

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
AND WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026
3:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 & VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2925
RELATING TO COCONUT TREES**

Chairs Gabbard and Lee, Vice Chairs Richards and Inouye, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2925 relating to coconut trees. This bill would establish coconut trees as a source of food and water, and as a cultural treasure. It would require the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish rules for coconut tree seed banks. It would also require owners or operators of properties with coconut trees to post and maintain a sign if the coconut tree is a landscape palm. The labeling standards for the landscape palms would be determined by the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. The bill would also establish an income tax credit for consumable coconut trees managed through natural management practices. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity ("Department") respectfully opposes this bill.

The Department appreciates the intent to promote pest management for coconut rhinoceros beetles, CRB. However, the Department is concerned that pesticides are not considered as one of the tools to combat CRB as it limits the options available to industry, agencies, and the public. The Department recommends the use of Integrated pest management, IPM, instead of "natural management." IPM is a concept of pest management that assesses the current situation based on the pest and takes advantage of all appropriate pest management options.

Chapter 149A of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) relates solely to pesticides. Only proposed section 149A-F involves actual pesticide use. The other proposed

sections to be added to HRS §149A, should be placed elsewhere. For example, Senate Bill No. 1582 HD1 (SLH 2025), Relating to the Coconut Tree, places support for coconuts in Chapter 141, HRS, and in Title 12, Subtitle 6, HRS. The Hawaii Seed Law, Chapter 150, HRS, already has provisions related to seeds (though limited to regulation of sales).

The Department disagrees with the definitions in proposed section 149A-B for “Consumable coconut tree” and “Landscape palm.” These two definitions should not hinge on the application of pesticides or poisons, and the language should reflect common terminology used for food use. Some suggested languages are provided below.

“Edible coconut tree” means a coconut tree that is grown and managed for food or feed use.

“Landscape palm” means any plant in the family Arecaceae that is grown and managed solely for ornamental or landscaping purposes.

The Department requests definitions for the terms “non-toxic,” “minimally toxic,” and “poison.” There are pesticide products that are fungicides or contain microbes that are considered hazardous to varying degrees and are regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA. Additionally, the EPA requires signal words that range from “Caution” to “Danger” on pesticide products to alert the user of the toxicity of the product.

The Department of Health has jurisdiction regarding the standards for potable water in the State. As such, the Department disagrees with establishing rules under HRS §149A-C regarding recognizing coconut trees as a natural source of potable water.

The proposed section under HRS §149A-A(3) for “allowing the lawful production and banking of viable coconut seeds” is unnecessary. Seed banks are not prohibited by any law, except to the extent affected by other laws, such as for biosecurity measures. Currently, seed banks are maintained by a variety of other organizations such as the Department of Land and Natural Resources, the University of Hawaii, and the Akaka Foundations. The Department already has the authority to adopt policies and/or rules for the items provided in subsection (c). Additionally, standards should not be voluntary if implemented in administrative rules and if standards are set, then the Department does not have the resources to enforce these standards on other seed banks that maintain coconut seeds.

Pesticides are regulated by the EPA to ensure their safe and effective use. Any coconut tree “treated with pesticides...that render the coconuts unsafe for human consumption” would be a violation of the Federal Insecticide, Rodenticide, and Fungicide Act, FIFRA, and the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, FFCA. The Pesticides Branch at Department and the Food and Drug Branch at Department of

Testimony of Sharon Hurd

February 11, 2026

Page 3 of 3

Health would take action to enforce these federal laws. The Department recommends the following language regarding "Landscape palms, labeling. (a)" below.

"Any landscape palm shall be clearly identified by a sign."

The Department expresses concern regarding the enforcement of the signage required for all landscape palms. The Department does not have the resources to enforce this law and subsequent rules for all property owners who have landscape palms. The implementation date of July 1, 2026, is too short to inform and allow compliance of the impacted individuals of the signage requirements.

The proposed bill includes amending the HRS, §235, and this Chapter does not fall under the Department's jurisdiction, but the Department of Taxation. The Department does not have the resources to conduct the inspections pertaining to the tax credit eligibility as provided in subsection (c).

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 HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

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. KANAKA'OLE
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. KANAKA'OLE
Acting Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
and
WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Wednesday, February 11, 2026
3:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2925
RELATING TO COCONUT TREES

Senate Bill 2925 establishes recognition of coconut trees as a source of food and water, and as a cultural treasure; requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish rules to allow the use of coconut tree seed banks in the State; requires owners or operators of property where any coconut tree is located to post and maintain a sign that clearly indicates that the coconut tree is a landscape palm, when applicable; requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish labeling standards for non-consumable landscape palms; and establishes an income tax credit for consumable coconut trees maintained through natural management practices. **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 **niu (coconut palm)** symbolizes resilience and sustainability in Hawaiian culture, closely tied to traditional practices, language, and daily life. Historically, coconut trees provided nourishment, medicine, building materials, and fiber for ropes and weaving. Recognizing niu as a sustainable staple food source is a step toward restoring and revitalizing its significance in our communities.

Hawai'i imports about 85–90 percent of its food, making the state highly vulnerable to supply chain disruptions. Niu is a versatile and nutritious food source, providing coconut water, milk, meat, and oil—all of which can support local food production and decrease dependence on

imported goods. Promoting coconut cultivation strengthens food sovereignty and offers accessible, nutrient-rich options for island residents.

Niu is an iconic tree that contributes to Hawai'i's sense of place. As a drought- and salt-tolerant species, it plays a vital role in coastal stabilization, erosion control, and carbon sequestration. Promoting the cultivation and protection of coconut trees strengthens the natural and cultural identity of Hawai'i while supporting local sustainability efforts.

The Department's Division of Forestry and Wildlife has a Community Coconut Project within the Kaulunani Urban and Community Forestry Program. The Community Coconut Project is dedicated to fostering "niu as a relationship rooted in community and aloha 'āina" and focuses on extending 'ike niu (coconut knowledge) to rejuvenate Hawaiian coconut resources, including the Uluniu system and the Hawaiian niu gene banking practice, within our Hawai'i communities. The project aligns with this bill.

Hawai'i recognizes the coconut palm as more than just a crop—it is a sacred and essential resource that supports our land, people, and cultural identity. This bill aligns with goals for food security, environmental stewardship, and cultural preservation.

The Department recognizes the importance of protecting coconut consumers from pesticides. Labeling coconut trees that have been treated with pesticides or poisons would help promote that protection.

The Department supports active control of CRB utilizing integrated pest management. All legal and scientifically proven methods should be considered

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

JOSH GREEN M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



GARY S. SUGANUMA
DIRECTOR

KRISTEN M.R. SAKAMOTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION

Ka 'Oihana 'Auhau

P.O. BOX 259

HONOLULU, HAWAII'1 96809

PHONE NO: (808) 587-1540

FAX NO: (808) 587-1560

**TESTIMONY OF
GARY S. SUGANUMA, DIRECTOR OF TAXATION**

TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. No. 2925, Relating to Coconut Trees

BEFORE THE:

Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment, and Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

DATE: Wednesday, February 11, 2026

TIME: 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 224

Chairs Gabbard and Lee, Vice-Chairs Richards, III, and Inouye, and Members of the Committees:

The Department of Taxation (DOTAX) offers the following comments regarding S.B. 2925 for your consideration.

S.B. 2925 adds a new part to chapter 149A, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to recognize coconut trees as a source of food and water and as a cultural resource, authorize coconut seed banks, require labeling of pesticide-treated "landscape palms," and direct the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to adopt related rules.

Section 2 of the bill creates a new refundable "natural management of the coconut rhinoceros beetle" income tax credit in chapter 235, HRS, for individual taxpayers who implement approved non-toxic management practices that result in "consumable coconut trees." The credit amount is based on an unspecified percentage of the qualified cost or an unspecified annual cap, whichever is less. Eligibility standards and cost certifications are to be determined and verified by the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity,

including taxpayer certification that only approved natural management practices were used and no prohibited pesticides were applied.

The refundable credit must be claimed within twelve months after the close of the taxable year and prohibits claiming the credit for expenses used to claim any other tax credit.

