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[EXTERNAL] Agenda IV.B.1 - Petition to Initiate Administrative Rulemaking to Contain/Slow the Spread of CRB on Hawai'i Island

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From Cadence McMillan <cmcmillan@connectionspcs.org>

Date Wed 1/28/2026 12:29 PM

To DAB.BOARD.TESTIMONY <dab.board.testimony@hawaii.gov>; jodie.hwf@gmail.com <jodie.hwf@gmail.com>

Aloha e Chair Hurd and Members of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity,

My name is Cadence from Mt. View, and I am urging you to **approve** the initiation of rulemaking to prevent the devastating establishment of coconut rhinoceros beetles (CRB) on Hawai'i Island, as reflected in the petition put forward by Hawai'i Wildlife Fund and Pōhaku Pelemaka.

Mahalo nui for your past actions in support of the Moloka'i community, as they sought your help in protecting their island from the potentially devastating impacts of the CRB. Now, Hawai'i Island needs your help, as more and more beetles and breeding sites are discovered in north Kona, and as **mulch and other high-risk vectors of CRB continue to be moved from infested areas to other regions on Hawai'i Island without any regulatory oversight.**

The irreversible establishment of CRB on Hawai'i Island may be imminent - and inevitable, if the movement of untreated host material is allowed to continue unabated. **Your decision on this matter may be our last chance to prevent the establishment of CRB on Hawai'i Island, and the generations-long impacts this will have on the island's food security, cultural integrity, native species, and overall economy.**

**Notably, the widespread distribution of CRB on Hawai'i Island will also exacerbate the risk of the pest being introduced and established on other islands, via the off-shipment of host material or other forms of interisland transportation.**

Please support these modest but critical rules, which simply ask for compliance agreements for training, treatment, and other best management practices before CRB host material can be moved from a known infested area.

Time is of the essence.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Cadence



January 26, 2026

VIA EMAIL TRANSMITTAL

Chairperson Sharon Hurd  
Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

RE: Petition for Interim Rulemaking to Regulate the Transport of Coconut  
Rhinoceros Beetle (*Oryctes Rhinoceros*) Host Material on Hawaii Island

Chairperson Hurd and Members of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity:

I am writing to respectfully oppose the Petition for Interim Rulemaking to Regulate the Transportaion of Coconut Beetle (*Oryctes Rhinoceros*) Host Material on Hawaii.

As a tenant and active business within the Keahole Agricultural Park, we respectfully oppose the proposed interim rules that would impose mandatory restrictions on the movement of coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) host materials.

We fully share the Department's concern regarding the spread of CRB. However, a blanket ban on transporting materials will have severe and immediate economic consequences for the businesses operating in the Keahole Agricultural Park (Park).

We would recommend developing an immediate Best Practices Program to treat materials prior to distribution. Similar to programs for coqui frog, fire ants, and rapid ohia death. Also, we support recommendation made by Hawaiian Earth Products to address the root host areas such as compost, green waste, decomposing materials to prevent the spread of CRB by natural vectoring.

Since there are minimal plant nurseries in the Park we believe it would be relatively easy to coordinate on-going treatments and inspections with the DAB. We have been proactive in requesting treatment and updates with the DAB CRB eradication team.

We are very concerned about the spread of CRB, however, the restrictions will not prevent the spread of CRB unless an immediate and comprehensive program addressing eradicating the full life cycle of the pest. A blanket ban will be devastating to all the business working in the Park.

We ask the Board to differ this decision and provide us an opportunity to work with the DAB and Hawaii County on a more practical, workable and effective solution.

Respectfully submitted,

Reed Kishinami  
Resort Management Group, LLC

PO Box 2366  
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96745  
(808) 329-5525 Fax: (808) 329-5556

*Ashley L. Kierkiewicz*  
County Council District IV



(808) 961-8265  
[ashley.kierkiewicz@hawaiiicounty.gov](mailto:ashley.kierkiewicz@hawaiiicounty.gov)

## **HAWAII COUNTY COUNCIL**

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

January 27, 2026

### **RE: Strong Support of the Petition for Interim Rulemaking to Regulate the Transportation of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Host Material on Hawai'i Island**

Aloha, Chair Hurd and Honorable Members of the Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity:

I offer this testimony as a Hawai'i County Council Member and as Chair of the Policy Committee on Planning, Land Use, and Economic Development, where I see firsthand how biosecurity failures are not isolated to agricultural issues, but cross-cutting threats that affect land use planning, economic stability, cultural resources, infrastructure investment, and long-term stewardship of place.

