



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

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House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection
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HB 561 – RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Wildberger, and members of the House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 561 relating to invasive species and establishes the invasive species rapid response special fund. The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources supports the intent of this bill and we respectfully provide the following information to substantiate our position.

Hawai'i has a long history of managing invasive weeds. Hawai'i Department of Agriculture listed noxious weeds for eradication or control as far back as 1992 using the following 5 criteria:

- 1) reproduction rate (dispersal, dormant, vegetative spread);
- 2) growth characteristics that can out compete native vegetation;
- 3) detrimental effects (yield loss on economic crops, or cost of losing endangered species);
- 4) control measure is difficult and needs extraordinary effort; and,
- 5) limited/isolated distribution and spread on at least one island.

These criteria can be applied to invasive arthropods, nematodes, pathogens or other pests.

The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council was then established in 2003 to develop an Invasive Species Management Plan as one of their stated mandates. For invasive weeds, procedures to declare an emergency were outlined -

https://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/rnre/Downloads/SLIDES_HawaiiDOA_Noxious_Weed_List.pdf)

This long history has shown that biosecurity is the single major issue facing sustainable natural resources management. More recently the state developed the Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan (HIBP). HIBP mentions the need for a rapid response to newly discovered invasive species as many as 20 times. This bill provides for a rapid response fund that can be used to combat new biosecurity issues as they arise.

While HIBP does not recommend a rapid response fund, it does seem logical to have a fund that meets the need of what HIBP wishes to see happen. The rapid response special fund could be essential to ensure the mitigation and/or timely eradication of newly detected invasive species. In the long run, it may reduce government spending in the millions at the state level.

There are a significant number of biosecurity related bills, and it seems reasonable that by the end of the session that these bills be put together as the state develops an integrated biosecurity bill that takes the best of all bills that have been presented.

In summary, we support the intent of this bill and look forward to a more integrated biosecurity/invasive species plan to come out of this year's session.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.