UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI SYSTEM
Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Energy and the Environment
And
Senate Committee on Agriculture
Thursday, February 5, 2015; 3:15 pm
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SB 583 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairs Gabbard and Ruderman, Vice Chairs Green and Riviere, and members of the Senate Committee on Energy and the Environment and Senate Committee on Agriculture, we respectfully submit testimony in support of SB 583, which appropriates funds to the department of agriculture to collaborate with the University of Hawaiʻi to research and develop methods for the prevention and treatment of macadamia felted coccid.

The College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) and the University of Hawaiʻi strongly support 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 Hawaiʻi in 2012. This scale insect was found in south Kona in February 2005, and is now distributed throughout the Island of Hawaii. Development of new control methods and appropriate management recommendations are essential for Hawaiʻi's producers to stop this invasive pest. Horticultural and harvest methods used in Hawaiʻi and the large size of trees in our well-established orchards contribute to great difficulties in achieving effective control.

In FY 2014, the legislature appropriated funds to initiate collaboration by the Department of Agriculture and CTAHR to address this serious invasive pest problem, augmented by funds committed by industry. With this support, CTAHR has begun the extensive field sampling required to develop a management decision plan, is testing the impact of canopy management, is developing methods to identify key predators of the coccid and to augment their populations, and is testing new control options.

This is not a simple problem, and a multi-year effort is required. SB 583 requests appropriation of the funds necessary to continue this research effort, to identify and import effective biological control agents, and ultimately develop an effective macadamia felted coccid management plan for Hawaiʻi macadamia orchards.