CRB was first detected on O'ahu in 2013 and is now widespread there, as well as on Kaua'i. Since 2023, CRB has been detected at multiple locations on Hawai'i Island, including Waikōloa, the Kona International Airport area, and Keāhole Agricultural Park. The spread of CRB poses a serious threat to niu, hala, and native and endangered palms that are foundational to Hawai'i Island's ecosystems, cultural practices, agricultural parks, resort areas, and public landscapes. Left unaddressed, these impacts will result in significant economic costs, safety risks, and long-term degradation of place-based identity.

Alongside Sen. Tim Richards and Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, and in collaboration with the Department of Research and Development, co-hosted the Hawai'i Island AgriPolicy Summits in November 2024 and December 2025. Across both summits, farmers, land managers, researchers, and agencies consistently raised CRB as a critical issue that Hawai'i Island must get ahead of, emphasizing the need for proactive biosecurity controls and faster regulatory action. The Petition before you directly reflects this community-driven call for early intervention rather than costly remediation after the fact.

I respectfully urge the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity to direct the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to convene the Advisory Committee on Plants and Animals as expeditiously as possible and to approve the proposed interim rule without delay. Timely action is essential to prevent further spread of CRB and to protect Hawai'i Island's agricultural systems, cultural landscapes, and economic future.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashley', written in a cursive style.

Ashley Lehaulani Kierkiewicz  
COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT IV

Kekuhi Kealiikanakaoleohaililani  
Hālau ‘Ōhi‘a  
1114 Auwae Road  
Hilo, HI 96720  
[kekuhi@lonoahonua.com](mailto:kekuhi@lonoahonua.com)

26 Jan 2026

Chairperson Sharon Hurd  
Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

**Re: Petition for Interim Rulemaking to Regulate the Transportation of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (*Oryctes Rhinoceros*) Host Material on Hawai‘i Island**

Aloha Chairperson Hurd and Members of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity,

I am writing to support the **Petition for Interim Rulemaking to Regulate the Transportation of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (*Oryctes Rhinoceros*) Host Material on Hawai‘i Island**. I am praying, urging the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity to direct DAB to convene a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Plants and Animals to approve the interim rule TODAY! Stop wasting time.

Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) is not a joke. It’s not minor. It’s not something to ignore like the introduction of other INVASIVES... in THE most isolated group of islands in the Pacific!! Do the right thing.

For the first 10 years, DAB was able to prevent the movement of CRB to other islands of the State. Then CRB was detected on the Island of Kaua‘i, where it is now widespread. And now, CRB larvae were collected in the Waikōloa Village area of Hawai‘i—and most recently detected outside the Waikōloa area at multiple sites on west Hawaii Island, near the Kona International Airport and within the Keāhole Agricultural Park.

And now I see their growing–traveling effects in Puna & Hilo. Why do we even have Biosecurity in JOBS upholding all the RULES & REGULATIONS but not STOPPING all the things killing our ‘ohana and eventually your ‘ohana, overtaking our forests and our food plants.

Before you politely dismiss the oral & written testimonies, before you go to lunch, or sign off for the day, it’s not a difficult thing to send an email or a text to friends in the department to direct DAB to convene and APPROVE THE INTERIM RULE to regulate continued, unconscious and uncaring transportation of CRB. Do it now.

Niu is still my mom’s & my grandchildren’s medicine!! Niu is everyday food. Without the niu we would not have a significant hula drum tradition. Niu is THE MOST widespread **storied** tree in the PACIFIC. AND MOST IMPORTANT is the GOD KŪ...as for an industry Hawai‘i economy cannot afford losing—there is NO replacement for waving coconut trees & palms in Hawai‘i!!

Kekuhi Kealiikanakaoleohaililani, Pele Clan & Niu tree & Kū worshipper  
Hālau ‘Ōhi‘a, Hawai‘i Island, Maui, O‘ahu, Molokai & Lei Ahi O Pele (Pacific Rim)

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[EXTERNAL] Agenda Item IV.B.1 - Petition to Initiate Administrative Rulemaking to Contain/ Slow the Spread of CRB on the Island of Hawai'i

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From Hannah Springer <ohiwai@gmail.com>

Date Tue 1/27/2026 9:30 AM

To DAB.BOARD.TESTIMONY <dab.board.testimony@hawaii.gov>

Me ka ha'aha'a e Chair Hurd and Members of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity,

My name is Hannah Kihalani Springer, I write urging **approval** of the initiation of Administrative Rulemaking to Contain/ Slow the Spread of CRB on the Island of Hawai'i.