This measure takes effect on July 1, 2026, with the tax credit under section 2 applicable for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2026.

DOTAX defers to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity regarding its ability to certify qualified costs, but requests that a third-party certification requirement be maintained.

Additionally, DOTAX recommends that the tax credit be made nonrefundable, as refundable credits are more susceptible to waste, fraud, and abuse.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2925
RELATING TO COCONUT TREES

Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa of ka ‘Oihana Mahi‘ai a me
ke Ao Kūlohelohe
Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ka Wai, ‘Āina, a me ka
Mo‘omehey a me nā Hana No‘eau
Ke Kapikala o Hawai‘i

February 11, 2026

3:00PM

Room 229

Aloha e Chairs Gabbard and Lee, Vice Chairs Richards and Inouye, and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment, and Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS SB2925**, which responds to the devastating impacts of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) on niu across ka Pae ‘Āina Hawai‘i by recognizing the importance of niu, creating a labeling system to identify niu trees treated with pesticides, and establishing a tax credit to offset the costs of managing CRB through natural methods.

Niu is part of a network of pilina (relationships) between Native Hawaiians and ‘āina that sustained communities since time immemorial. Recognizing niu as a food and water source and affirming its cultural significance ensures that these relationships to ‘āina are preserved and carried forward for future generations. Unfortunately, CRB has already had devastating impacts on our niu trees. Additionally, in managing CRB, many niu trees have been treated with toxic pesticides, rendering their niu unsafe for human consumption. The loss of our niu comes with the loss of an essential source of food and water as well as traditional and customary practices

SB2925 introduces a framework around natural management of CRB: incentivizing treatment methods that are not toxic to humans, ensuring niu trees unsafe for consumption are labeled, and providing a tax credit to reimburse individuals for the costs related to CRB management. Transparency regarding pesticide use to treat niu protects access to safe, consumable niu. As communities face increasing pressures from climate change, rising food costs, and loss of traditional resources, ensuring trees that

have been treated with pesticides are properly marked prevents unintended exposure to harmful chemicals and promotes accountability in land and resource management practices.

Providing a tax credit to offset non-toxic and natural management of CRB encourages individuals to participate in the management of CRB rather than relying solely on underfunded state agencies. While a tax credit will have some revenue loss to the state, recruiting everyone to support long-term, environmentally sustainable management of CRB that protect food and water sources will better assist the state in managing the devastating impacts of CRB. Management strategies that rely less on pesticides address the threat of CRB while maintaining alignment with mālama ‘āina to safeguard niu for subsistence and cultural purposes.

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **PASS SB2925.**

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: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair
Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

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

DATE: February 10, 2026

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF SB2925, RELATING TO COCONUT TREES**

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

The Act establishes recognition of coconut trees as a source of food and water, and as a cultural treasure. Requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish rules to allow the use of coconut tree seed banks in the State. Requires owners or operators of property where any coconut tree is located to post and maintain a sign that clearly indicates that the coconut tree is a landscape palm, when applicable. Requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish labeling standards for non-consumable landscape palms. Establishes an income tax credit for consumable coconut trees maintained through natural management practices.

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

1. SB2925 strengthens protection of coconut trees, which are a vital part of Hawaii's cultural heritage, traditional food systems, and coastal landscapes, helping ensure they remain for future generations.
2. By supporting regulated coconut seed banks and biosecurity rules, this bill creates a safer, more reliable supply of healthy planting material, protecting communities and farmers from devastating pests like the coconut rhinoceros beetle.

3. Expanding and safeguarding coconut tree plantings supports diversified local agriculture and value-added cottage industries.

Mahalo for your consideration.



The Senate
Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
Wednesday, February 11, 2026
3:00 pm Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
State Capitol

Testimony in Support of SB 2925

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Lee, Vice Chairs Richards and Inouye, and Members of the Committees,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is **in support of SB 2925** *Relating to Coconut Trees*. This bill recognizes coconut trees (niu) as an important food, water, and cultural resource, enables seed production and banking for consumable coconut trees, requires labeling for landscape or ornamental coconut trees treated with pesticides, and requires the Hawaii Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) to adopt rules. This bill also provides a tax credit to encourage the use of natural management techniques to manage coconut rhinoceros beetle in consumable coconut trees.

Coconut trees are important for food, cultural arts and products, natural infrastructure, and aesthetics, and the spread of the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) across Oahu and Kauai, and now starting on Hawaii Island, is heartbreaking. For each of these islands, the use of pesticides is vital during an eradication attempt due to their efficacy. While pesticides are effective at killing CRB, their use requires the removal of flowers to prevent impacts to bees and prevents the harvest of coconuts for consumption. On islands where this pest has become established, it is important to provide the public with a variety of management options and find some balance between the need to control CRB in some coconut trees while utilizing other control options in trees that would be used for consumption or propagation.

If this bill advances, we ask that you consider adding a definition for “natural management practices.”

Mahalo for the opportunity to support SB 2925 and for your consideration of our testimony.

Aloha,



Christy Martin
CGAPS Program Manager



Stephanie Easley
CGAPS Legal Fellow

Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Christian Zuckerman
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

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Kelii Gannet
Kohala, Hawai'i

East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Ka'u, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawai'i

Gina Lind
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahālāwai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Moloka'i

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Rachel LaDrig
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i



Aloha Chairs Gabbard & Lee, Vice Chairs Richards & Inouye, and Committee Members,

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 SB2925.**

SB2925 provides a meaningful recognition of coconut trees not only as essential sources of sustenance and hydration but also as vital cornerstones of Hawaii's cultural heritage. Elevating the status of coconut trees acknowledges their multifaceted contributions to our community and environment. By mandating the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish guidelines for coconut tree seed banks, the bill ensures the preservation and propagation of these invaluable resources, fostering both agricultural sustainability and cultural continuity.

The proposed income tax credit for those who maintain consumable coconut trees through natural management practices offers incentives that align with sustainable agricultural methods. This approach not only supports individual farmers and landowners but also reinforces the state's commitment to environmentally friendly agricultural practices. Together, these measures highlight a proactive stance toward nurturing a resource that is integral to both our islands' ecosystems and cultural fabric.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
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e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 11, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

TESTIMONY ON SB 2925
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
3:00 PM

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Lee, Vice-Chairs Richards and Inouye, and Members of the Committees:

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 provides comments on SB 2925. HFB previously supported legislation that recognized coconut as an important food source, cultural resource, and component of Hawai'i's food security. We appreciate the continued legislative attention to the role coconut trees play in community resilience and local food systems.

HFB recognizes the serious threat posed by the coconut rhinoceros beetle and supports efforts to expand effective management tools, encourage replanting, and preserve coconut resources for future generations. Provisions related to seed banks and incentives for management practices acknowledge the real costs and challenges faced by those caring for coconut trees.

At the same time, SB 2925 introduces new regulatory distinctions, labeling requirements, and implementation details that would be established through future rulemaking. As this measure moves forward, HFB encourages careful consideration of how these provisions may apply to agricultural operations, mixed-use lands, and existing management practices, and the importance of maintaining flexibility for producers operating under diverse conditions.

HFB appreciates the opportunity to provide comments and looks forward to continued collaboration on approaches that support food security, cultural values, and practical, workable solutions for managing coconut trees and invasive species.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



February 10, 2026

To: Chair Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair Tim Richards and the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment; Chair Chris Lee, Vice Chair Lorraine R. Inouye and the Senate Committee on Water, Land Culture and the Arts

Subject: **SB2925**, Relating to Coconut Trees

Aloha,

I am writing to support SB2925 with comments. This measure would establish recognition of coconut trees as a source of food and water, and emphasize its cultural significance. It requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish rules to allow the use of coconut tree seed banks to grow more coconut and establish labeling standards for non-consumable landscape palms. Clear signage would need to be posted identifying a coconut tree is a landscape palm when that is the case, by owners. It would also incentivize non-toxic practices when maintaining coconut trees with regards to fighting against the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) by establishing an income tax credit.

