

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII

JOSH GREEN
LT. GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII



WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
CHAIRMAN
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

TYLER I. GOMES
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRMAN

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS**

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TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM J. AILA, JR, CHAIRMAN
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
HEARING ON FEBRUARY 21, 2020 AT 12:00PM IN CR 308

HB 2015, HD1 RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

February 20, 2020

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2015. This bill establishes a pilot program within the Aina Mauna legacy program of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) to remove and harvest gorse from Mauna Kea and develop it as a marketable product to expand economic opportunities for native Hawaiians. The Department supports the intent of this measure as long as it doesn't affect the priorities identified in the Governor's Supplemental Budget request.

Gorse is a highly invasive thorny shrub that creates impenetrable thickets which can be over 12 feet tall. DHHL Aina Mauna lands contain Hawaii's largest infestation of gorse, covering over 10,000 acres which prohibits homesteading and other land uses. The ecology and characteristics of this invasive species, which include abundant and early seed production, is easily spread and an over 30-year seedbank life, make containment, removal and long-term control of gorse very difficult and costly. The importance of eliminating this plant cannot be overstated. DHHL spends a great amount of time, effort and resources to control gorse annually and continues to look for the most feasible, efficient and effective long term solution to the gorse infestation on the Aina Mauna lands of Humuula and Piihonua. Any assistance in this effort is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

Harry Kim
Mayor



Roy Takemoto
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i Office of the Mayor

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February 19, 2020

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Committee Members:

RE: HB 2015, HD1 Relating to Invasive Species

HB 2015, HD1 is a valuable bill, as the control of this invasive species is very important, not only to the environment on the upper slopes of Maunakea, but also to prevent gorse's spread to the lower slopes during rain events.

I would suggest that the development of a pilot project include consultation with the Big Island and Hawai'i Invasive Species Councils, DLNR, HDOA, Natural Resource Conservation Service and University of Hawai'i specialists, to provide input and guidance to avoid unintended consequences of further spreading the plant, plant parts, or seeds during removal and repurposing of the gorse. I would also suggest that the Hawai'i County Game Management Advisory Commission be invited to consult, since that Commission has long expressed concern about the spread of gorse and the fire hazard it represents.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harry Kim
MAYOR

Date: February 21, 2020

To: House Committee on Finance

From: Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.

Re: HB 2015 HD1

Aloha Chair Sylvia Luke, Vice-Chair Ty Cullen, and members of the House Committee on Finance,

As a native Hawaiian conservationist for the past 30 years, I **SUPPORT HB 2015 HD1**. This bill establishes a pilot program within the Aina Mauna legacy program of DHHL to remove and harvest invasive gorse plants from Mauna Kea and develop it as a marketable product to expand economic opportunities for native Hawaiians.

As everyone in Hawai'i has witnessed this past year, Mauna Kea holds significant meaning to the residents of the State, from keiki to kūpuna. Efforts to reduce and remove invasive gorse plants from the mauna has been slow and ineffective. This bill will expand economic opportunities for native Hawaiians, which is an important State effort for Hawaiian homeland beneficiaries and residents. Please PASS HB 2015 HD1.