I live in Ka'ūpūlehu, Kekaha (Kekaha wai 'ole/ Kekaha without water) North Kona, as have my people since "before contact".

I have observed the similar call of the people of Moloka'i for your support in protecting Moloka'i from the CRB invasion poised there. I am encouraged by your response to them and would pray the same for Hawai'i Island.

The water of the coconut (niu) was an important resource to the people of old from my home region, who lived by the sea, during times of drought. It remains a welcome electrolyte replacement beverage, best off of the tree as compared to out of a can.

The native loulu (*Pritchardia affinis*) grew at wai'ōpae (anchialine ponds) and they were visible from afar indicating to mariners and walkers, the presence of water in the dry, lava lands, of home. Today at Kūki'o, the landscapers have grown progeny from the remaining old growth plants from before the development, and planted them as distinctive landscaping specimens.

The hala (*Pandanus*) has long been woven into important, functional elements of our material culture. The mats that my tūtū wove have long ago deteriorated, but Ka Ulu Lauhala O Kona, and other weaving collectives, have kept the tradition, skill, and artistry thriving, and the handiwork of Aunty Maluihi Lee's exquisite lauhala hat, shades me from the sun still. And, the lei hala is an important adornment and ceremonial component of rites of transition, such as bereavement or the passing of one year to the next.

All of these species, so important to our memories of the old folks past and to the current practices of cultural presence on a landscape that is so quickly changing before our very eyes, are threatened by the CRB. When development came to Kekaha wai 'ole, we encouraged the use of these plants in landscaping, so that even as the architecture and demographics changed, we would have these visual reminders of what remains of old, in Hawai'i nei. They were part of the native economy and are viable landscaping elements of the contemporary economy. I pray that they long grace the landscape of home.

"Please support these modest but critical rules, which simply ask for compliance agreements for training, treatment, and other best management practices before CRB host material can be moved from a known infested area."

'O au nō me ka 'oia'i'o,  
Hannah Kihalani Springer

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[EXTERNAL] Agenda IV.B.1 - Petition to Initiate Administrative Rulemaking to Contain/Slow the Spread of CRB on Hawai'i Island

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From Ian Scarth <scarthi@hawaii.edu>

Date Tue 1/27/2026 10:10 AM

To DAB.BOARD.TESTIMONY <dab.board.testimony@hawaii.gov>

Aloha e Chair Hurd and Members of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity,

My name is Ian Scarth from Hilo, and I am urging you to **approve** the initiation of rulemaking to prevent the devastating establishment of coconut rhinoceros beetles (CRB) on Hawai'i Island, as reflected in the petition put forward by Hawai'i Wildlife Fund and Pōhaku Pelemaka.

Mahalo nui for your past actions in support of the Moloka'i community, as they sought your help in protecting their island from the potentially devastating impacts of the CRB. Now, Hawai'i Island needs your help, as more and more beetles and breeding sites are discovered in north Kona, and as **mulch and other high-risk vectors of CRB continue to be moved from infested areas to other regions on Hawai'i Island without any regulatory oversight.**

The irreversible establishment of CRB on Hawai'i Island may be imminent - and inevitable, if the movement of untreated host material is allowed to continue unabated. **Your decision on this matter may be our last chance to prevent the establishment of CRB on Hawai'i Island, and the generations-long impacts this will have on the island's food security, cultural integrity, native species, and overall economy.**

**Notably, the widespread distribution of CRB on Hawai'i Island will also exacerbate the risk of the pest being introduced and established on other islands, via the off-shipment of host material or other forms of interisland transportation.**

Please support these modest but critical rules, which simply ask for compliance agreements for training, treatment, and other best management practices before CRB host material can be moved from a known infested area.