Coconut trees, or kumu niu, are culturally significant across the Pacific, and Hawai'i is no exception. They are often called the tree of life. From coconut we can get water, milk, oil, meat, sugar, and building and crafting materials. They are a symbol of resilience and sustainability, and it's a shame that to some they are known only for their role in landscaping. Now more than ever it is apparent that the coconut tree needs to be protected with the presence of CRB on our islands. Our coconut tree population is being significantly impacted by CRB. According to CRBHawaii.org, the insect has been detected on O'ahu, Hawai'i Island, Kaua'i, and Maui, and has affected the growth of many coconut trees.

To mitigate harm being done to coconut trees, one solution is to continue to grow more trees to compensate for the loss, and this measure would make sure that there are rules adopted around seeds banks, and seed handling and transport in order to minimize the spread of CRB. Using pesticides and poisons makes it unsafe to consume the fruit, and organizations such as Aloha Organic have proved that the use of natural management practices can combat the insect without needing to use chemicals that are harmful to public health, through their development of organic CRB deterrent. Incentivizing individuals to maintain their coconut trees using natural management practices would allow there to be more coconut trees available for consumption, and as mentioned earlier, the ways in which coconut can be consumed is numerous, so doing so would help increase Hawai'i's ability to be self-sustainable.

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.



**HAWAI'I
FOOD+
POLICY**

Honolulu, HI 96813
food@purplemaia.org

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure and thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo,
Sydney Haas & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

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.

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 10:27:03 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Godfrey Akaka	Testifying for The Native Hawaiian Gathering Rights Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We the NHGRA are in support of SB2925. Coconuts are a valuable resource for food for our community. The importance of requiring labels is common sense for safety purposes. Mahalo

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 10:53:34 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chance Correa	Testifying for Malama 'Aina Landscape & Masonry Design LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We stand in solidarity with SB 2925 to recognize the coconut tree known as "the tree of life" because It has great cultural significance and is one of our greatest natural resources, providing Pure organic food and water for many Residence, Polynesians and cultural practitioners.



Written Testimony before the Joint Senate Committees on Agriculture &
Environment and on Water, Land, Culture & the Arts

Wednesday, Feb 11, 2026 (3:00 pm) Conference Room 224

RE: SB 2983 RELATING TO COCONUT TREES.

Chairs Gabbard and Lee, Vice Chairs Richards and Inouye and Members of the Joint Senate
Committees on Agriculture & Environment and on Water, Land, Culture & the Arts:

Trees for Honolulu's Future ("TFHF") is a nonprofit organization with a vision for a tree-filled island
that preserves and enhances our quality of life, especially in the face of climate change.

TFHF supports SB 2983, which advances the protection and stewardship of nui — a vital source of
food and water and an important cultural resource.

Research consistently shows that trees provide multiple benefits: they create shade and reduce
temperatures through evapotranspiration; recharge groundwater and reduce runoff that harms
reefs; capture pollutants and store carbon; and contribute to safer, calmer streets. Yet Honolulu has
experienced a decline in urban tree canopy in recent years.

Coconut trees are especially significant. For various reasons, many nui are now treated as ornamental
rather than productive, and all face threats such as the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB). This bill
provides an opportunity to address these challenges and strengthen stewardship of this important
resource.

TFHF respectfully urges passage of SB 2983 to the next committees for further consideration.

Sincerely,

Daniel Dinell
President

HONOLULU is HOT TREES are COOL

Visit us: www.TreesForHonolulu.org Contact us: info@TreesForHonolulu.org Voice/Fax/Text: 808-707-6353
P.O. Box 12051, Honolulu, Hawaii 96828

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 5:18:27 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Manawaiakea	Testifying for E Ola Kakou Hawai'i a waiwaiole	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2925

Relating to Coconut Trees

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

Kou Inoa Roslyn Cummings and I submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 2925.

Coconut trees are not simply “landscape plants.”

They are waiwai-a living food system, water source, and cultural & customary resource that has sustained Ko Hawaii Pae 'Aina for generations.

For Na Kanaka the people (1839 Declaration of Rights), Ho'oilina Heirs/Legacy, Hoa'aina Native Tenants, Kanaka Maoli and Kaiulu local communities, niu (coconut) has always been essential

-For drinking water

-For nutrition

-For medicine

-For building materials

-For cultural practice

-For food security

Protecting niu is protecting kanaka.

Public Health and Food Security

At a time when Hawai'i is increasingly vulnerable to supply chain disruptions, climate change, and rising food costs, we must strengthen our local food systems — not weaken them.

Niu Coconut trees provide-hydration, nutrition, sustainability.

Allowing widespread pesticide use on trees that produce food and water puts our not only na kanaka the people at risk but also waiwai our natural resources.

No Kaiialu community should have to question whether their use of niu coconut is contaminated.

Pesticides used to address Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) infestations do not remain isolated.

They Leach into soil, Enter groundwater, Affect pollinators, Harm surrounding Kaiiaola.

To treat them merely as “ornamental palms” law from lived reality.

Respectfully, Roslyn Cummings

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 4:15:08 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Pieper	Testifying for Hanai Kaiaulu	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I strongly support this measure recognizing coconut trees as a source of food, water, and cultural heritage, and for establishing protections, seed banks, and incentives that ensure their survival for future generations.

The coconut tree—niu—is widely known across Polynesia as the Tree of Life. Every part of the tree has purpose: food, water, medicine, fiber, tools, shelter, ceremony, and navigation. For Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, niu is not simply a landscape palm—it is a living relative and a cornerstone of cultural practice, food security, and resilience.

Contemporary colonization continues today in subtle but damaging ways. One example is the routine removal of coconut seeds from public spaces, preventing natural regeneration and severing people from access to food and cultural resources. Labeling coconut trees as “non-consumable” without distinction has contributed to fear-based management practices that prioritize liability over cultural survival. This bill directly addresses that harm.

At the same time, Hawai‘i is losing the battle against the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB). Without immediate and culturally informed action—including seed banking, propagation, and natural management practices—we risk losing not only the trees themselves, but the cultural knowledge and lifeways tied to them. The loss of niu would be an irreversible loss to Hawai‘i’s identity, ecosystems, and people.

I strongly support:

- The establishment of coconut tree seed banks to protect genetic diversity
- Clear labeling standards distinguishing consumable coconut trees from ornamental landscape palms
- Required signage that prevents unnecessary removal of fruit from culturally important trees
- Tax credits that incentivize natural, non-chemical management practices

- Recognition of coconut trees as food-producing assets rather than hazards

This measure is a critical step toward food sovereignty, cultural restoration, and ecological responsibility. Protecting niu is protecting Hawai‘i’s future.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support.

Respectfully,
Mikala Pieper, Director
Hānai Kaiāulu



HAWAII PEST CONTROL ASSOCIATION

Century Square – 1188 Bishop St., Ste. 1003*Honolulu, HI 96813-3304

Telephone (808) 533-6404 • Fax (808) 533-2739

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION

Senate Bill 2925 Relating to Coconut Trees

Hearing: AEN/WLA
Date: February 11, 2026
Time: 3:00 PM

Submitted by: Hawaii Pest Control Association
Position: Oppose

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

The Hawaii Pest Control Association (HPCA) respectfully submits this testimony in opposition to SB2925 unless amended to expressly exempt licensed pest control operators.

SB2925 seeks to recognize coconut trees as a source of food and water and as a cultural treasure, establish coconut seed banks, impose labeling requirements for landscape palms, and create an income tax credit for coconut trees maintained through “natural management” practices. While HPCA appreciates the intent to protect coconut trees and address the coconut rhinoceros beetle, we have serious concerns regarding the measure’s impact on effective pest management and licensed pest control operations.

First, SB2925 prioritizes “natural management” practices in a manner that may discourage or restrict the use of legally registered, science-based pest control tools. Licensed pest control operators rely on integrated pest management strategies that may include biological controls, sanitation, monitoring, and, when necessary, targeted pesticide applications approved by the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Limiting access to these tools could reduce the ability to effectively control invasive pests and protect public and environmental health.

Second, the labeling and signage requirements proposed in the measure raise concerns regarding implementation, enforcement, and liability. The bill does not clearly address how responsibility will be allocated among property owners, operators, and licensed applicators, nor does it provide sufficient clarity regarding compliance standards.

