



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

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Senate Committee on Ways and Means
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HB 237 HD2 SD1 – RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 237 HD2 SD1.

The two-lined spittlebug is just the next challenge to the biosecurity of Hawai'i agriculture. This is a continuing story accurately depicting biosecurity as one of the most, if not the most, important management issues in agriculture and natural resources.

The bill does a credible job of describing the problem and its economic effect. The spittlebug will continue to degrade Hawai'i Island pasture and affect livestock operations if a coherent integrated pest management program is not identified and extended to producers. This problem will require the combined efforts of the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA), the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UHM/CTAHR), and the appropriate federal agencies on Hawai'i Island.

UHM/CTAHR is currently involved with spittlebug research and Extension efforts through an Extension Specialist on Hawai'i Island and a Professor of Entomology on the UHM campus. There is also a clear role for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Interregional Research Project No. 4 (IR-4) program, which could also be a source of federal funds. The IR-4 mission is to test the efficacy of pesticides and develop data to label the chemistry for specific uses.

HB 237 HD2 SD1 budgets funds to combat this pest, and puts those funds and decision making authority in the hands of HDOA. We strongly support this effort as UHM/CTAHR already works closely with HDOA on this and on other biosecurity issues.

We support HB 237 HD2 SD1, but recognize that the State is in a challenging economic time where funds are low and responsibilities are high. We defer to HDOA as to their priorities and availability of personnel to support this measure.