

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY**

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026
9:30 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2885, SD1
RELATING TO BIOSECURITY**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2885, SD1, relating to biosecurity. This measure, beginning January 1, 2027, establishes mandatory handling and storage rules for commercial and residential coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) host material to reduce the spread of CRB within infested zones and to prevent spread into non-infested zones; establishes penalties; effective 7/1/2050. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) supports the intent of this measure and offers comments.

The Department is appreciative of the intent of this measure as it seeks to resolve one of the largest challenges relating to CRB, the storage and/or accumulation of CRB host material. However, as currently drafted, the Department defers to the Department of Health (DOH) regarding the implementation and effects on their regulations related to solid waste management of green waste, particularly as HRS 150A-4 precludes Chapter 150A, HRS, from amending or altering the functions, duties, and powers of DOH.

It is the Department's understanding that the majority of large commercial composters are already permitted by DOH and are already subjecting green waste to the turning and heat treatment requirements, making some provisions in subsection (a) redundant. Similarly, subsection (e) appears to partially be covered under requirements for illegal dumping, and the Department is unclear if this interferes with HRS 342H.

Regarding subsection (a), it appears to require mechanical turning and spreading, or a heat treatment for all contractors, commercial operators, counties, and

facilities that generate, store, transport, sell, or distribute green waste. The Department is unsure of the feasibility of this section for a number of reasons such as: appearing to require the respective Counties' green waste pick-ups to verify turning or heat treatment before pick up; does not allow for the use of chemical treatments that have been verified to eliminate all CRB life stages; requires heat treatment for imported goods regardless of how they were stored after importation; and require essentially all non-residential properties with landscaping to turn or heat treat. Additionally, the Department is unaware of the effectiveness of subsection (a)(1). Turning and aeration are critical components of windrow composting, but without sufficient material, the piles themselves would likely not reach sufficient temperatures to eliminate CRB. Thinly spread green waste that is less than 2" in depth has been shown to preclude CRB reproduction, provided it is allowed to dry out, regardless of temperature. The Department has similar concerns about the treatments in subsection (c), as there is almost no way to verify compliance, particularly in situations where the producer is not the retailer. Lastly, there is no allowance for use of pesticides, such as fumigants, that have been shown to eradicate CRB and would require a secondary heat treatment. Should this measure move forward, the use of scientifically verified pesticide treatments should be allowed.

The Department is appreciative of integrating its proposed changes to subsection (b), clarifying the intent to prevent accumulation of a single pile of CRB host material greater than a yard for residential areas. The Department suggests additional clarification because as currently written, this could be interpreted to prohibit any CRB host material. The Department suggests the following language to address this:

(b) No residential property owner or occupant shall create, maintain, store, or accumulate a mulch pile, green waste pile, ~~or~~ compost pile, or any pile other coconut rhinoceros beetle host material capable of supporting larval development larger than one cubic yard~~[, or any other coconut rhinoceros beetle host material capable of supporting larval development]~~.

However, the Department has some concerns with this subsection. First, the Department is concerned about this subsection's requirement to use county-issued green waste bins or require transfer to an appropriate county facility. The Department is unaware of how widespread county-issued green waste bins are across each County and is unsure if it would be unduly burdensome on some residents versus others, particularly those in more rural or remote areas. Also, if a resident is in an area that does not have a county-issued green waste bin, there does not appear any realistic way for them to comply with this section. Second, on page 6, beginning on line 12 through the end of line 20, the Department is unsure on the intent of identifying "prohibited materials" as the Department believes this section is intended to prevent accumulation of breeding material, as opposed to prohibiting the listed items in any amount. Lastly, the Department is unsure how this section could reasonably be effectuated without a significant increase in manpower.

The Department is unclear on the intent of subsection (d) as it appears to conflict or is redundant with other sections. For example, subsection (d)(1) seems to conflict with subsection (b) in a number of ways. It requires homeowners to treat green waste if they do not have access to, or exceed the green waste volume of, a county-issued green bin, whereas subsection (b) requires only the use of a county-issued green bin. Subsection (d)(4) also appears to require the contractor who picks up the county-issued green bin to ensure it is treated. Additionally, subsection (c) already appears to cover the treatment requirements for sale or movement. Based on this, the Department believes subsection (d) should be removed.

The Department believes the intent of subsection (e) is to prevent long-term storage of large volumes of green waste without any form of treatment. The Department is concerned that treated materials that were subjected to treatments that eliminated CRB and subsequently stored appropriately to prevent subsequent reinfestation would require retreatment every 60 days. This can be remedied by adding an exception for this in subsection (f). This would also appear to essentially prohibit the ownership or maintenance of potted plants as they would either have to be repotted or destroyed every 60 days.

Regarding subsection (h), should this measure move forward, the Department believes that the existing biosecurity website and pest hotline, biosecurity.hawaii.gov and 808-643-7378 (PEST), respectively, should be used for this as opposed to creating an entire a new number and hotline system. As the Department is already fielding reports of CRB through this manner, this section should be removed.

Regarding subsection (i), the Department is unsure of some of the definitions as they are not found elsewhere in the measure. For example, "Documentation" is found within other definitions in subsection (i), but nowhere else in this section. Additionally, the definition "Operator of record" is only found in subsection (i). The Department suggests that the definition of "Coconut rhinoceros beetle infested zone" be amended because anywhere in the State has an elevated risk of CRB establishment if there is any trade of goods from an infested area. The Department suggests this definition to read as:

"Coconut rhinoceros beetle infested zone" means any geographic area designated by the department as having confirmed coconut rhinoceros beetle presence [~~or elevated risk of establishment~~].

Ultimately, the Department believes green waste management is necessary to reduce impacts by CRB. Should this measure move forward, additional distinctions between the Department's and DOH's respective authorities need to be made to ensure there is no duplication of the State's limited resources. The Department respectfully

requests at least a year to collaborate with the counties on implementation and resources that would be necessary to effectuate this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify to this measure.

