



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection
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SB 871 SD1 – 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 SB 871 SD1 relating to invasive species and appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources' (DLNR) Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Hawai'i branch, for invasive species technician positions on Hawai'i Island 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 produces 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.

A study by Dr. James Leary showed that one new mature plant impacts an estimated 850 acres of forested watershed with an associated cost of \$66,000 to ameliorate. Therefore, technicians are required needed to carry out this task in a timely manner before Hawai'i Island watersheds are severely impacted.

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 and defer to the testimony of DLNR as to the specifics.