Time is of the essence.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Ian Scarth

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**[EXTERNAL] Agenda IV.B.1 - Petition to Initiate Administrative Rulemaking to Contain/Slow the Spread of CRB on Hawai'i Island**

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From Kaheāwai Media <kaheawai@proton.me>

Date Wed 1/28/2026 11:42 AM

To DAB.BOARD.TESTIMONY <dab.board.testimony@hawaii.gov>; jodie.HWF@gmail.com <jodie.HWF@gmail.com>

Aloha e Chair Hurd and Members of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity,

Kaheāwai Media would like to submit testimony in support of Agenda item IV.B.1 and urges you to approve the initiation of rulemaking to prevent the devastating establishment of coconut rhinoceros beetles (CRB) on Hawai'i Island, as reflected in the petition put forward by Hawai'i Wildlife Fund and Pōhaku Pelemaka.

Mahalo nui for your past actions in support of the Moloka'i community, as they sought your help in protecting their island from the potentially devastating impacts of the CRB. Now, Hawai'i Island needs your help, as more and more beetles and breeding sites are discovered in north Kona, and as mulch and other high-risk vectors of CRB continue to be moved from infested areas to other regions on Hawai'i Island without any regulatory oversight.

The irreversible establishment of CRB on Hawai'i Island may be imminent - and inevitable, if the movement of untreated host material is allowed to continue unabated. Your decision on this matter may be our last chance to prevent the establishment of CRB on Hawai'i Island, and the generations-long impacts this will have on the island's food security, cultural integrity, native species, and overall economy.

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Please support these modest but critical rules, which simply ask for compliance agreements for training, treatment, and other best management practices before CRB host material can be moved from a known infested area.

Time is of the essence.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

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[EXTERNAL] Agenda IV.B.1 - Petition to Initiate Administrative Rulemaking to Contain/Slow the Spread of CRB on Hawai'i Island

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From Kalani Soller <kysoller@ksbe.edu>

Date Tue 1/27/2026 9:56 AM

To DAB.BOARD.TESTIMONY <dab.board.testimony@hawaii.gov>; jodie.HWF@gmail.com <jodie.HWF@gmail.com>

Aloha e Chair Hurd and Members of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity,

I am Kyle "Kalani" Soller, from Punahoa, Hilo and I am urging you to **approve** the initiation of rulemaking to prevent the devastating establishment of coconut rhinoceros beetles (CRB) on Hawai'i Island, as reflected in the petition put forward by Hawai'i Wildlife Fund and Pōhaku Pelemaka.

Mahalo nui for your past actions in support of the Moloka'i community, as they sought your help in protecting their island from the potentially devastating impacts of the CRB. Now, Hawai'i Island needs your help, as more and more beetles and breeding sites are discovered in north Kona, and as **mulch and other high-risk vectors of CRB continue to be moved from infested areas to other regions on Hawai'i Island without any regulatory oversight.**

The irreversible establishment of CRB on Hawai'i Island may be imminent - and inevitable, if the movement of untreated host material is allowed to continue unabated. **Your decision on this matter may be our last chance to prevent the establishment of CRB on Hawai'i Island, and the generations-long impacts this will have on the island's food security, cultural integrity, native species, and overall economy.**

**Notably, the widespread distribution of CRB on Hawai'i Island will also exacerbate the risk of the pest being introduced and established on other islands, via the off-shipment of host material or other forms of interisland transportation.**

Please support these modest but critical rules, which simply ask for compliance agreements for training, treatment, and other best management practices before CRB host material can be moved from a known infested area.

Time is of the essence.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.  
Kalani Soller

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[EXTERNAL] Agenda IV.B.1 - Petition to Initiate Administrative Rulemaking to Contain/Slow the Spread of CRB on Hawai'i Island

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From Kalani Soller <ksoller70@gmail.com>

Date Tue 1/27/2026 11:37 AM

To DAB.BOARD.TESTIMONY <dab.board.testimony@hawaii.gov>; jodie.HWF@gmail.com <jodie.HWF@gmail.com>

Aloha e Chair Hurd and Members of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity,

My name is Kayla Soller and I am urging you to **approve** the initiation of rulemaking to prevent the devastating establishment of coconut rhinoceros beetles (CRB) on Hawai'i Island, as reflected in the petition put forward by Hawai'i Wildlife Fund and Pōhaku Pelemaka.

