



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
and

Senate Committee on Water and Land
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By

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SB 685 – RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Chairs Gabbard and Kahele, Vice Chairs Ruderman and Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment and Committee on Water and Land:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 685 relating to invasive species and appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Maui branch, for invasive species technician positions in east Maui to address invasive plants and animals. 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.

A single miconia plant can invade >2,400 acres of protected watershed in tropical area over time. One mature plant produce approximately 400 fruits and 80,000 seeds. Fruits are attractive to birds which spread the seeds over long distances. Seeds from one fruit can survive 32-48 years (serious weed seed bank problem). Miconia also has a shallow root system that facilitates soil erosion.

CTAHR former invasive species specialist, Dr. James Leary, has developed a novel and impactful herbicide ballistic technology with a selective herbicide to manage this highly invasive weed targeting on incipient populations of miconia that are colonizing remote sections of class 1 watersheds on Maui.

Skillful technicians are urgently needed to carry out this task in a timely manner before the class 1 watersheds on Maui is severely impacted.

A study by Dr. Leary showed that one new mature plant impacts an estimated 850 acres of forested watershed with an associated cost of \$66,000 to ameliorate.

A real life example of how damaging miconia can be in the tropical rainforest is that a quarter of the rainforest in Tahiti is now made up of miconia stands.

We support the intent of this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget. In addition, we suggest that this bill be considered in the context of the other invasive species bills with particular emphasis on SB 871 and SB 523.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.