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
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COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
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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. KANAKA'OLE
Acting Chairperson**

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

**Wednesday, March 18, 2026
9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2885, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO BIOSECURITY**

Senate Bill 2885, Senate Draft 1 establishes mandatory handling and storage rules for commercial and residential coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) host material to reduce the spread of CRB within infested zones and to prevent spread into non-infested zones beginning on 1/1/2027. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Supplemental Budget request.**

The Department supports the enhanced CRB management policies outlined in this measure. The two main management methods for mechanical or heat treatment are somewhat effective at reducing CRB in the host material; there are additional science-backed methods for CRB reduction that could be considered. The Hawaii CRB Response project lists and explains them here: <https://www.crbhawaii.org/treatments-breeding>.

The Department also supports policies on CRB management for both residential and commercial operations. It notes that the Department of Health has already established some policies regarding green waste management and suggests integrating these policies.

The Department notes that the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council and the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity have reporting hotlines 643-PEST by phone and online at

643PEST.org, which address CRB as well as other pests in Hawaii. These could help address paragraph (h) of this measure on page 9.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2885 SD1

RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka ‘Oihana Mahi‘ai a me ka ‘Ōnaehana Mea‘ai
(House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems)

Ke Kapikala o Hawai‘i
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

Malaki 18, 2026

9:30AM

Lumi 325

Aloha e Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS SB2885 SD1**, which responds to the devastating impact of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) by establishing mandatory rules for handling and storage of CRB host material.

CRB has already had devastating impacts on our islands’ niu trees. Niu is part of a network of pilina (relationships) between Native Hawaiians and ‘āina that sustained communities since time immemorial. As both a food and water source, niu is culturally significant and essential to the well-being of our communities, now and for future generations. Beyond its role as sustenance, niu is woven into traditional practices, cultural knowledge, and to our stewardship of ‘āina. The continued spread of CRB threatens not only the health of these trees but also the relationships and practices connected to them.

One of the primary ways invasive species like CRB spread across islands is through the movement of unquarantined plant material, including green waste, mulch, and untreated vegetation. When plant materials are transported without proper safeguards, they can carry CRB larvae to new areas, accelerating the spread of CRB.

SB2885 SD1 addresses the source of new CRB populations by requiring the regular turning and heat treatment of mulch and green waste so CRB populations can be better detected, terminated, and kept from spreading across the rest of our islands.

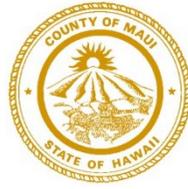
Green waste generation and compost use are regular aspects of agricultural operations. Smaller operations may not have the ability to acquire the equipment or staffing needed to meet the requirements of this measure. To ensure the greatest rate of compliance without undue burdensome on smaller operations, OHA respectfully encourages the Committee to consider technical guidance and cost-share support for composting and treatment equipment.

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **SUPPORT SB2885 SD1.**

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov

TO: Representative Cory M. Chun, Chair
Representative Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor
Rogerene Arce, Director of Agriculture

DATE: March 4, 2026

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF SB2885 SD1, RELATING TO BIOSECURITY**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure.

Beginning 1/1/2027, establishes mandatory handling and storage rules for commercial and residential coconut rhinoceros beetle host material to reduce the spread of CRB within infested zones and to prevent spread into non-infested zones. Establishes penalties. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD1)

We **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

1. The bill is vital to keeping Maui County CRB-free, protecting cultural coconut resources, local agriculture, urban landscapes, and community well-being from this destructive invasive pest.
2. These uniform statewide standards will support ongoing CRB prevention efforts, reducing establishment risks across islands and saving millions in future eradication costs.
3. SB2885 empowers the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity with clear authority to enforce compliance, ensuring consistent statewide application of CRB prevention measures while providing education and resources to support Maui County farmers, residents, and businesses in maintaining our pest-free status.

Mahalo for your consideration.



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e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

March 18, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON SB 2885, SD1
RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

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 the intent of SB 2885, SD1, which establishes statewide standards for the handling, treatment, and movement of mulch and green waste in areas impacted by coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB).

CRB continues to pose a serious threat to Hawai'i's agricultural and natural landscapes. Targeting breeding sites, particularly unmanaged mulch and decomposing green waste, is a science-based strategy that addresses the root of the infestation rather than only treating adult beetles. Strengthening prevention and containment measures is critical to protecting farms, nurseries, and communities across the State.

As this measure advances, HFB respectfully encourages careful attention to implementation. The bill establishes detailed operational requirements, including mandatory turning schedules, heat treatment standards, storage limits, documentation requirements, and restrictions on transfer or sale of untreated material. These standards will directly impact nurseries, farmers, landscapers, composting facilities, green waste processors, and counties operating in affected zones.

Many agricultural and landscaping operations generate green waste as part of normal business activity and may not currently have the equipment, staffing, or infrastructure necessary to meet mechanical turning or temperature-monitoring requirements without additional cost. For smaller operators in particular, compliance could require investments in new equipment, increased labor, or higher disposal costs.

HFB encourages the Committee to consider phased implementation, technical guidance, and education-first enforcement to ensure that operators understand compliance requirements and have practical pathways to meet them. Technical assistance or cost-share support for composting equipment and treatment systems may also help ensure broad compliance and prevent unintended economic strain on compliant businesses.

With thoughtful rollout and continued stakeholder coordination, SB 2885, SD1 can strengthen CRB containment efforts while maintaining the stability of Hawai'i's agricultural and green waste management sectors.

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



Hawaiian Earth Recycling
65-1101 Wilikina Drive
Wahiawa, HI 96786
(808) 426-6652
Marvin.Min@hawaiianearth.com

March 16, 2026

RE: Testimony with Comments for Hawaii SB 2885 SD1

Dear Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Hawaiian Earth Recycling, we respectfully provide our comments for Hawaii SB 2885 and its intent to reduce the spread of invasive species such as the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) through responsible green waste management. Being the State's largest green waste recycler, we are honored to have received from the Hawaii Senate and House of Representatives the *Outstanding Business Leader Award* in helping control the spread of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle and other invasive species.