Mahalo nui for your past actions in support of the Moloka'i community, as they sought your help in protecting their island from the potentially devastating impacts of the CRB. Now, Hawai'i Island needs your help, as more and more beetles and breeding sites are discovered in north Kona, and as **mulch and other high-risk vectors of CRB continue to be moved from infested areas to other regions on Hawai'i Island without any regulatory oversight.**

The irreversible establishment of CRB on Hawai'i Island may be imminent - and inevitable, if the movement of untreated host material is allowed to continue unabated. **Your decision on this matter may be our last chance to prevent the establishment of CRB on Hawai'i Island, and the generations-long impacts this will have on the island's food security, cultural integrity, native species, and overall economy.**

**Notably, the widespread distribution of CRB on Hawai'i Island will also exacerbate the risk of the pest being introduced and established on other islands, via the off-shipment of host material or other forms of interisland transportation.**

Please support these modest but critical rules, which simply ask for compliance agreements for training, treatment, and other best management practices before CRB host material can be moved from a known infested area.

Time is of the essence.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.  
Kayla Soller

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**[EXTERNAL] Agenda IV.B.1 - Petition to Initiate Administrative Rulemaking to Contain/Slow the Spread of CRB on Hawai'i Island**

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From Kamaehu Naipo <kamaehu.naipo@gmail.com>

Date Tue 1/27/2026 9:44 AM

To DAB.BOARD.TESTIMONY <dab.board.testimony@hawaii.gov>; jodie.HWF@gmail.com <jodie.HWF@gmail.com>

Aloha e Chair Hurd and Members of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity,

My name is Kamaehu Naipo, from Kāne'ohe on the island of O'ahu, and I am urging you to approve the initiation of rulemaking to prevent the devastating establishment of coconut rhinoceros beetles (CRB) on Hawai'i Island, as reflected in the petition submitted by Hawai'i Wildlife Fund and Pōhaku Pelemaka.

Mahalo nui for your past actions in support of the Moloka'i community as they sought your help to protect their island from the potentially devastating impacts of CRB. Today, Hawai'i Island needs that same support. More beetles and breeding sites continue to be discovered in North Kona, and mulch and other high-risk vectors of CRB are still being moved from infested areas to other regions of Hawai'i Island without any regulatory oversight.

I currently help maintain uluniu groves here on O'ahu, and it is always disheartening to encounter this pest that has created so much struggle for those of us working to revitalize the 'ike kupuna of cultivating our tree of life, the niu. O'ahu has been hit so hard by this infestation, and seeing this devastation reach our fellow kanaka on Hawai'i Island makes it clear that immediate action is necessary.

The irreversible establishment of CRB on Hawai'i Island may be imminent — and inevitable — if the movement of untreated host material continues unchecked. Your decision on this matter may be our last opportunity to prevent CRB from becoming permanently established on Hawai'i Island, along with the generations-long impacts this would have on food security, cultural integrity, native species, and the island's overall economy.

Furthermore, widespread distribution of CRB on Hawai'i Island will increase the risk of the pest being introduced to other islands through off-shipment of host material or other forms of interisland transport.

Please support these modest but critical rules, which simply require compliance agreements for training, treatment, and best management practices before CRB host material can be moved from a known infested area.

Time is of the essence.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Kamaehu Naipo

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[EXTERNAL] Agenda IV.B.1 - Petition to Initiate Administrative Rulemaking to Contain/Slow the Spread of CRB on Hawai'i Island

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From Kui Leo Hawaii <kuileohawaii@gmail.com>

Date Tue 1/27/2026 11:41 AM

To jodie.HWF@gmail.com <jodie.HWF@gmail.com>; DAB.BOARD.TESTIMONY <dab.board.testimony@hawaii.gov>

Aloha e Chair Hurd and Members of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity,

My name is Brandon Silva and I am urging you to **approve** the initiation of rulemaking to prevent the devastating establishment of coconut rhinoceros beetles (CRB) on Hawai'i Island, as reflected in the petition put forward by Hawai'i Wildlife Fund and Pōhaku Pelemaka.

Mahalo nui for your past actions in support of the Moloka'i community, as they sought your help in protecting their island from the potentially devastating impacts of the CRB. Now, Hawai'i Island needs your help, as more and more beetles and breeding sites are discovered in north Kona, and as **mulch and other high-risk vectors of CRB continue to be moved from infested areas to other regions on Hawai'i Island without any regulatory oversight.**

The irreversible establishment of CRB on Hawai'i Island may be imminent - and inevitable, if the movement of untreated host material is allowed to continue unabated. **Your decision on this matter may be our last chance to prevent the establishment of CRB on Hawai'i Island, and the generations-long impacts this will have on the island's food security, cultural integrity, native species, and overall economy.**

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Please support these modest but critical rules, which simply ask for compliance agreements for training, treatment, and other best management practices before CRB host material can be moved from a known infested area.

