



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture
and
Senate Committee on Higher Education
and
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
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HB 1931 HD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairs Nishihara, Taniguchi and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kouchi, Kahele and Ruderman, and members of the committees, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1931 HD1, which appropriates funds to the department of agriculture and the University of Hawai'i to research and develop methods for the prevention and treatment of macadamia felted coccid.

The University of Hawai'i supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget.

Macadamia felted coccid is a severe pest of macadamia, a crop with a \$38.2 million farm value in Hawai'i in 2012. It was found in South Kona in February 2005, and two attempts to eradicate the insect appeared to be successful at the time. However, subsequent infestations were again found on the Big Island, indicating that the insect had already spread from the initial point of discovery or that additional introductions occurred. At this time, the coccid is distributed throughout the Big Island, although it is not yet found on other islands.

Development of new control methods and appropriate management recommendations are essential for Hawai'i's producers to stop this invasive pest. Horticultural and harvest methods used in Hawai'i and the large size of trees in our well-established orchard contribute to great difficulties in achieving effective control.

The College of Tropical Agriculture, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture are collaborating in this endeavor, as is indicated in HB 1931 HD1, and as permitted by available funding and personnel. Timing is critical, however, and we believe that it is both appropriate and necessary for the Legislature to appropriate funds to accelerate and strengthen this pest management effort, and protect

this critical segment of Hawai'i agriculture from the severe losses that will result from infestation and continued spread of this invasive insect pest.

In discussions, concerned parties have suggested an appropriation of \$735,000, if funds are not to lapse at the end of a single fiscal year. This is the equivalent of \$367,000 for a single fiscal year, which would support hire of a researcher, an extension agent, support staff and a graduate student assistant to address this problem, in addition to funding for travel and operations.