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Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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**TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

**APRIL 7, 2021
10:30 AM
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 258, SENATE DRAFT 1
URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO IDENTIFY HOW COFFEE
BERRY BORER AND COFFEE LEAF RUST ENTERED INTO HAWAII AND
MEASURES TO PREVENT THE FLOW OF THESE INVASIVE SPECIES INTO THE
STATE TO PROTECT THE ONGOING VIABILITY OF HAWAII'S COFFEE INDUSTRY**

Chairperson Hashem and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution 258, Senate Draft 1. This resolution asks the Department of Agriculture ("Department") to trace the introduction of coffee berry borer ("CBB") and coffee leaf rust ("CLR") into Hawaii, determine what role the importation of green coffee from regions with known infestations played in the introduction of these pests, and report on its findings and recommendations to the legislature no later than 20 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2022. The Department appreciates the intent of this resolution and offers the following comments.

The Department lacks adequate staffing, training, and expertise for conducting the comprehensive investigations necessary to accurately determine the origin of these two invasive species. Further, as this represents a likely foreign pathway, this falls within the expertise and broader jurisdiction of the U.S. Department and Agriculture (USDA). When the CBB was detected in 2010, the Department requested the assistance of the USDA, Animal Plant Health Inspection Services-Plant Protection and



Quarantine (APHIS-PPQ) to aid in determining the origins of CBB infestations in Hawaii. While that investigation was inconclusive regarding the pathways through which CBB entered Hawaii, it was not linked to the importation of green coffee from foreign sources. The Department has requested a similar analysis be performed by APHIS-PPQ for CLR.

A broader pathway analysis is critical for the long-term management of CLR in Hawaii. It may identify gaps within our biosecurity program that require closing. Further, knowing the point of origin of the CLR will provide us with valuable information on expected impacts of the disease, varieties of coffee that may be resistant to the strain of CLR we have, and other information that will be useful for both the Department and coffee growers. Ongoing work by research partners of USDA Agricultural Research Service will likely provide insights into some of these questions later this year, but access to more timely information will be extremely valuable to the Department and local coffee industry.

The Department's Plant Quarantine Branch already inspects all known coffee plants and plant parts that enter the state pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 150A and Hawaii Administrative Rules Chapter 4-70, Subchapter 4. Entry requirements are stringent and require inspections, permits, treatments, and extended quarantines, as appropriate, depending on the proposed imported coffee product. The existing regulations are designed to target any coffee pest, not just CBB or CLR.

Since the initial detection of CLR last year, the Department has been working with industry groups, the University of Hawaii and USDA APHIS-PPQ on an almost weekly basis. The Department and partners are actively surveying all islands, developing measures to prevent spread while surveying, providing outreach through fliers and radio advertisements, implementing interim rules to limit spread throughout the state, informing stakeholders on the processes to import CLR-resistant coffee cultivars, and working through the regulatory framework to allow for additional treatment options to become available to farmers. Each of these tasks will be ongoing for the foreseeable future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SCR-258-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2021 6:20:44 AM

Testimony for AGR on 4/7/2021 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bruce Corker	Rancho Aloha	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso, Members of the Committee:

As a Hawaii coffee farmer and Board member of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association, I strongly support this Resolution.

Hawaii's system of preventing the introduction of invasives has failed coffee farmers twice in the last decade with the entry of CBB, and then CLR.

How the system failed needs to be determined in order to strengthen the system and to protect against future introductions damaging to Hawaii agriculture.

Hawaii needs to better protect the interests of its farmers.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Corker

Rancho Aloha

North Kona District, Hawaii County



April 06, 2021

Aloha Chair and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association (KCFA), please accept this communication in regard to SCR258, SD1.

Our non-profit is a membership organization of over 200 current active members. The purpose of KCFA is to support and protect the economic interests of Kona coffee farmers, and the nearly 200 years of heritage of Kona coffee.

Apologies for the tardiness of this testimony, however please accept that our membership is very negatively affected by the arrival of pests and diseases which affect our crop, and coffee is so important to Hawaii that we must work together to protect!

At the end of the day, we must have a strong Hawaii Department of Agriculture as well as a strong extension body (CTAHR) who seek to help protect our farmers, and not only to react with additional inputs after pests have been permitted to enter the state.

The uses of toxic and untested chemicals (pesticides) have unknown consequences upon human health and the environment as well, and so it is critical that our focus is not on encouraging such reactions to problems which are missed by allowance of entrance, but rather that more and better energy is put towards avoiding the entrance originally. Again, we must work together to protect the coffee industry and not allowing pests and diseases to enter Hawaii is the first step.

