



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
And

Senate Committee on Water and Land
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By

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SB 523 – RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

Chairs Gabbard and Kahele, Vice Chairs Ruderman and Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment and Committee on Water and Land:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 523 relating to biosecurity that creates the invasive species rapid response special fund, adds ten full-time positions to the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) per the Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan (HIBP), adds four full-time positions to the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) and requires the department submit a report to the legislature, and appropriates funds for positions and for execution of the HIBP. The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM), College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) supports the intent of this bill and we respectfully provide the following information to substantiate our position.

We consider invasive species and biosecurity to be one of the more crucial, if not the most crucial, issue facing agriculture and sustainable natural resources. The HIBP references the need for a rapid response to invasive species as many as 20 times, indicating its value in addressing Hawai'i's biosecurity issues.

Rapid response to invasive species is currently part of the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council's activities and part of the HDOA strategy for prevention of movement of pests statewide.

Given the critical nature of rapid response techniques and the manpower required to engage these techniques, UHM/CTAHR supports the intent of forming an invasive

species rapid response special fund. As with any disaster, funding often is the limitation to rapid response to immediate concerns. This fund addresses that issue.

The appropriation for DLNR and HDOA for full-time positions is following the recommendation of the HIBP.

The funding for projects addressing specific invasive species issues such as rapid ohia death and coqui frogs is also in concert with the HIBP.

We support the intent of this bill and its support of the HIBP provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget. There is concern though on the various invasive species bills and a need to compare and contrast the various bills on invasive species into a more integrated approach, especially where establishing positions is concerned, with particular note to SB 685 and SB 871.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.