With over 30 years of experience and expertise in responsible green waste management, we'd like to offer our comments:

- The Hawaii Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity has confirmed that CRB will inhabit organic waste material that is inside of erosion control socks/filters.
 - In Section 1, page 1, line 7, add "and erosion control socks/filters," so that it reads the following; "Although adult CRB visibly damage palm crowns, eighty to ninety per cent of the CRB life cycle occurs hidden inside mulch and green waste piles and erosion control socks/ filters, where larvae develop undetected for four to six months before emerging as new adults."
 - At the end of Section 1, page 4, line 18, after "...and support state wide biodiversity resilience.", add "This act shall also include erosion control socks/filters and all mulch, compost, and plant care materials shipped into Hawaii which may bring in other invasive species such as two lined spittle bugs and other plant diseases.

- To support consistency of green waste management across Hawaii State Department of Health and United States Environmental Protection Agency regulations, in Section 2, §150A, page 5, line 3, after "... mandatory handling and treatment standard. (a)";
 - Please consider adding "All green waste activities requiring Hawai'i State Department of Health oversight, including commercial processing, storage, acceptance, or transfer of green waste, mulch, or compost from off site sources; operation of green waste or composting facilities; accumulation of green waste beyond residential self use thresholds; or distribution or sale of green waste derived products, shall obtain and comply with a Solid Waste Management Permit as required under Department of Health and United States Environmental Protection Agency law."

- We'd like to recommend including an additional approved treatment method allowing the use of an OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute) certified organic product produced in the State of Hawai'i and validated through University of Hawai'i laboratory testing, to reduce reliance on imported and potentially unapproved biological controls. OMRI certification provides independent verification of product composition and safety, while preserving flexibility for future University of Hawai'i developed treatments and continued innovation.
 - Consider amending Section 1, page 3, line 10, so that it reads, "Breeding-site management of mulch and green waste includes heat-based or mechanical "kill treatments" such as thermophilic composting, use of a tested OMRI- Organic Materials Review Institute certified organic product produced in the State of Hawaii to reduce the risk of importing unregistered or unapproved biological controls, and that has been successfully laboratory tested and validated at a University of Hawaii laboratory, use of pile turning or processing that reliably generates lethal core temperatures, steam treatments, or other high-heat methods; and other strategies that can be effective, low-cost management option for smaller piles."
 - In Section 2, §150A , page 5, line 7, change "following two methods" to using "following ~~two~~ three methods:"
 - In Section 2 , §150A , page 6, line 5, before subsection (b), add
 - (3) Use of an OMRI- Organic Materials Review Institute certified organic product produced in the State of Hawaii to reduce the risk of importing unregistered or unapproved biological controls, and that has been successfully laboratory tested and validated at a University of Hawaii laboratory.

- The current Act requires green waste piles to be turned every sixty calendar days; however, requiring commercial operators and residents to turn green waste when turning alone may not achieve any meaningful treatment outcome creates unnecessary burden without improving biosecurity. Turning is only effective when combined with sufficient pile size and mass, proper moisture content, adequate aeration, and sustained thermophilic temperatures. Without these conditions, turning does not neutralize coconut rhinoceros beetle host material. For this reason, we recommend replacing the sixty day turning requirement with adoption of the PFRP (Process to Further Reduce Pathogens) standard, which is already required by the Hawaii State Department of Health and the

US EPA and this ensures that turning is only required when it is part of a proven, effective treatment method.

- Please consider amending the language in section 2, §150A, part 1 (A), page 5, line 9; to read the following;
 - (A) **Mulch** Piles shall be fully turned, aerated, and broken down not less than **five times within 15 days, and record daily core temperatures of at least 131 degrees F for a minimum of 15 consecutive days, or using an in vessel composting system that is approved by the State Of Hawaii Department of Health, The United States EPA, and The U.S. Composting Council standards of PFRP- Process to Further Reduce Pathogen (killing all invasive species) once every sixty calendar days; All new unprocessed green waste greater than 1 cubic yard shall also be grinded once every week.**
 - (B) Material shall be spread, or **maintain temperature of minimum 131 degrees, reworked, re-heated, including stockpile prior to screening** in a manner that prevents long-term cool core development; or
- Green waste is a valuable resource that should be captured, recycled, and diverted from landfills whenever possible. Burning or incinerating green waste represents an unnecessary waste of material and creates avoidable environmental, public health, and fire risks, particularly in areas where water resources may be limited, and fire suppression capacity is constrained.
 - Please consider adding subsection (j) After Subsection (i), on page 12, line 8
 - **(j) In no way shall burning or incineration of host material be used due to environmental and public health risks, and/ or fire hazards unless the approved 3 treatment methods mentioned in Section 150A have first been utilized and exhausted (not including logs for firewood use).**

SB 2885 is an important step toward strengthening Hawaii's biosecurity and protecting our agricultural and natural resources. We respectfully ask that the Committee consider these amendments.

Mahalo,

Marvin Min

Hawaiian Earth – Senior Vice President and General Manager
65-1101 Wilikina Drive, PO Box 861601, Wahiawa, HI, 96786

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO BIOSECURITY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the coconut
2 rhinoceros beetle (CRB) is one of the State's fastest growing
3 invasive threats, capable of causing hundreds of millions of
4 dollars in damage to palms, agriculture, and culturally
5 important landscapes. Although adult CRB visibly damage palm
6 crowns, eighty to ninety per cent of the CRB life cycle occurs
7 hidden inside mulch and green waste piles, where larvae develop
8 undetected for four to six months before emerging as new adults.
9 These piles, not the palms, are the true drivers of population
10 growth.

11 Increasing CRB populations bring significant economic and
12 budgetary risks for the State. CRB-related economic losses are
13 estimated to reach \$500 million to \$1 billion over the next
14 decade, with agricultural impacts alone projected at \$169
15 million annually by 2040 if spread reaches additional islands
16 and agricultural regions. However, these figures do not capture
17 indirect cultural, environmental, or tourism-related impacts



1 associated with the loss of mature palms and native species, but
2 illustrate that CRB management is not only an ecological issue,
3 but also a significant fiscal consideration.

4 The legislature also finds that beyond financial costs, CRB
5 threatens coastal resilience, traditional practices, community
6 aesthetics, and the State's tourism economy. Despite these
7 risks, Hawaii currently lacks consistent, statewide standards
8 for how mulch and green waste are stored, treated, processed, or
9 moved, leaving large breeding sites unmanaged in both
10 residential areas and high-volume commercial operations.
11 Existing movement rules reduce the spread between districts but
12 do nothing to reduce CRB populations where they are already
13 established.

