UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI SYSTEM
Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before The
Senate Committee on Economic Development, Environment, and Technology
and
Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Agriculture
Friday, February 12, 2016; 1:20 p.m.
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SB 2988 – RELATING TO THE MACADAMIA FELTED COCCID

Chairs Wakai and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Slom and Nishihara, and members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Environment, and Technology, and Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Agriculture, thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of SB 2988, 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.

Hawaiʻi is the third largest producer of macadamia nuts in the world, with approximately 15,000 acres harvested on the Island of Hawaiʻi and a $38.2 million farm-gate value (NASS 2012). Macadamia felted coccid is a severe pest of macadamia. This scale insect was found in south Kona in February 2005, and is now distributed throughout the Island of Hawaiʻi. 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 worked in collaboration with the department to research the impact of canopy management, to identify key predators of the coccid and to augment their populations by planting refuge plants in orchards, and to evaluate other new control options.

This is not a simple problem, and a multi-year effort is required. SB 2988 requests appropriation of funds to continue this research effort to the department of agriculture, in order to identify and import effective biological control agents, find ways to further increase the populations of natural enemies of this insect pest, develop better insecticide application technologies, and ultimately develop an effective macadamia felted coccid management plan for Hawaiʻi macadamia orchards.