Finally, SB2925 does not adequately account for the role of licensed pest control professionals who are trained, regulated, and essential partners in managing invasive species statewide. Absent a clear exemption, the measure may unintentionally interfere with lawful pest control activities and undermine coordinated response efforts.

For these reasons, the Hawaii Pest Control Association respectfully requests that the Committee defer SB2925 for further stakeholder engagement and refinement, or alternatively, amend the measure to explicitly exempt licensed pest control operators from its restrictions and labeling requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,

Emmanuel Zibakalam

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 1:20:28 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel Anthony	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

SB2925

Testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of the Measure Relating to Coconut Trees (Niu)

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

My name is Daniel Anthony, and I submit this testimony on behalf of my ‘ohana — a subsistence Kanaka Maoli family of nine who lives on the land and depends on the land for food, water, medicine, and cultural continuity.

We write in strong support of this measure because it speaks directly to our lived reality and to harms that our family, and many families like ours, are already experiencing.

For generations, coconut trees — niu — have sustained our people. They are not decoration. They are not landscaping. They are food, fresh water, medicine, cordage, building material, ceremony, and survival. For our family, niu is part of how we feed our children, teach our kūpuna’s knowledge, and remain rooted to place.

Yet despite this reality, the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity has never had a plan to save coconut trees as food trees. Their actions and policies have focused almost entirely on protecting landscape palms, while ignoring — and in many cases actively endangering — consumable coconut trees relied upon by subsistence families.

At no point were our voices meaningfully included.

There was no cultural perspective.

No subsistence agriculture lens.

No community-based decision-making.

Instead, chemical treatments and management approaches were implemented that made coconuts unsafe to consume, without warning, labeling, or consent. For families like ours, this meant the loss of trusted food and water sources — something no Native Hawaiian family should ever be forced to endure by their own State.

These decisions broke community trust. They created fear around trees our families have relied on for generations. Worse, they may have permanently ended multi-generational coconut genetics that can never be replaced — trees passed down through families, adapted to place, climate, and culture over hundreds of years.

That loss cannot be measured in dollars.

It is a loss of ancestry, resilience, and future food security.

This measure is important because it finally begins to correct that harm.

By recognizing coconut trees as a source of food and water — not just ornamentals — and by supporting seed banks, transparency, and non-toxic, culturally informed management, this bill acknowledges something our families have always known: niu is sacred, living infrastructure for Kanaka Maoli survival.

This bill also represents an opportunity to restore trust — by ensuring that future decisions include subsistence families, cultural practitioners, and communities who live closest to the land and carry this knowledge forward for the next generation.

We urge you to pass this measure, not only as policy, but as an act of kuleana — to protect what remains, to honor what has been lost, and to ensure that our children and grandchildren will still know the taste of fresh coconut, the sound of husking, and the responsibility of caring for these trees.

Mahalo for hearing the voices of families who live this reality every day.

Me ke aloha ‘āina,

Ohana Anthony -Aea

A Kanaka Maoli Subsistence ‘Ohana of Nine
Kahaluu, Oahu

SB 2925

2/10/26

Aloha, my name is Nākai‘elua Villatora I am from the ahupua‘a of Kalapakī, the moku of Puna and the mokupuni of Kaua‘i. I am a wahine ‘ōiwi, makuahine and ho‘oilina Hawai‘i Kanaka Maoli. This is a declaration of truth and standing for the protection of niu as a kumu waiwai Hawai‘i in perpetuity. The State has a duty to uphold the protection of our natural resources and all rights pertaining to customary practices in Hawai‘i for the benefit of our people, Kanaka Maoli under HRS Article XII, Section 7. You must act under your oath to uphold these laws. To deny the protection of niu is to deny the health of our people, our waiwai and our ‘āina.

I would like to share a small portion from a kūpuna that was published in Ka Nūpepa Kū‘oko‘a on the 15th of October 1897. Title He Pule Niu;

“Kupu ka niu,
Kupu ke kanaka,
Pua ka niu,
Pua ka wahine ui,
Hua ka niu,
Hua na keiki,
Na pulapula o ka aina.”

”Sprout the coconut,
Sprout the people,
Bloom the coconut,
Bloom the beautiful women,
Produce the coconut,
Produce the children,
The descendants of the land.”

A true testament of the connection and reflection of health wellbeing of niu to our people, Kanaka Maoli. We cannot allow the erasure of niu as a vital food source for it to become merely be considered a “landscape palm” in the tourism industry. In times of food insecurities, niu is a foundational resource that never before was under threat, until now. We must not forget the ulu niu that sustained Kanaka Maoli since time immemorial. I, Nākai‘elua do not consent to the continued negligence for the protection of niu. Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono. Mahalo.

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 1:22:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alohi Aea	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha to our legislators and mahalo nui for hearing this bill to protect the valuable resource of our coconut trees. In the last few years, my 'ohana's pilina to this tree has grown, and we are learning more about how to care for and value our niu as a food and water source . As a mother and Native Hawaiian, I can not imagine a future where my children and grand children do not have access to coconuts grown in Hawai'i. At the same time, I know that many of the plants that we rely on for our way of life are threatened by the increase of the CRB in our communities.

I believe this bill is one major step in protecting not only our niu for generations to come but also a stepping stone in mobilizing our communities to work together in order to protect many more of the valued canoe crops that our Pacific communities rely on including ulu, kalo, mai'a and hala. These plants are an important part of the fabric of what makes Hawai'i so special, and recognizing the importance of niu is critical in protecting all of them for our future.

Mahalo.

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 6:45:33 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Klayton Kubo	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Support

Klayton Kubo

Waimea, Kaua'i

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 4:47:47 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joanna McCormack jardine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony of Joanna McCormack Jardine
In Support of SB 2925 – Relating to Coconut Trees (Niu)**

**AEN/WLA Public Hearing
February 11, 2026 | 3:00 p.m.
Room 224 & Videoconference**

Aloha Chair Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair Tim Richards, and Members of the Committee Lynn Decoite, Karl Rhoads, and Brenton Awa, as well as Chair Chris Lee, Vice Chair Lorraine Inouye, and Members of the Committee Stanley Change, Rachele Lamosao, and Samantha DeCorte, along with the Senate Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection.

My name is Joanna McCormack Jardine, and it is with a deep sense of responsibility that I submit my testimony in strong support of SB 2925, which seeks to protect, preserve, and promote the growth of niu (coconut trees) in Hawai‘i.

I am a Masters in Social Work student at UH Mānoa focusing on behavioral mental health, with a Bachelor’s in Psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago. I am also a mother of four young keiki at a New Century Public Charter School here on Kaua‘i, and someone with substantial lived experience navigating the intricacies of abuse and trauma. Through both my personal and academic work, I have come to understand the deep and urgent need for land-based, culturally rooted interventions that promote holistic health and wellness at a statewide level.

Through the teachings of Dr. Manulani Aluili Meyer and the work she has carried out alongside Indrajit Gunasekara on the campus of University of Hawai‘i West O‘ahu, I have

witnessed how the cultivation of coconut trees fosters a powerful symbiotic relationship between land and community. The growing of niu is not merely agricultural; it is relational, educational, and healing. I am hopeful that this relationship will be given the means it needs to continue to flourish and branch out across our islands as we collectively learn how to better care for this vital resource.

Food sovereignty is about more than access to nourishment for our 'ohana. The cultivation of niu also fosters purpose, responsibility, cultural connection, and belonging—protective factors that can serve as preventative measures against abuse and harm within our communities. In this way, SB 2925 represents an investment not only in environmental stewardship, but also in public health, family well-being, and community resilience.

As taught by Dr. Meyer, “When coconuts grow, humanity flourishes. Kupu ka niu, kupu ke kanaka”.

It is the responsibility of the people to advocate for laws that reflect social justice, just as it is the responsibility of the Senate to legislate for the general welfare of our state. I respectfully urge you to pass SB 2925, recognizing how imperative this measure is during a time of environmental invasion and social affliction.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,
Joanna McCormack Jardine

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 3:15:56 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT!!!

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 4:52:48 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kahikina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this measure.

Niu is the tree of life. We need to protect it and all publicly available coconuts on all islands.

