



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
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By

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HB 1050 SD1 – RELATING TO INTERISLAND MOVEMENT OF INVASIVE SPECIES

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments with concerns on HB 1050 SD1, which Mandates the Department of Agriculture and the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council to perform specified tasks to address the interisland spread of invasive species, requires annual reports, and appropriates funds for these purposes.

The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) is an interagency coordinating council consisting of five State department directors and the President of the University of Hawai'i. As an interagency council, the HISC is housed administratively within the Department of Land and Natural Resources, but does not directly employ staff who can be tasked with mitigation efforts and treatment of state and private land to combat invasive species. Rather, HISC receives appropriated funds, and provides these funds to third parties to promote and carry out invasive species mitigation efforts via an annual competitive grants process.

HISC was created as an interdepartmental collaboration intended to provide policy level direction, coordination, and planning among state departments and federal agencies. Without a permanent staff or the authority or organizational structure of a State department, it would be difficult for HISC to respond to a legislative mandate to conduct specific mitigation efforts. HISC could certainly be required to solicit proposals to strengthen the mitigation efforts of State agencies, but does not have staff or authority to implement such measures directly.

A further concern with HB 1050 is that very specific actions are mandated, such as the creation of buffer zones around agricultural lands, airports and ports, but the targets of these actions are not named. Plant pests, public health pests, plant diseases, and invasive weeds all require different control actions, and pose different threats in different situations. Coffee berry borer, for example is found on coffee farms, but not in natural areas, so insecticidal spraying to create buffer zones would not necessarily be a productive approach. Weeds such as miconia are a threat to forests, but not necessarily to ports. The very broad goals of HB 1050 SD1 seem to be at odds with the very specific actions required by the language of the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments with concerns on HB 1050 SD1.