



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

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By
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and
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HB 1514 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Wooley, Vice Chair Onishi, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 1514, which appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) for control and containment of the Coffee Berry Borer.

The Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) is a severe pest of coffee, first discovered by staff of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, in south Kona in 2010. CTAHR was a founding member of the Executive for the Coffee Berry Borer Task Force Along with the HDOA, CTAHR, the Hawai'i Agricultural Research Center, the USDA Pacific Basin Agricultural Research Center, and state and local coffee associations. Since this time, these parties have collaborated closely to develop management methods for this terrible pest, to educate and assist coffee growers in implementing prevention and control efforts, and to take direct action to suppress this pest. Although it is still limited to the Island of Hawai'i, further spread is a very real threat, particularly to the Island of Kaua'i, where half the coffee in the state is grown.

We support the appropriation of additional funding to the HDOA to continue the battle to control and contain CBB in Hawai'i. CTAHR intends to continue our partnership with HDOA to support the coffee industry. Although immediate control measures are certainly needed, we would also suggest that a portion of the funds appropriated be reserved for support of both research and outreach efforts to assist the affected, and potentially affected farmers, and distributed to the individuals and organizations conducting such work as the HDOA deems appropriate. Although management of the pest is marginally possible with great effort if the recommendations developed over the past three years and distributed by CTAHR extension personnel and HDOA staff are followed, implementation is very difficult under the steep and rocky conditions where coffee is often grown on the Island of Hawai'i, and many gaps remain in our understanding of this beetle in Hawai'i and in development of the tools needed to more effectively control it and contain its spread.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 1514.