14 The legislature further finds that while coconut palms are
15 the primary host, other culturally and agriculturally important
16 affected plants include date palms, hala, banana, sugarcane, and
17 kalo. Because CRB spend most of their lives (four to six
18 months) inside decomposing plant material, breeding sites are
19 the foundation of local population growth. Adult activity in
20 palm crowns represents only a small fraction of the total life
21 cycle.



1 Current CRB management tools generally include some
2 combination of palm protection, breeding-site reduction, and
3 movement controls. Palm-focused treatment include trunk and
4 root injections of systemic insecticides that can protect palms
5 for several months, and crown sprays and fungicide treatments
6 via drone application help maintain palm vigor and reduce
7 secondary decline. These approaches protect individual trees
8 but do not address the source of new CRB. Breeding-site
9 management of mulch and green waste includes heat-based or
10 mechanical "kill treatments" such as thermophilic composting,
11 pile turning or processing that reliably generates lethal core
12 temperatures, steam treatments, or other high-heat methods; and
13 other strategies that can be effective, low-cost management
14 option for smaller piles. Because larvae require several months
15 to develop, treating green waste at least every four months
16 interrupts the life cycle before adult emergence.

17 The legislature also finds that certain existing
18 regulations in the State do restrict the movement of certain
19 high-risk plant materials. However, these regulations apply
20 only to specific species or pathways and do not comprehensively
21 regulate the movement of untreated green waste or mulch. As a



1 result, current movement controls operate as a loose, patchwork
2 system, which reduces some pest-spread risk but leave
3 significant gaps that allow untreated mulch and green waste to
4 move between infested and non-infested areas, including inter-
5 island transport.

6 The legislature also finds that because more than ninety
7 per cent of the CRB life cycle occurs inside undisturbed mulch
8 and green waste piles, establishing consistent, enforceable,
9 science-based standards for residential and commercial mulch and
10 green waste handling provides an opportunity to reduce CRB
11 populations significantly and effectively at their source.

12 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish
13 mandatory, enforceable standards for the handling, storage,
14 treatment, and movement of mulch and green waste materials in
15 coconut rhinoceros beetle infested zones, both residential and
16 commercial, to ensure early intervention at CRB breeding sites,
17 reduce CRB reinfestation risk, and support statewide biosecurity
18 resilience.

19 SECTION 2. Chapter 150A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
20 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
21 and to read as follows:



1 "§150A- Residential and commercial mulch and green waste
2 materials; coconut rhinoceros beetle; mandatory handling and
3 treatment standards. (a) All contractors, commercial
4 operators, counties, and facilities that generate, store,
5 transport, sell, or distribute mulch or green waste shall be
6 required to neutralize coconut rhinoceros beetle host material
7 using one of the following two methods:

8 (1) Mechanical turning and spreading;

9 (A) Piles shall be fully turned, aerated, and broken
10 down not less than once every sixty calendar
11 days; and

12 (B) Material shall be spread or reworked in a manner
13 that prevents long-term cool core development; or

14 (2) Verified heat treatment with documented treatment
15 readings and dates to be retained for inspection;

16 (A) Material shall be subjected to thermophilic
17 composting steam treatment; or

18 (B) Any equivalent heat-based kill treatment capable
19 of achieving:

20 (i) A minimum internal temperature of one
21 hundred thirty-one degrees Fahrenheit or



1 fifty-five degrees Celsius for not less than
2 three consecutive days; or
3 (ii) A scientifically validated equivalent lethal
4 exposure approved by the department.

5 (b) No residential property owner or occupant shall
6 create, maintain, store, or accumulate a mulch pile, green waste
7 pile, or compost pile larger than one cubic yard, or any other
8 coconut rhinoceros beetle host material capable of supporting
9 larval development. All green waste generated at a residence
10 shall be placed into county-issued green waste bins for
11 scheduled collection or transported to an approved commercial
12 processor, county facility, or transfer station. Prohibited
13 materials include:

- 14 (1) Loose mulch;
- 15 (2) Green waste;
- 16 (3) Palm debris;
- 17 (4) Coconut husk material;
- 18 (5) Uncontained or unprocessed vegetative waste; or
- 19 (6) Any decomposing organic matter than meets the
20 definition of coconut rhinoceros beetle host material.



1 (c) No untreated green waste, mulch, compost, palm debris,
2 or other coconut rhinoceros beetle host material shall be sold,
3 distributed, transferred, or commercially exchanged within or
4 from a coconut rhinoceros beetle infested zone unless:

5 (1) The material has undergone documented mechanical
6 turning or certified heat treatment pursuant to
7 subsection (a); and

8 (2) There is documented proof of treatment that
9 accompanies the material at the point of sale,
10 transfer, or distribution. Any sale, transfer, or
11 distribution of untreated material shall constitute an
12 immediate violation subject to enforcement action.

13 (d) All coconut rhinoceros beetle host material shall be
14 treated before any:

15 (1) Transfer between property;

16 (2) Commercial sale or resale;

17 (3) Distribution by county or private facilities; or

18 (4) Off-site hauling for disposal and composting; provided
19 that redundant treatment upon receipt may be required
20 when transporting material between separate operators.



1 (e) Any untreated coconut rhinoceros beetle host material
2 shall not be stored for more than sixty days in any coconut
3 rhinoceros beetle infested zone under any circumstances. After
4 sixty days, the coconut rhinoceros beetle host material shall be
5 treated immediately or removed for approved treatment or
6 disposal pursuant to this section.

7 (f) The following shall be exempt from this section:

8 (1) Any island of the State without a confirmed coconut
9 rhinoceros beetle population; and

10 (2) Small-scale residential composting contained in sealed
11 or pest-proof bins not more than one cubic yard.

12 (g) The department shall enforce and administer the
13 provisions of this section. Any commercial operator or
14 residential property owner violating any provisions of this
15 section shall:

16 (1) Receive a written warning and be required to take
17 corrective action within seven days;

18 (2) Be subject to a civil fine of \$500 and be required to
19 take corrective action within seven days if:

20 (A) Corrective action was not taken after receiving a
21 written warning; or



1 (B) A second violation occurs; and

2 (3) Be subject to a civil fine of \$1,000 for any
3 subsequent offense; provided that each day of
4 continued violation under this section shall
5 constitute a distinct and separate offense.

