Written Testimony Presented Before the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
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HB 1514 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 1514 HD1 SD1, which appropriates moneys for control and containment of the Coffee Berry Borer (CBB).

We strongly support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University’s Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget.

This severe pest of coffee was discovered in south Kona in 2010, by staff of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR). Although it is still limited to the Island of Hawai‘i, where half of the coffee in the state is grown, further spread throughout the state is a very real threat. A recent CTAHR economic analysis estimates FY2013 crop losses due to CBB as $7.68 million, with a concomitant $571,000 annual loss in state tax revenues.

HB 1514 HD1 SD1 would appropriate funds for a program administered by the Department of Agriculture to assist coffee growers with the high cost of the biological pesticide necessary to control CBB; and for accompanying education and mitigation activities under the direction of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources.

Provided that any funds appropriated represent an addition, rather than a replacement of any priorities indicated in the University’s Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget, we agree with the appropriation requested in earlier testimony by the Hawai‘i Farm Bureau Federation of $150,000 for education and mitigation activities by CTAHR. These efforts will permit hire of temporary personnel to assist with coordination and evaluation of the impact of the CBB control program, and provide training to growers.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 1514 HD1 SD1.