Please consider establishing heirloom seed banks in every ahupuaa and ensure that these seed banks will be lawfully protected from the university of Hawaii or other institutions/companies interested in genetically modifying these seeds.

Please also consider to require labeling for trees treated for fire ants where fire ants are present.

Mahalo nui for all that you do to protect our food resources.

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 2:59:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yanrong Chen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB2925, which recognizes coconut trees as vital food, water, and cultural resources; regulates their labeling and management; and provides tax incentives for naturally maintained consumable coconut trees.

My name is Yanrong Chen and I am a rising junior of 'Iolani School testifying in support of SB2925.

In recent years I have grown to become more climate conscious than ever whether that be for our mountains, our streams or our oceans. I have swimmmed in “fishless” waters, ones that once held abundant reefs but now remain as dead rocks. I have hiked the Wai’anae mountains to find not native species thriving in our forests, but others that dominate. Our ecosystems and environments are under threat because of climate change. Habitat loss, food chain destruction, and other weighing factors have already caused devastating effects in every aspect of our mauka to makai. And I urge the public and our government to call for long-term solutions.

Coconut trees are often overlooked as ornamental landscaping trees planted on the side of Waikiki, but Coconut trees, or niu, have long been a vital part of Hawaiian culture and sustenance. Traditionally, every part of the tree served a purpose: from the fruit providing nourishing food and clean drinking water, to the leaves and husks being used for weaving, shelter, and tools. More than just a resource, the niu symbolizes life, resilience, and connection between people and the ‘āina. By recognizing and protecting these trees, we preserve not only a food source but also an important part of heritage and identity.

However, our coconut resources now face a serious threat from the invasive Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle, which destroys trees from the crown and prevents them from regenerating. Many of the remaining coconut trees are aging or being removed due to infestation risks, leaving fewer edible coconuts available for communities. By offering a tax credit for maintaining consumable coconut trees grown through natural and sustainable practices, this bill encourages residents to preserve these vital food sources, protect healthy trees, and strengthen local food security.

Hawai'i is currently facing a long-term threat of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles and it is important that we create plans for this problem. Hawai'i must take a multi-pronged approach to fisheries management and environmental protection to ensure the viability of the land and people. This bill helps achieve those goals efficiently and equitably, and I'd love to discuss this further if there are any concerns or questions.

Mahalo!

Yanrong Chen, Kapahulu/Mo'ili'ili

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 8:52:14 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zane Verdier-Ching	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support bill sb2925. I eat coconut everday; either being water, milk, or the coconut meat. I also use the tree to strain liquids and the coconut milk i make frō scratch. I also use the tree for cultural purposes. Without knowing if trees have been poisoned, injected, or sprayed. Its quite scary to get coconuts here locally now. I depend on this food source and it's already getting scarce as is. This bill would be the first step in preserving this precious food and water source. I urge you beg of you to pass this bill!

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 8:52:50 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lina Liu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Lina Liu, and I am writing in **strong support** of this measure.

This bill recognizes what many in Hawai‘i have long known: coconut trees are not merely ornamental landscape features, but vital sources of food, water, cultural practice, and climate resilience. By formally recognizing coconut trees as both a food-producing resource and a cultural treasure, this measure helps correct a long-standing gap in how these trees are categorized and managed across our islands.

Clarifying the distinction between consumable coconut trees and non-consumable landscape palms through signage and labeling standards is a practical and much-needed step. Too often, coconut trees are treated as decorative palms, resulting in unnecessary removal, missed opportunities for food production, and confusion for property owners, landscapers, and the public. Establishing clear labeling standards will reduce mismanagement while supporting public understanding of which trees can safely contribute to local food access.

The requirement for the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish rules allowing the use of coconut seed banks is also forward-thinking. Seed banks are critical infrastructure for climate adaptation, biodiversity preservation, and long-term food security. Ensuring that coconut genetic diversity is preserved and made accessible supports Hawai‘i’s resilience in the face of changing environmental conditions.

Finally, the income tax credit for consumable coconut trees maintained through natural management practices provides an important incentive for landowners to steward these trees as food resources rather than ornamental landscaping. This aligns economic incentives with public health, environmental stewardship, and food system sustainability.

At a time when Hawai‘i is working to strengthen local food production, cultural restoration, and climate resilience, this bill advances all three priorities in a practical and meaningful way.

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

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 10:40:43 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ati Jeffers-Fabro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kakou,

I am testifying in support of SB2925 relating to our beloved Niu. This bill recognizes the truly important cultural value the Niu has in our Pae `Aina but also its importance to peoples throughout the world. It has sustained people with its many uses to the point of being deified as a provider of life.

SB2925 will elevate the status of our beloved Niu by creating accesibilty for planting, protection of fruit bearing species and more compliance on invasives for the State Department of Agriculture.

Please consider supporting this Bill and bring Niu back to its proper status as a tree of life rather than a tourist icon.

Me ke Aloha Pumehana

Ati Jeffers-Fabro

February 10, 2026

Aloha Chair and Committee Members:

I, Cheyenne Paris ‘Makanui’ Kitahara respectfully submit this testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of SB2925**. As a Hawaiian, a mother, a cultural practitioner, an eleventh generation grand-daughter of Kekahawai’olenākona, kia’i wai and fifth generation kia’i loko, **I SUPPORT SB2925** establishing the recognition of coconut trees as a source of food and water, and as a cultural treasure.

I humbly urge legislation to recognize Kumu Niu, coconut trees as a cultural treasure. Niu holds deep cultural, practical, and spiritual importance in Hawaiian culture. Niu is considered a vital **“life tree” and “giver of life”** because nearly every part could be used. The fruit provided food and drink, while the husk, shell, leaves, and trunk were used to make tools, ropes, mats, containers, thatching, and canoes.

Beyond everyday survival, coconut trees were woven into **traditional knowledge and practices**. They played roles in medicine, fishing, farming, and ceremonial life, and different varieties were carefully cultivated for specific uses. **The coconut also symbolized abundance, sustenance, and connection to the land (‘āina), reflecting the Hawaiian value of living in balance with nature.**

Coconuts were used in **healing and protective rituals**, where **their purity and life-sustaining qualities were thought to transfer strength, fertility, and well-being to a person. The water symbolized cleansing and renewal, while the hard shell represented protection.**

In traditional belief, *niu* is considered a **kino lau** (physical manifestation or body form) of Kū—meaning the tree itself embodies the *mana* (spiritual power) of this god. **This association reflects the coconut’s vital role in life, strength, leadership, and sustenance, qualities that are also attributed to Kū.**

Kū is one of the four great Hawaiian gods and is connected with war, governance, strength, and productive forces in nature. Because *niu* is seen as a body form of Kū, it was treated with respect in rituals and daily life; for example, the coconut water (*wai niu*) was sacred and used in ceremonies because it was untouched by human hands

In conclusion, I ask the Hawaii State Legislature to please do the following:

- 1. Establish the recognition of coconut trees as a source of food and water, and as a cultural treasure.**
- 2. Require the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish rules to allow the use of coconut tree seed banks in the State.**
- 3. Establish an income tax credit for consumable coconut trees maintained through natural management practices.**

I SUPPORT SB2925.

Mahalo,

Cheyenne Paris ‘Makanui’ Kitahara / Kekahawaiolenakona

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 11:09:48 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sierra Vaughn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support bill 2925 SB. We are under a state of emergency with the CRB infestation. Coconut trees are crucial to hawaii as a local food source and an important cultural resource. The loss of coconut tree will have an irreversible negative impact on our food systems. We as a state my educate the public and take large scale collective action.

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 11:48:15 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB2925. We need to protect all our food sources in Hawaii and coconut is and will always be a food source. Protecting our coconut is imperative!

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 2:58:17 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nathan Kamahele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

For Centuries the Coconut tree has been the tree of life. Sustaining life everywhere it is planted and utilized. Not ever has it been seen and ornamental till recently especially in colonized areas and marketed to tourists.