6 The chairperson of the board may institute a civil action in any
7 court of competent jurisdiction for injunctive or other relief
8 to correct or abate violations of this section or any rule
9 adopted pursuant to this section, to collect administrative
10 penalties, or to obtain other relief. Collected civil fines
11 shall be retained by the department as additional funding to
12 support ongoing coconut rhinoceros beetle management efforts,
13 including implementation, enforcement, technical assistance, and
14 outreach, and community grants and cost-share programs for
15 equipment to support compliance.

16 (h) There is established within the department a statewide
17 coconut rhinoceros beetle compliance hotline and reporting
18 system to allow residents, landscapers, contractors, and
19 agricultural workers to report suspected untreated piles,
20 illegal sales, and long-term storage violations. The hotline
21 and reporting system shall include an email and phone number.



1 (i) For the purposes of this section:

2 "Coconut rhinoceros beetle host material" means green
3 waste, mulch, compost, palm debris, coconut husk, decomposing
4 plant matter, or any organic material capable of supporting the
5 development of coconut rhinoceros beetle larvae.

6 "Coconut rhinoceros beetle infested zone" means any
7 geographic area designated by the department as having confirmed
8 coconut rhinoceros beetle presence or elevated risk of
9 establishment.

10 "Documentation" means written or electronic records of
11 treatment methods, temperatures achieved, dates of processing,
12 and verification logs required under this section.

13 "Green waste" means leaves, branches, fronds, grass
14 clippings, chipped vegetation, palm residues, and other plant
15 material generated through landscaping, trimming, or land-
16 clearing activities.

17 "Mulch" means mechanically processed or unprocessed plant
18 material used or stored for landscaping, soil amendment, or
19 compost feedstock.

20 "Operator" means any individual, business, contractor,
21 county, green waste processor, composting facility, or landowner



1 responsible for generating, storing, moving, or processing
2 coconut rhinoceros beetle host material.

3 "Pile" means any accumulation of coconut rhinoceros beetle
4 host material exceeding one cubic yard, whether loose,
5 compacted, or contained.

6 "Processing" means any activity that breaks apart,
7 mixes, turns, aerates, or mechanically alters coconut rhinoceros
8 beetle host material.

9 "Redundant treatment" means treatment applied upon receipt
10 of coconut rhinoceros beetle host material that has already been
11 treated before transfer, as required by the department.

12 "Storage" means the accumulation or placement of coconut
13 rhinoceros beetle host material on a property for more than
14 seventy-two hours.

15 "Thermophilic composting" means a heat-based composting
16 process that achieves sustained elevated temperatures sufficient
17 to kill coconut rhinoceros beetle larvae and pupae.

18 "Transfer" means the sale, exchange, distribution, gifting,
19 or physical relocation of coconut rhinoceros beetle host
20 material from one property or operator to another.



1 "Treatment" means mechanical turning or heat-based
2 processing that meets the standards established in this section,
3 including required temperatures, durations, and documentation.

4 "Untreated material" means coconut rhinoceros beetle host
5 material that has not undergone treatment meeting the
6 temperature, duration, and documentation requirements
7 established under this section."

8 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

9 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Management; Invasive Species; Green Waste; Agriculture; Biosecurity; Penalties

Description:

Beginning 1/1/2027, establishes mandatory handling and storage rules for commercial and residential coconut rhinoceros beetle host material to reduce the spread of CRB within infested zones and to prevent spread into non-infested zones. Establishes penalties. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.



SB-2885-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:35:11 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taylor Kellerman	Kualoa Ranch	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

3/17/26

Subject: Strong Support for SB No. 2885 - Relating to Biosecurity

Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

My name is Taylor Kellerman and I reside on Oahu. I am writing in strong support of SB No. 2885.

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) poses one of the most serious invasive threats our state has faced in decades. As outlined in the bill, up to 90% of the CRB life cycle occurs hidden within mulch and green waste piles. Without consistent, enforceable statewide standards, these breeding sites will continue to fuel reinfestation and spread.

SB 2885 takes a science-based, proactive approach by addressing the source of the problem — untreated mulch and green waste — rather than focusing only on palm treatment. By establishing clear standards for turning, heat treatment, storage limits, and documentation, this measure strengthens Hawai‘i’s biosecurity infrastructure and reduces long-term economic risk.

The projected financial losses from CRB — potentially hundreds of millions of dollars — do not even account for the cultural and environmental impacts to our landscapes, agriculture, and tourism economy. Prevention is far more responsible and cost-effective than reaction.

This bill would establish a consistent statewide framework which is what is needed to effectively address the crippling CRB issue. Currently there are incomplete patchwork efforts that allow CRB to persist and spread due to inconsistencies. For these reasons, I respectfully urge your favorable consideration and passage of SB No. 2885.

Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to protecting Hawai‘i.

Respectfully,

Taylor Kellerman

Director of Diversified Agriculture and Land Stewardship

Kualoa Ranch Hawaii

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
Supporting SB2885 SD1, Relating to Biosecurity
Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
March 18, 2026 at 9:30 am
Conference Room 325 and via Videoconference**

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Hawai'i and Palmyra supports SB2885 SD1, which establishes mandatory handling and storage rules for commercial and residential coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) host material to reduce the spread of CRB within infested zones and to prevent spread into non-infested zones and establishes penalties, beginning 1/1/2027.

CRB is a destructive invasive pest that has spread rapidly since its first detection in Hawai'i, with established populations on O'ahu and Kaua'i and an active infestation being addressed on the west side of Hawai'i Island. CRB poses a serious threat to coconut palms, other culturally and agriculturally important plants, and the landscapes and economies that depend on them.

Effective management of green waste and mulch, which serve as primary CRB breeding sites, is essential to controlling beetle populations and preventing further spread. Current management approaches often focus on protecting individual trees, but without consistent standards for how mulch and green waste are handled, stored, treated, and moved, CRB populations continue to grow where they are already established.

