HB 1769 – RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Branco, and members of the House Committee on Water and Land:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 1769 relating to rapid ohia death (ROD), which is a companion bill to SB 2765.

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa has a long and productive history collaborating with the Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and the U.S. Forest Service. This cooperation and collaboration has extended to working to combat ROD. The University has a main component of the education/Extension task and has worked toward the objectives defined in the Rapid Ohia Death Part 1: Strategic Response Plan.

The University appreciates the budget and the expenditure plan, particularly in a difficult budget year. Since ohia is an iconic plant for the state of Hawai‘i, and because it is the dominant tree throughout most of the state, its salvation benefits much of the Hawai‘i ecosystem.

We strongly support HB 1769, but defer to the DLNR as to the ability to carry out the tasks with the proposed budget. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.