The coconut tree is far more than a tropical decoration for tourists; it is a critical lifeline that provides total sustenance for millions of people worldwide. Utilizing it as the "Tree of Life" means recognizing that every single part—from roots to leaves—can be repurposed to fulfill all basic human needs for survival. Sustaining Life: Beyond the Postcard The coconut tree provides a complete survival kit for coastal and island communities: Nutrition and Hydration: The fruit offers nutrient-dense meat rich in healthy fats, fiber, and minerals. The water is an electrolyte-rich drink that has even been used as an emergency IV fluid substitute due to its chemical similarity to human plasma. Shelter and Construction: The trunk provides sturdy timber for building houses and boats, while the leaves are woven into durable thatched roofing, mats, and baskets. Energy and Fuel: Dried coconut husks and shells serve as a primary source of charcoal and fuel for cooking and warmth. Medicine and Hygiene: Traditional practices use the roots for medicinal teas and dyes, and the antimicrobial properties of coconut oil are used for skincare, hair health, and treating ailments. Essential Ecological and Economic Role Without coconut trees, the impact would be devastating to both the environment and local economies: Coastal Protection: Their dense root systems stabilize sandy shores, acting as a natural defense against erosion, storm surges, and tsunamis. Climate Action: A single mature tree can sequester approximately 50kg of (CO_2) annually, and massive plantations serve as significant global carbon sinks. Food Sovereignty: For over 100 million people, coconuts are a cornerstone of food security and a primary source of income. Imagine "No More Coconut Trees" If coconut trees vanished, the loss would transcend aesthetic beauty: Loss of Heritage: Native Hawaiian and Polynesian cultures would lose a central spiritual thread and generational knowledge tied to the niu (coconut). Economic Collapse: Over 30 million smallholder farmers would lose their livelihoods, potentially leading to widespread poverty in tropical regions. Environmental Vulnerability: Shorelines would erode rapidly, and coastal biodiversity would lose a primary habitat and food source. By viewing the coconut tree as a functional necessity rather than an ornamental background, we support a more resilient and self-sufficient future for tropical communities.

Mahalo, Nathan Kamahele

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 2:23:18 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Kaiakapu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am urging you to support SB2925 to officially recognize our kumu Niu as a critically important food resource and not an ornamental plant in Hawai‘i.

I am kanaka maoli, a Kaua‘i native, a coconut practitioner, and agriculture professional. We would not be here, and Hawai‘i would not be the same, if it were not for this miracle plant the Coconut Tree, and our special relationship to it. It is time that we honor that, put our money where our mouth is, and designate it with some special privledges to protect and perpetuate coconut culture.

The paradigm of ornamental trimming and synthetic posioning of this precious food resource needs to end. I have been watching it increase in our community and across the islands for many years now with only more and more issues and concerns arising. Trees are being injected unlawfully by the thousand! - not tagged with warning signage, not ensuring removal of flowers as per federal law requires, and using an irresponsible amount of taxpayer money to apply!

There is too much risk to continue on this path - risk of food security, risk of pollinator health, risk of aquatic life health, risk of cultural practice loss, risk of human health due to contaminated coconuts, etc.

Please vote the way of aloha aina. Vote to support our treasured coconut trees through special recognition. Vote to incentivize non-toxic and natural management of CRB. Vote for more transparency and regulation of synthetic pesticides on our kupuna crop the kumu niu. Because what’s next?... inject our Banana trees, inject our Ulu, spray our kalo?

Mahalo nui,

Chris Ka‘iakapu

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 1:18:59 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Cole	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jennifer Cole, and I am a resident of Kaua‘i. I am writing in strong support of SB2925 and the protections it seeks to provide against the harmful impacts of pesticide use—particularly as it relates to coconut trees and the broader health of our island ecosystems and communities.

Coconut trees are not ornamental luxuries. They are keystone species in Hawai‘i’s coastal and agricultural landscapes, deeply tied to food security, cultural practice, traditional medicine, and everyday community life. When pesticides are applied without adequate safeguards, coconut trees often become unintended casualties—absorbing chemicals through soil, air, and water. These chemicals do not simply disappear; they move through the tree, into the fruit, into the groundwater, and ultimately into our bodies.

On Kaua‘i, many families rely on coconuts as a staple food and as a source of nourishment, hydration, and medicine. The presence of pesticide residues threatens not only the safety of these foods, but also public trust in the land itself. No community should have to question whether a coconut picked from their neighborhood is safe to consume.

Beyond human health concerns, pesticide exposure weakens coconut trees over time—making them more susceptible to disease, reducing fruit production, and shortening their lifespan. This undermines long-term resilience at a moment when we should be strengthening natural systems in the face of climate change, soil degradation, and water contamination.

SB2925 represents an important step toward accountability, transparency, and precaution. Protecting coconut trees means protecting nearshore waters, pollinators, soil life, and future generations. It also aligns with Hawai‘i’s values of mālama ‘āina—caring for the land so it can continue to care for us.

I urge you to pass SB2925 and to prioritize policies that safeguard public health, cultural food sources, and the ecological integrity of Kaua‘i. Our island deserves land management practices that honor life, not compromise it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your commitment to the people and lands of Hawai‘i.

With respect,

Jennifer Cole

Anahola-Kauai, Hawaii

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 2:18:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Menzies	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing in strong support of SB2925.

Coconut trees (niu) are not ornamental luxuries in Hawai‘i. They are food, medicine, water, shade, livelihood, and living cultural practice. They have sustained people across generations and continue to do so today. Protecting niu is inseparable from protecting food security, public health, and cultural continuity in Hawai‘i.

SB2925 takes an important and thoughtful step by limiting toxic pesticide use on consumable coconut trees, supporting natural pest management, and increasing transparency through labeling. These measures honor both science and tradition. They recognize that what we spray on trees ultimately affects our bodies, our keiki, our ecosystems, and our trust in the safety of local food.

As someone who values land stewardship, cultural practices, and community well-being, I believe this bill reflects the kind of future-minded policy Hawai‘i needs. One that prioritizes health over convenience, regeneration over short-term fixes, and respect for living systems over extractive approaches.

Passing SB2925 affirms that Hawai‘i is committed to protecting culturally significant plants, supporting growers who use responsible practices, and safeguarding the health of residents and visitors alike.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration of this important measure. I urge you to support SB2925.

With respect and gratitude,
Sarah Menzies

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 2:56:08 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anya Nebl	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am sharing this testimony in support of SB 2925, with the permission of Kima Wassel Hardy, the original author. She writes:

Niu, the coconut tree, is not ornamental scenery. It is a source of food and water, a cultural ancestor, and a cornerstone of resilience in Hawai‘i. Every part of the tree has value, and for generations it sustained our island communities. Today, however, policy and practice largely treat niu as an ornamental liability rather than the life-giving resource it is.

SB2925 begins to correct that imbalance by formally recognizing coconut trees as food-bearing, culturally significant resources. Allowing the use of coconut seed banks strengthens long-term resilience, protects genetic diversity, and supports climate adaptation. Clear signage and labeling standards for non-consumable landscape palms provide transparency and public safety without undermining access to food.

The income tax credit for consumable coconut trees maintained through natural management practices is especially important. It acknowledges stewardship as essential work and aligns incentives with regenerative care and local food production.

This bill is urgent in light of the coconut rhinoceros beetle. CRB thrives in stressed trees, yet current responses rely heavily on cutting and chemical controls that harm ecosystems and ignore proven community-based, organic care practices. SB2925 helps create space for healthier, more effective approaches rooted in mālama ‘āina.

In an island state facing climate shocks, supply chain disruptions, and rising food costs, we cannot afford to neglect or destroy a tree that provides both food and clean water in times of need. SB2925 supports resilience, culture, and common sense.

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 1:24:28 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacie Slaymaker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of this bill and appreciate the Legislature for taking a thoughtful, common-sense approach to protecting coconut trees in Hawai‘i.

For many of us, coconuts are not just decorative landscaping objects. They are food, water, medicine, and a living connection to culture and place. Clear recognition of coconut trees as a consumable resource, and transparency around when pesticides make coconuts unsafe, is an important step for public health and community trust.

I also strongly support the authorization of coconut seed banks and the encouragement of natural, non-toxic management of the coconut rhinoceros beetle. These provisions protect long-term resilience without sacrificing food safety or relying on chemicals that can harm people, wildlife, and the environment. The proposed tax credit is a practical incentive that helps landowners do the right thing.

