serves as a model for sustainable invasive species management. Dependence on government funding is not sustainable due to competing needs of state funds.

Please pass HB2551 with sufficient funds to implement this program.

Thank you.