HB 474 – RELATING TO RAT LUNGWORM DISEASE

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Hashem, and members of the committee:

My name is Carolyn Ma, and I am the Dean for the UH Hilo Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (DKICP). University of Hawai‘i at Hilo fully supports the intent of this bill that will address the eradication and treatment of Rat Lung Worm (RLW) Disease.

We will continue to partner with the Dept. of Health to address this disease, however, UH Hilo’s emphasis in regards to this specific bill is in research. We have on faculty at the DKICP, a premier researcher who focuses specifically on RLW and has already conducted valuable research. Any funds awarded would allow the Jarvi lab to investigate the following:

1. Determine how effective commercially available vegetable washes or other solutions are at killing infective RLW larvae.

2. Evaluate the possibility of RLW transmission in water by conducting laboratory and household catchment studies to optimize maintenance and treatment design for the prevention of RLW larvae entering household and agricultural water supplies.

3. Develop blood-based diagnostics for evidence of human or domestic animal exposure to RLW to better understand the source of infection.

4. Determine the effectiveness of multiple anti-parasitic drugs to the stages of Angiostrongylus cantonensis in humans.

UH Hilo supports this bill if the passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our University of Hawai‘i BOR Approved Supplemental Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 474. Aloha.