Thanks for the introduction of this piece of legislation and for your support of it through the Committee. We are happy to discuss details, and look forward to your questions as they arise..

Many thanks for the opportunity to support of SCR258, SD1, and to share the position of our farmer-based coffee organization.

Sincerely,

Colehour Bondera
President, Board of Directors





Hawaii Coffee Association
PO Box 168, Kealahou, HI 96750

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

April 7, 2021

RE: Testimony in Support of SCR258 SD1

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso and members of the committee,

I am Chris Manfredi, President of Hawaii Coffee Association (HCA).

The Hawaii Coffee Association supports the intent of SCR 258 SD1.

We may learn something from an investigation and report that can demonstrate from where CBB and CLR originated and therefore take steps to prevent further introduction of invasive species that are extremely damaging to crops and expensive to manage.

Importation of raw coffee from infested areas of the world directly into uninfested growing regions in Hawaii has a predictable, although perhaps not a provable outcome.

We must also ask why are outbound airline passengers screened by USDA, and inbound passengers are not.

In an effort to protect Hawaii from CBB and CLR the Federal Register / Vol. 63, No. 229 / Monday, November 30, 1998 § 319.73-2 *Products prohibited importation* includes language relating to the importation of coffee plant material to Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

Reportedly in 2006 Alan Green, APHIS' Plant Health Programs' executive director, wrote in a letter to Lyle Wong, an administrator with the Hawaii Department of Agriculture, "Neither the methyl bromide fumigation nor moist heat treatments as currently proposed in the docket are efficacious against the two major pests of concern coffee bean borer and coffee leaf rust,"

The HCA has not seen this letter. If the opinion expressed is untrue, we need to see the research to the contrary. If it is true, we must ask why was it ignored and what technology can we employ to protect Hawaii's farmers from further introduction of harmful invasive species.

Respectfully submitted.

It is important for the economy of the State of Hawaii to facilitate, foster and protect successful coffee enterprises that utilize Agricultural Land, provide opportunities for small business entrepreneurs and create a prestige reputation product for the state involving an item for consumption that 62% of all Americans drink every day. Unfortunately, the Coffee Borer Beetle has entered the state and has negatively influenced the profitability of every coffee producer, roaster, and wholesaler in the state. Both production and quality has dropped due to the Coffee Borer. Now a very devastating virus the Coffee Leaf Rust has entered the state and can potentially wipe out small farmer coffee.

What is most sad is that these two infestations may have been avoided with a more robust and potent system to screen and identify pest that can enter the state in green coffee or other coffee plant materials. Resolutions SCR258 and SD1 should be approved and acted upon to ascertain the weaknesses of the Agricultural inspection system to eliminate the possibility of future infestation that threaten the coffee industry and other agricultural products from Hawaii.

Although not a part of this resolution the State Department of Agriculture, University of Hawaii Agricultural Experiment Station and the USDA-ARS should conduct research to eradicate both the Coffee Borer Beetle and Coffee leaf Rust from Hawaii.

SCR-258-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2021 8:36:17 AM

Testimony for AGR on 4/7/2021 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jim Monk	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is James Monk, and I am a coffee farmer on the Big Island in the Kona District. I urge the department of agriculture be directed to identify how coffee berry borer and coffee leaf rust entered into Hawaii and determine measures to prevent the flow of these invasive species into the state to protect the ongoing viability of Hawaii's coffee industry. Our Department of Agriculture needs to start working for the farmers and the farm industry of Hawaii.

SCR-258-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2021 2:09:29 PM

Testimony for AGR on 4/7/2021 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cecelia Smith	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please help us. Our economic viability depends on you.
Mahalo. and with aloha,

Cecelia Smith

SCR-258-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2021 2:57:51 PM

Testimony for AGR on 4/7/2021 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
linda kelly murphy	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

CLR is rapidly moving onto my Captain Cook coffee farm that is 135 years old. I have actively fought the CBB since 2009 at the outlay of most of my anual profit. The CBB is mitigated to 5-10 % now and controllable. The CLR is spreading like wildfire across all 5 acres and will destroy the kona coffee industry on Hawaii for all future generations. This is a rare small heritage crop and should be protected. We need the help and financial support of our local government to keep the agricultural and financial independence of our farmers alive and productive. The farming community is slowly being destroyed by all of the pests that come into our tropical environment .

I am doing my part for preservation of a way of life here for the future generations

SCR-258-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2021 5:19:21 PM

Testimony for AGR on 4/7/2021 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lawrence Ford	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The rust and cbb are important to investigate to discover ways that harmful species enter our state. Farmers need as much support as possible to keep growing conditions as good as possible so that this state can produce as much of its own economic power as it can.