This bill respects both science and culture, while offering real solutions to a serious threat. It protects something that has sustained people in Hawai‘i for generations, and will continue to do so if we manage it wisely.

Mahalo for your time and for considering this measure.
Kindly,

Jacie Slaymaker

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 1:37:19 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel Bishop	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

My name is Daniel Bishop and I am in full support of SB 2925. I am a small farmer and I have been planting coconut trees for around 20 years on my farms (Waiahole and Punaluu).

My intention for planting nui is not solley based on the economic value, but as a source of sustinenence. My coconut trees were a reliable source of Food, Water, and Shelter in case of a natural disaster. In other words, my Huricane Supply Kit.

Mahalo

Danny Bishop

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 12:51:52 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Faith Chase	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Faith Chase, and I am in strong support of S.B. 2925.

For more than 30 years, my family has depended on healthy coconut trees for our livelihood. We did not grow up seeing coconuts as decoration. We grew up knowing them as food, water, medicine, and survival. Coconut water is also a source of water.

What this bill recognizes in law is what families like mine have always known in practice: niu is life.

S.B. 2925 affirms that coconut trees are a natural source of food and potable water and a cultural treasure. **That matters deeply to families like mine, because when coconut trees are poisoned with systemic pesticides, the coconuts may still hang on the tree, but they are no longer safe. They become silent hazards instead of nourishment.**

This bill draws an important and necessary line between consumable coconut trees and landscape palms. That distinction protects the public, protects families, and protects our future. People deserve to know whether a coconut is something they can drink, or something that could make them sick.

In addition, by authorizing coconut seed banks and allowing healthy trees to produce viable seeds, the bill ensures that Hawai'i will not lose its genetic heritage of niu. That matters not just for culture, but for food security. You cannot poison your way to resilience. You must plant, protect, and pass on life.

The natural management tax credit is equally powerful. It rewards mālama instead of chemicals. **It supports farmers and families who choose non-toxic, regenerative practices that keep coconuts safe to eat and drink.**

This strengthens biosecurity by aligning protection of the 'āina with protection of the people.

My family's story is only one of many, but it is rooted in a simple truth:

When you protect the coconut tree, you protect Hawai'i's food, water, culture, and future.

For these reasons, I urge you to pass S.B. 2925 and stand for the life-giving tree that has stood for us for generations.

Mahalo, Faith

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 2:39:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J. Kehau Lucas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB 2925

RELATING TO COCONUT TREES

Hawai'i State Legislature – 2026 Regular Session

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 2925, a critical measure that recognizes the cultural, ecological, and food-security importance of the coconut tree (niu) and establishes essential protections and management practices to ensure its survival for future generations.

I. Cultural and Historical Importance (Evidence-Based)

SB 2925 affirms what Native Hawaiian communities have always known: the niu is an essential cultural and livelihood resource. The Legislature's findings confirm that coconut trees have historically been a critical source of food, potable water, medicine, and materials, and continue to hold significance for the health, culture, and lifestyle of Hawai'i's people. [\[trackbill.com\]](#)

By formally recognizing coconut trees as a cultural treasure, SB 2925 aligns state law with long-standing Hawaiian practices and values. This legal recognition supports the continuation of cultural traditions, including food cultivation, lā'au lapa'au, and traditional craftwork.

II. Food Security and Community Resilience

SB 2925 also acknowledges coconut trees as a valuable source of food and water, especially relevant in a changing climate and increasingly unstable global food system. [\[legiscan.com\]](#)

As an island state dependent on more than 80% imported food, Hawai'i must diversify and strengthen local food systems. By establishing rules to preserve consumable coconut trees, the bill advances community resilience, emergency preparedness, and food sovereignty.

III. Environmental Threat: The Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB)

The bill addresses a pressing ecological crisis. The Legislature identifies the coconut rhinoceros beetle as a serious statewide threat that is actively damaging coconut populations. [\[trackbill.com\]](#)

Scientific assessments from Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture and USDA have consistently demonstrated that CRB infestation leads to:

- destruction of apical meristems
- decreased fruit production
- long-term decline of coconut stands

SB 2925’s approach—supporting natural and non-toxic management—aligns with best practices for long-term ecological health.

IV. Pesticide Transparency and Public Health Protection

SB 2925 requires:

1. clear labeling of non-consumable landscape palms, and
2. transparency in pesticide use on coconut trees. [\[trackbill.com\]](#)

These provisions protect residents, cultural practitioners, and farmers who rely on coconuts as food. The distinction between consumable versus landscape palms is essential, given that systemic pesticides can render coconuts unsafe for human consumption.

This measure aligns with public health best practices and supports informed decision-making by communities, consumers, and land managers.

V. Seed Banking and Long-Term Sustainability

The bill requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish rules enabling the lawful production and banking of viable coconut seeds. [\[legiscan.com\]](#)

This is a critical climate-change strategy. Seed banking:

- safeguards genetic diversity,
- supports replanting after CRB damage or storms, and
- ensures long-term availability of culturally significant resources.

The seed banking mandate aligns with widely accepted conservation strategies used globally to protect vulnerable plant species.

VI. Supporting Regenerative Agriculture Through Tax Incentives

The bill establishes an income tax credit for consumable coconut trees maintained through natural management practices. [\[legiscan.com\]](https://legiscan.com)

This incentive:

- encourages property owners to cultivate safe, consumable coconuts
- supports non-toxic, environmentally friendly pest control
- contributes to Hawai'i's regenerative agriculture goals

By rewarding stewards who maintain trees using sustainable methods, the measure fosters a healthier and more resilient ecosystem.

VII. Clarity for Landowners and Managers

SB 2925 requires property owners to post a clear sign indicating when a coconut tree is a landscape palm.

This is a straightforward, low-cost measure that prevents accidental consumption of pesticide-treated coconuts and reduces liability. [\[legiscan.com\]](https://legiscan.com)

VIII. Conclusion

SB 2925 is a thoroughly researched, culturally grounded, environmentally responsible, and forward-looking bill. It protects a vital cultural resource, promotes food security, addresses ecological threats, and encourages sustainable land stewardship. The bill is grounded in evidence collected by the Legislature itself and aligns with best practices in agriculture, conservation, and public health.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 2925.

Mahalo for your consideration and for your commitment to protecting Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources.

Aloha 'āina,
J. Kēhau Lucas

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 12:56:06 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
George Liu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is George Liu, I love the environment and coconut trees, let's preserve these coconut trees. I support this bill!

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 11:57:30 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Wassel Hardy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kima Wassel Hardy. I am an urban agroecologist, local business owner, and a steward of community-based food systems. I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of SB2925.

Niu is not ornamental scenery. It is a source of food and water, a cultural ancestor, and a cornerstone of resilience in Hawai‘i. Every part of the tree has value, and for generations it sustained our island communities. Today, however, policy and practice largely treat niu as an liability rather than the life-giving resource it is.

SB2925 begins to correct that imbalance by formally recognizing coconut trees as food-bearing, culturally significant resources. Allowing the use of coconut seed banks strengthens long-term resilience, protects genetic diversity, and supports climate adaptation. Clear signage and labeling standards for non-consumable landscape palms provide transparency and public safety without undermining access to food.

The income tax credit for consumable coconut trees maintained through natural management practices is especially important. It acknowledges stewardship as essential work and aligns incentives with regenerative care and local food production.

This bill is urgent in light of the coconut rhinoceros beetle. CRB thrives in stressed trees, yet current responses rely heavily on cutting and chemical controls that harm ecosystems and ignore proven community-based, organic care practices. SB2925 helps create space for healthier, more effective approaches rooted in mālama ‘āina.

In an island state facing climate shocks, supply chain disruptions, and rising food costs, we cannot afford to neglect or destroy a tree that provides both food and clean water in times of need. SB2925 supports resilience, culture, and common sense.

Kupu ka niu, kupu ke kanaka. When the coconut tree thrives, so do we.

Mahalo for your consideration, and I urge your support of SB2925.

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 11:50:43 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Manuel Diaz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony for SB2925

To: Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment, and Members of the Committee

From: Manuel Diaz Jr.

