



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture
Thursday, March 19, 2015 at 8:30 am

By
Robert Bley-Vroman, Chancellor
And
Maria Gallo, Dean
And
J. Kenneth Grace, Associate Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HCR 76 – REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT AUDIT OF THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Onishi, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, thank you for this opportunity to offer comments and concerns on HCR 76, which would request an audit of the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) by the State Auditor, specifically examining the funding strategy used to support interagency invasive species projects and research.

The University of is a member of the six-member interagency council, which is co-chaired by the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture. HISC was created the Legislature in 2003.

Our concerns lies both with the subject matter expertise of the office of the State Auditor to determine the efficacy of different invasive species funding strategies, and with the need for an audit of the process that HISC currently employs to select projects for support.

The current selection process is competitive, and open to the public and to legislative involvement. HISC staff release a call for proposals, including a statement of priorities identified by the council for that particular year, and provide a scoring rubric used to evaluate and rank the submitted proposals. A research review committee consisting of members of each agency represented on the HISC scores and reviews the proposals, and drafts a recommended priority list and budget for funding. This is reviewed by the full HISC at a public meeting, and HISC may choose to reject, amend or approve each proposed project.

HISC funding does not replace the targeted efforts of the relevant agencies, but it greatly expands the ability of the state to address the many invasive species problems in Hawai'i. The selection and funding process appears serve this goal, and to be open and transparent.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide our comments on HCR 76.