This bill establishes a comprehensive and science-based framework for managing green waste in CRB-infested areas, focusing on population suppression at the source while reducing the risk of movement to other islands. We support the balanced approach in this bill, which emphasizes prevention, early intervention, and accountability while providing practical options for compliance. Establishing consistent standards will reduce reinfestation risk, protect cultural and agricultural resources, and strengthen long-term biosecurity resilience across Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of SB2885 SD1.

Guided by science, TNC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 84,000 acres in 13 nature preserves and 18 managed areas and have supported over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands.

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House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

March 18, 2026

9:30am

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 325

In **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB 2885

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

My name is Dr. Joy Leilei Shih-Casado, I am a scientist, and a conservationist for over 25 years. I am in strong support of SB 2885, which would establish consistent, statewide handling of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle host material, where it spends 80-90% of its lifecycle. This method is considered to be the most effective for mitigating the impact of this destructive invasive species, and for preventing its further spread. Hawai'i is known as the "Endangered Species Capital" of the world. CRB not only causes damage to our iconic niu, but threatens our endemic and endangered palms, kalo, banana, hala, and more. It is impossible to imagine Hawai'i without these culturally important species, but right now we are being forced to imagine it.

The standards that are defined in SB 2885 are straightforward, manageable, and most importantly, effective. The timely passage of SB 2885 may be our best if not final opportunity to win the battle against CRB. While certain regions and islands in Hawai'i have taken strong measures to prevent the movement of CRB into their areas, these patchwork efforts leave vulnerabilities that allow CRB to persist and spread due to inconsistent handling.

Economic losses due to CRB are projected to reach \$1 billion in the next decade and \$169 million annually by 2040 if its spread continues. However, these do not capture indirect cultural, environmental, and tourism costs. We cannot afford to rely on our small communities efforts and research labs to implement small scale or future solutions. This is an issue for the state, and the time is now for a simple but consistent and effective framework.

Mahalo nui for your attention to this critical matter and for the opportunity to testify. I am available for further discussion or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Joy Leilei Shih-Casado, Ph.D

joyshih@hawaii.edu

March 16, 2026

Subject: Strong Support for SB No. 2885 - Relating to Biosecurity Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

My name is Carey Aoyagi, and I am the General Manager at The Coconut Plantation AOA and also a Horticulturalist, we have 281 Coconut palm trees we manage and maintain on Oahu. We have taken the proactive approach in training and equipment to fight CRB invasion on our property. I submit this testimony in strong support of SB No. 2885.

The coconut rhinoceros beetle is not only an environmental threat — it is an economic one. Agricultural projections estimate potential losses reaching \$169 million annually by 2040 if CRB spreads further. Crops such as coconut, banana, hala, and other culturally significant plants are vulnerable.

Current regulations focus primarily on movement restrictions, but they do not adequately address breeding-site reduction. As this bill recognizes, untreated mulch and green waste are the primary drivers of CRB population growth. By requiring mechanical turning, verified heat treatment, and documentation prior to transfer or sale, SB 2885 closes significant regulatory gaps.

Importantly, this bill establishes enforceable, science-based standards while allowing equivalent validated treatment methods approved by the Department. It balances flexibility with accountability.

Failing to act will increase costs to businesses, counties, and taxpayers. Proactive management protects local agriculture, food security, and rural economies.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass SB No. 2885.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carey Aoyagi, General Manager
The Coconut Plantation AOA at Ko Olina Resort and Marina

SB-2885-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 11:31:28 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marguerite Casillas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

My name is Marguerite Casillas, and I support SB No. 2885.

Hawai‘i’s visitor industry depends on the health and beauty of our landscapes. Coconut palms are iconic features of our resorts, beaches, and public spaces. The unchecked spread of coconut rhinoceros beetle threatens not only private property and agriculture but also public infrastructure and tourism-related assets.

Economic estimates indicate potential losses between \$500 million and \$1 billion over the next decade. These figures do not include indirect impacts to visitor satisfaction, brand reputation, or county maintenance budgets.

SB 2885 provides a practical, enforceable solution by targeting CRB breeding sites — untreated mulch and green waste — and requiring treatment standards before storage or transfer. By implementing clear compliance measures and enforcement tools, this bill helps prevent reinfestation cycles that drive ongoing costs.

Biosecurity is economic security. Prevention today avoids far greater expenditures tomorrow. This bill would establish a consistent statewide framework which is what is needed to effectively address the crippling CRB issue. Currently there are incomplete patchwork efforts that allow CRB to persist and spread due to inconsistencies.

I respectfully urge passage of SB No. 2885.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Marguerite Casillas
92-1001 Aliinui Drive #24B
Kapolei, HI 96707

SB-2885-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 11:35:10 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristin Vasquez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

My name is Kristin Vasquez, and I reside in O`ahu. I am writing in strong support of SB No. 2885.

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) poses one of the most serious invasive threats our state has faced in decades. As outlined in the bill, up to 90% of the CRB life cycle occurs hidden within mulch and green waste piles. Without consistent, enforceable statewide standards, these breeding sites will continue to fuel reinfestation and spread.

SB 2885 takes a science-based, proactive approach by addressing the source of the problem — untreated mulch and green waste — rather than focusing only on palm treatment. By establishing clear standards for turning, heat treatment, storage limits, and documentation, this measure strengthens Hawai‘i’s biosecurity infrastructure and reduces long-term economic risk.

The projected financial losses from CRB — potentially hundreds of millions of dollars — do not even account for the cultural and environmental impacts to our landscapes, agriculture, and tourism economy. Prevention is far more responsible and cost-effective than reaction.

This bill would establish a consistent statewide framework which is what is needed to effectively address the crippling CRB issue. Currently there are incomplete patchwork efforts that allow CRB to persist and spread due to inconsistencies. For these reasons, I respectfully urge your favorable consideration and passage of SB No. 2885.

Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to protecting Hawai‘i.

Respectfully,

Kristin Vasquez

SB-2885-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 12:02:41 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Rubinstein	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Richard Rubinstein, and I reside in. Kapolei, Oahu]. I am writing in strong support of SB No. 2885.