Address: Pearl City, HI 96782

Position: Support with Comments

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Manuel Diaz and I am a resident of O‘ahu in the ‘Ewa district. I am writing to testify in **support** of SB2925, which seeks to provide much-needed resources for the management of the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB). However, I wish to offer several critical comments regarding the state’s history of management of this crisis and the methods used for eradication.

The Cost of Delay

The current state of our coconut palms is a direct result of historical mismanagement. The CRB was first detected on O‘ahu over a decade ago. Had the state prioritized the protection of our palms and implemented aggressive, culturally informed biosecurity measures then, we would not be facing the widespread devastation we see today. Our coconuts are more than just landscaping; they are a vital cultural resource and a symbol of food security that should have been protected long ago.

Protecting Food Integrity

While I support the intent of SB2925 to fund eradication efforts, I am **firmly opposed** to the use of systemic poisons or any pesticides/herbicides that render the coconut meat and water unsafe for human consumption.

- **Food Security:** In an island state, we cannot afford to sacrifice a primary food source in the name of "saving" it.
- **Long-term Health:** Injecting palms with persistent toxins creates a secondary environmental hazard.
- **Request:** I urge the committee to ensure that funds from this bill are prioritized for **non-toxic, mechanical, and biological controls** that preserve the integrity of the fruit.

Conclusion

We are playing catch-up for years of inaction. I support the funding in SB2925 to finally take this threat seriously, but I ask that the state be held accountable for how these funds are used. We must protect our palms without poisoning our food.

I urge you to pass SB2925 with a clear mandate for safe, non-systemic treatment methods.

Mahalo for your time and for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Manuel Diaz

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 1:25:04 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Marie Eng	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote yes. Coconut trees provide us with coconuts that can be used for food and water. I personally grate coconut to make my own coconut milk to make haupia. My keiki and I enjoy drinking the coconut water and eating the soft meat with a spoon. If I'm lucky to find one, I can eat the cotton candy-like/spongy delicacy of a sprouted coconut meat. Coconuts are harder to come by on the side of the road these days. It would be great to protect and label our natural coconut resources, rather than only finding them in grocery stores with out-of-state origins. Mahalo!

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 3:42:14 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexander K.D. McNicoll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in STRONG support of **SB2925**.

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 5:02:56 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Safranski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in FULL support of this.. we are loosing coconut trees with the CRB. They need protection so we can continue to eat, drink and use the tree for the many uses. I am always learning what else that tree gives to us besides food and a life sustaining water...

I cannot imagine a Hawai'i without Niu trees but i'm already seeing dead coconut heads along the coast and my neighborhood and it's so sad - it's a very important food, hydrating drink, the husk and bark is used in so many things from clothing to home, I personally use it as a dog toy because it naturally cleans their teeth as they husk em, saves me vet bills!

hands down, we need to protect our food sources and this will create a larger seed bank to enhance the grassroots efforts currently working their okoles off!

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 6:27:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sharon Doughtie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Bill SB2925. The niu is an important food, water and medicine source and should not be contaminated with pesticides. We can all see the CRB devastation of the coconut palms and pesticides will further erode their viability to the community for this cornerstone resource of Hawai'i. Who knows what will happen down the road if all coconut palms are contaminated with pesticides? There are proven ways to combat CRB without poisons. Having coconut seed banks for consumable niu can help sustain their long-term viability in this fragile ecosystem.

It's important that people have the right to eat clean food. I, for one, will not ingest coconut products that have been exposed to pesticides.

Mahalo for introducing this significant bill and please pass it.

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 8:49:44 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jan K Baldado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I SUPPORT SB2925. Mahalo nui.

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 10:44:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimeona Kane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha.

Kimeona Kane of Waimānalo in strong support of this bill, officially recognizing the Niu as it needs to be. We need to make this important on all levels and push the needle further in a way that allows us to truly save Niu. We must do better. This will help set a direction that we can all stand by and behind. Lets save the Niu. Mahalo nui.

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 9:26:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maile Atay	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I stand in **STRONG SUPPORT** of this measure recognizing coconut trees as a source of food, water, and cultural treasure in Hawai'i.

Coconut trees, niu, are not ornamental commodities. They are perennial food systems that anchor coastal ecosystems, protect shorelines, nourish communities, and hold deep cultural meaning.

Historically, state-level biosecurity efforts have focused on preserving landscape palms rather than protecting coconut trees as productive food-bearing trees. In doing so, management strategies often relied on chemical interventions that compromised soil biology and, in some cases, rendered coconuts unsafe for consumption. This approach did not fully integrate cultural, subsistence, or regenerative agricultural perspectives.

This legislation represents a necessary course correction.

By recognizing coconut trees as food and water sources and encouraging non-toxic, transparent, and culturally informed management practices, the State affirms principles aligned with farming chemical-free in order to:

- Protect soil and microbial life.
- Preserve genetic diversity.
- Support community-based stewardship.
- Restore trust through transparency and inclusion.

Coconut genetics that have adapted to Hawai'i over generations are irreplaceable. Once lost, they cannot be recreated. Protecting them is not only an environmental imperative — it is a food security strategy and a cultural responsibility.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass this measure and help establish Hawai'i as a global leader in regenerative, culturally grounded biosecurity and agriculture.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Maile Atay

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 9:29:49 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT SB2925

Dana Keawe

Moku O Keawe

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 10:16:36 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey Baucom	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kakou,

I am testifying in support of SB 2925, as I believe it is imperative that we move swiftly to protect our precious coconut trees.

Currently the only solutions to Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle infestation is the injection or application of chemical pesticides. These pesticides are systemic, meaning they are taken into the plant and spread through all its tissues, they cannot be washed off and will remain in fruit, leaves and flowers. In order to protect pollinators who are also affected by these pesticides, trees must have their flowers removed, requiring constant maintenance. While it is recommended to re-apply these pesticides each year, studies have NOT been conducted to determine for how long flowers will remain toxic to pollinators and inedible to humans. If these trees cannot produce fruit, they cannot produce seeds. Without a way to propagate and protect the unique genetic diversity of our local coconut trees, we will be facing a massive loss to our biodiversity and the security and resilience of our plants.

Imidicloprid and Acephate are the two pesticides recommended for injection and treatment. Imidicloprid has not been sufficiently studied for the effects of chronic low-dose exposure. Acephate is an organophosphate, a class of chemicals that has been linked to a wide variety of symptoms in acute poisoning and illnesses as a result of chronic lower-dose exposure.

We must actively seek out new solutions that do not render coconuts inedible and toxic for the pollinators that we depend on for our food. Additionally we must reinforce regulations and require stricter handling and management of these pesticides that have not been comprehensively studied in how they affect coconut trees. Every tree that is injected must be met with a commitment for timely trimming in order to protect our pollinators. It is a virtual guarantee that without these actions, we will not only fail to protect the unique diversity of our local coconuts, we will also be forced to answer for the deaths of pollinators, the poisoning of those who unknowingly consume fruit from injected palms, and the myriad unknown effects that these pesticides may have on our environment and our communities for generations to come.

Mahalo

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 8:32:51 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kehaunani Andrade	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Kehau and along with my Ohana; my husband, 4 adult children and 20 grandchildren, stand in strong support of HB 2925. We have many niu/coconut palms grown on our land along with other fruit trees as a means of sustainable living and cultural uses. My Ohana understands that it is our Kuleana to care for these trees, as did our ancestors, so that the niu/coconut palms can continue to take care of us. The niu/coconut palm is a life source in so many ways and will continue to be that for generations to come. Please protect what remains and stand for what is Hawaii's Kuleana....support HB 2925.

Mahalo

SB-2925

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 9:29:05 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellie Tsuchiya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Ellie Tsuchiya and I am a resident of ‘Ewa Beach, where the impact of the CRB has been widespread and deeply devastating. I am testifying in support of SB 2925, as I believe it is imperative that we move swiftly to protect the sacred niu now and for generations to come.

By recognizing coconut trees as a source of food and water, not just ornamentals, and by supporting seed banks, transparency, and non-toxic, culturally informed management this bill gives our coconuts a fighting chance for survival from the invasive CRB. I support this bill because it centers the lived experience of those directly impacted in this fight.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Ellie Tsuchiya