



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

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HB 1553 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR INVESTIGATION AND MITIGATION OF DAMAGE DONE BY THE COFFEE BERRY BORER

The purpose of HB 1553 is to appropriate funds from the agricultural development and food security special fund for investigation and mitigation of damage done by the coffee berry borer. The bill identifies eight items for the use of the funds, two of which shall be expended by the University of Hawai'i, namely:

- To fund investigative research by the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) in collaboration with the USDA Pacific Basin Research Center to develop practical techniques for use to combat the effects of the coffee berry borer in the Kona region on the island of Hawai'i; and
- To fund one position in the Kona office of CTAHR's Cooperative Extension Service, whose specific responsibility shall be to assist farmers to implement the coffee berry borer mitigation program.

This testimony is restricted to the aforementioned two items, as other sections of the bill concern other agencies, whose representatives will speak more knowledgeably on those issues.

Hawai'i is the only state in the nation producing coffee, and CTAHR has been instrumental in its success from the beginning. As early as 1901, a report was issued on the location selection, cost of picking and maintenance, and variety selection of coffee. Research reports on pests began in 1904 with the arrival of a coffee blight, and the first Cooperative Extension bulletin entitled *Insects Affecting Coffee in Kona* was disseminated to farmers and others in 1931. During the years when coffee farmers consisted primarily of Japanese immigrants, CTAHR issued bilingual publications to meet their needs. The college's research on coffee production, harvesting, processing—as well as on various pests, such as the black twig borer, crab spider, green scale ant complex, and more recently, the coffee berry borer—have been immensely valuable to the coffee industry. In short, CTAHR's research and extension service have contributed significantly to the viability of Hawaii's coffee industry.

HB 1553 provides funds to support the research and the Cooperative Extension Service position called for in the bill. This is important as additional resources are needed to fulfill these additional responsibilities. CTAHR will be happy to collaborate with the USDA Pacific Research Center on the research relating to the coffee berry borer in the Kona region.

We support HB 1553 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this bill.