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) poses one of the most serious invasive threats our state has faced in decades. As outlined in the bill, up to 90% of the CRB life cycle occurs hidden within mulch and green waste piles. Without consistent, enforceable statewide standards, these breeding sites will continue to fuel reinfestation and spread.

SB 2885 takes a science-based, proactive approach by addressing the source of the problem — untreated mulch and green waste — rather than focusing only on palm treatment. By establishing clear standards for turning, heat treatment, storage limits, and documentation, this measure strengthens Hawai‘i’s biosecurity infrastructure and reduces long-term economic risk.

The projected financial losses from CRB — potentially hundreds of millions of dollars — do not even account for the cultural and environmental impacts to our landscapes, agriculture, and tourism economy. Prevention is far more responsible and cost-effective than reaction.

This bill would establish a consistent statewide framework which is what is needed to effectively address the crippling CRB issue. Currently there are incomplete patchwork efforts that allow CRB to persist and spread due to inconsistencies. For these reasons, I respectfully urge your favorable consideration and passage of SB No. 2885.

Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to protecting Hawai‘i.

Respectfully,

Richard Rubinstein

SB-2885-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 4:43:34 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Venus Pajimola	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong Support for SB No. 2885 - Relating to Biosecurity
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

My name is Venus Pajimola, and I support SB No. 2885.

Hawai‘i’s visitor industry depends on the health and beauty of our landscapes. Coconut palms are iconic features of our resorts, beaches, and public spaces. The unchecked spread of coconut rhinoceros beetle threatens not only private property and agriculture but also public infrastructure and tourism-related assets.

Economic estimates indicate potential losses between \$500 million and \$1 billion over the next decade. These figures do not include indirect impacts to visitor satisfaction, brand reputation, or county maintenance budgets.

SB 2885 provides a practical, enforceable solution by targeting CRB breeding sites — untreated mulch and green waste — and requiring treatment standards before storage or transfer. By implementing clear compliance measures and enforcement tools, this bill helps prevent reinfestation cycles that drive ongoing costs.

Biosecurity is economic security. Prevention today avoids far greater expenditures tomorrow. This bill would establish a consistent statewide framework which is what is needed to effectively address the crippling CRB issue. Currently there are incomplete patchwork efforts that allow CRB to persist and spread due to inconsistencies.

I respectfully urge passage of SB No. 2885.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Venus Pajimola

SB-2885-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 6:33:33 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill and thank you for your hard work. Mahalo!

SB-2885-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:17:23 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

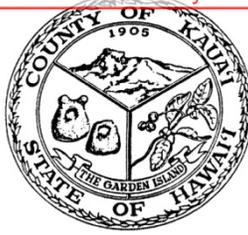
Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
michael santos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB2885 bill needs to be passed. It will ensure future generations that will not have to go to a museum to see what a coconut tree was. I thank you for your time and consideration on this matter

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Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawaii 96766

March 17, 2026

TESTIMONY OF FERN HOLLAND
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
SB 2885, SD 1, RELATING TO BIOSECURITY
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Wednesday, March 18, 2026
9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 325
Via Videoconference

Dear Chair Chun and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of the intent of SB 2885, SD 1, Relating to Biosecurity. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

I serve as a County Councilmember on Kaua'i and am Chair of the Parks & Recreation / Transportation Committee. I have witnessed firsthand the widespread devastation at the Wailua Golf Course as we struggle to manage an active infestation of coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) with limited resources, while relying almost entirely on State and Federal leadership for a biosecurity response. Over the past year, it has been deeply troubling to watch the rapid, islandwide spread of CRB. As an ecologist, I also understand what lies ahead for our county parks, historical sites, and culturally significant landscapes if we do not act decisively.

We need action and funding now.

On Kaua'i, CRB is no longer a theoretical risk. It is an active and escalating challenge impacting residents, landscapers, farmers, and county operations. SB 2885, SD 1 accurately reflects the latest science: **80% to 90% of the CRB lifecycle occurs hidden within mulch and green waste piles**, not in palm crowns. As such, breeding-site management is the most effective intervention point.

However, our on-the-ground experience makes clear that response efforts are currently hindered by a lack of direction, resources, and public education. Any regulatory framework must be paired with meaningful support mechanisms to be effective.

For more than a year, I have urged the State of Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, and now the Department of Biosecurity, to provide islandwide educational outreach so residents and operators clearly understand what actions they

can take immediately and what options are available to them, strongly advocating for islandwide mailers about severe biosecurity threats for Kaua‘i (e.g., Little Fire Ant and CRB currently); this has yet to happen. What is urgently needed is education, equipment, trap materials, and small grants to support steam treatment and other control measures. The challenge on Kaua‘i is not a lack of concern or willingness, but a lack of accessible resources, funding, and coordinated systems to respond at the scale and urgency that this threat requires.

CRB is not only an agricultural pest, but also a biosecurity, cultural, fiscal, and community resilience issue. Projected losses in the hundreds of millions of dollars over the next decade are realistic, and secondary impacts to coastal stability, cultural practices, tourism landscapes, and community identity cannot be overstated. While legislative action is critical, I respectfully suggest that equal attention be given to ensuring existing regulations are enforced. For example, the State of Hawai‘i Department of Health must ensure composting facilities are consistently achieving and maintaining lethal temperatures where required. Do they have the capacity to oversee more regulations? From my perspective, it does not appear to be the case. I urge the Committee to carefully consider how this bill would be implemented by agencies already struggling to enforce existing requirements. A compliance-driven approach without adequate education, tools, and funding risks falling short.

Regulation Without Resources Risks Worsening the Problem

While SB 2885, SD 1, establishes clear, science-based standards, regulations without parallel funding and technical support risk pushing CRB breeding material into unmanaged or illegal disposal pathways. When compliance becomes burdensome or costly and without assistance, green waste does not disappear, it moves. Often it ends up in gulches, forest edges, vacant lots, or informal dumping areas, where CRB can still breed successfully, even in less ideal habitat.

On Kaua‘i, where illegal dumping and unmanaged forested areas are already widespread, this risk is especially acute. CRB will adapt. If optimal mulch or green waste piles are unavailable, they will lay eggs in leaf litter, unmanaged organic debris, and disturbed soils, expanding their footprint and making detection and control even more difficult. Invasive species respond to pressure by exploiting system weaknesses, not by disappearing.

Using Mulch Management and Steam Treatment as a Solution

Given the abundance of mulch, green waste, and organic material across Kaua‘i’s unmanaged expanses, we should consider using mulch strategically as part of the solution. By creating managed mulch piles in key locations and ensuring they are sterilized before larvae mature into adult beetles, we can disrupt the life cycle at scale.

With appropriate investment and oversight, a regional bait-trap system in established infestation areas could significantly reduce the number of beetles reaching maturity. These managed piles could be enhanced with attractants such as ultraviolet (UV) light or pheromones to draw beetles away from surrounding unmanaged sites. Properly deployed, this approach could dramatically reduce population pressure and protect vulnerable trees.

Steam treatment, when applied correctly and consistently, is a proven, non-chemical, heat-based control method that reliably kills CRB larvae and pupae within mulch and green waste piles. When integrated into baited trap systems, steam treatment can be used to:

- Draw adult beetles into designated breeding material,
- Kill larvae before emergence, and
- Reduce overall population pressure over time.

CRB larvae take approximately five (5) to seven (7) months to develop, providing a critical window to interrupt the life cycle. That opportunity exists only if treatment tools are accessible, affordable, and widely deployed. Steam technologies, including commercially available systems such as those produced by Sioux, are already widely used in agriculture and biosecurity applications.

The Priority Must Be Management Capacity, Not Just Rules

The most effective path forward is to place resources directly into the hands of counties, community groups, landscapers, and tree trimmers so breeding sites can be managed at scale. This includes funding for mobile and fixed green waste treatment infrastructure like heavy machinery, steam treatment, curtain burners, and hot composting systems. Cost-share programs, grants, and direct financial support should be developed and promoted along with materials and support for regional trapping networks. Rapid response teams must be organized and deployed to address new infestations. Finally, it is crucial to invest in biological controls.

Urgency Matters

CRB populations on Kaua'i are entering a rapid growth phase, with islandwide detections increasing. When breeding sites remain untreated, populations grow exponentially. Compliance-heavy systems that delay action will not keep pace with the biology of this pest. Hawai'i does not have the luxury of slow rollouts or fragmented implementation. Therefore, what is needed now is:

- Rapid deployment of treatment tools,
- Community-scale solutions,
- County-level flexibility, and
- Stable funding streams for implementation, not simply oversight.

Conclusion

SB 2885, SD 1, is grounded in sound science and correctly targets the source of CRB population growth. I urge the Committee to retain its core intent while amending or supplementing the bill to ensure funding, equipment, education, and community-based management capacity are prioritized alongside regulatory standards.

Regulation that cannot be enforced is a poor use of limited time and resources. Worse, it risks unintentionally driving behaviors that exacerbate the problem. Any regulatory framework must be paired with cost-sharing, technical support, and clear guidance to avoid counterproductive outcomes.

Chair Chun and Members of the Committee
Re: Testimony in Support of SB 2885, SD 1
March 17, 2026
Page 4

CRB will exploit gaps faster than regulations can be enforced. The State's strongest defense is to make proper treatment easier, cheaper, and more accessible than noncompliance, and to aggressively target breeding sites before beetles emerge. People want to do the right thing; they simply need the necessary education and support to do so.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of SB 2885, SD 1, and *mahalo* for your leadership on Hawai'i's biosecurity future. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fern Holland", written in a cursive style.

FERN HOLLAND
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

RM:sf

March 17, 2026

Subject: Strong Support for SB No. 2885 - Relating to Biosecurity
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

My name is Karen Messick, full time resident in The Coconut Plantation Community at Ko Olina, and I support SB No. 2885.

Hawai'i's visitor industry depends on the health and beauty of our landscapes. Coconut palms are iconic features of our resorts, beaches, and public spaces. The unchecked spread of coconut rhinoceros beetle threatens not only the private property of our community of over 200 Coconut Palms and agriculture but also public infrastructure and tourism-related assets.

Economic estimates indicate potential losses between \$500 million and \$1 billion over the next decade. These figures do not include indirect impacts to our community landscape, visitor satisfaction, brand reputation, or county maintenance budgets.

SB 2885 provides a practical, enforceable solution by targeting CRB breeding sites — untreated mulch and green waste — and requiring treatment standards before storage or transfer. By implementing clear compliance measures and enforcement tools, this bill helps prevent reinfestation cycles that drive ongoing costs.

Biosecurity is economic security. Prevention today avoids far greater expenditures tomorrow. This bill would establish a consistent statewide framework which is what is needed to effectively address the crippling CRB issue. Currently there are incomplete patchwork efforts that allow CRB to persist and spread due to inconsistencies.

I respectfully urge passage of SB No. 2885.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Karen L Messick
The Coconut Plantation at Ko Olina Resident
Oahu

LATE

SB-2885-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:47:33 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JOHN ASSATURIAN	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Match 17, 2026

Subject: Strong Support for SB No. 2885 - Relating to Biosecurity

Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

My name is John Assaturian and I reside in Coconut Plantation at Ko Olina. I am writing in strong support of SB No. 2885.

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) poses one of the most serious invasive threats our state has faced in decades. As outlined in the bill, up to 90% of the CRB life cycle occurs hidden within mulch and green waste piles. Without consistent, enforceable statewide standards, these breeding sites will continue to fuel reinfestation and spread.

SB 2885 takes a science-based, proactive approach by addressing the source of the problem — untreated mulch and green waste — rather than focusing only on palm treatment. By establishing clear standards for turning, heat treatment, storage limits, and documentation, this measure strengthens Hawai‘i’s biosecurity infrastructure and reduces long-term economic risk.

The projected financial losses from CRB — potentially hundreds of millions of dollars — do not even account for the cultural and environmental impacts to our landscapes, agriculture, and tourism economy. Prevention is far more responsible and cost-effective than reaction.

This bill would establish a consistent statewide framework which is what is needed to effectively address the crippling CRB issue. Currently there are incomplete patchwork efforts that allow CRB to persist and spread due to inconsistencies. For these reasons, I respectfully urge your favorable consideration and passage of SB No. 2885.

Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to protecting Hawai‘i.

Respectfully,

John Assaturian

808-255-7147