Time is of the essence.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Brandon Silva

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[EXTERNAL] Agenda IV.B.1 - Petition to Initiate Administrative Rulemaking to Contain/Slow the Spread of CRB on Hawai'i Island

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From Ohana Soller <ohanasoller@gmail.com>

Date Tue 1/27/2026 11:33 AM

To jodie.HWF@gmail.com <jodie.HWF@gmail.com>; DAB.BOARD.TESTIMONY <dab.board.testimony@hawaii.gov>

Aloha e Chair Hurd and Members of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity,

My name is Kalehua Soller and I am urging you to **approve** the initiation of rulemaking to prevent the devastating establishment of coconut rhinoceros beetles (CRB) on Hawai'i Island, as reflected in the petition put forward by Hawai'i Wildlife Fund and Pōhaku Pelemaka.

Mahalo nui for your past actions in support of the Moloka'i community, as they sought your help in protecting their island from the potentially devastating impacts of the CRB. Now, Hawai'i Island needs your help, as more and more beetles and breeding sites are discovered in north Kona, and as **mulch and other high-risk vectors of CRB continue to be moved from infested areas to other regions on Hawai'i Island without any regulatory oversight.**

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Please support these modest but critical rules, which simply ask for compliance agreements for training, treatment, and other best management practices before CRB host material can be moved from a known infested area.

Time is of the essence.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.  
Kalehua Soller

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[EXTERNAL] Formal Statement for the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity

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From Peter Hix <peter@southernturfhawaii.com>

Date Tue 1/27/2026 9:22 AM

To DAB.BOARD.TESTIMONY <dab.board.testimony@hawaii.gov>

Cc Danny Green <danny@southernturfhawaii.com>; George Woerner <gwoerner@woerner.com>

Good morning Chairperson Hurd and Members of the Board.

I want to begin by stating clearly that preserving Hawai'i from invasive species is critically important to us. We live and work here. Our families, our livelihoods, and our long-term future are tied to the health of these islands. We are not advocating for anything that would harm Hawai'i's ecosystems, agriculture, or native species. We support strong, effective measures to contain and control coconut rhinoceros beetle. What we are asking for is a solution that is targeted, workable, and fair.

My name is Peter Hix with Southern Turf Hawaii, and I operate a commercial sod farm within the agricultural lots that fall inside the proposed CRB infested area.

Our sod farm depends on the continuous movement of sod off-parcel to customers. Under the proposed interim rule, the transportation, receipt, processing, sale, barter, donation, or giving away of what the rule defines as "CRB host material" is prohibited within and from the infested area unless done under a permit or a formal compliance agreement. The rule defines "transport" as any movement out of a single Tax Map Key parcel.

Even though sod itself is not explicitly named, sod production necessarily organic matter, trimmings, roots, thatch, and green waste. Those materials fall squarely within the rule's definition of CRB host material, which includes decomposing plant material such as mulch, trimmings, compost, wood, and plant propagation media.

As a result, the rule would effectively restrict or condition our ability to sell sod off-parcel unless we obtain permits or compliance agreements, submit to inspections, adopt treatment protocols, train staff, keep records, and accept regulatory access to our facility. Any misstep could result in misdemeanor penalties and fines of up to \$10,000 per offense.

That is not a marginal inconvenience. It directly disrupts our ability to operate, meet customer demand, and remain economically viable.

What makes this especially unfair is how the infestation actually occurred. Our site did not become infested because of negligent practices by our operation. It occurred after neighboring agricultural lot lessees failed to properly manage their property which became breeding grounds for CRB. Those unmanaged lots are exactly the type of high-risk areas this rule is supposed to address.

Yet the proposed interim rule applies blanket restrictions to all operators within the zone, regardless of whether they caused or contributed to the infestation, whether they maintain clean sites, or whether they already follow best management practices.

In effect, responsible operators like our sod farm are being economically penalized for conditions created by negligent neighbors.

Even the Plant Quarantine Branch's own analysis raises serious concerns. It acknowledges that quarantine restrictions should optimally be limited to known infestations, that historically restrictions are placed on commodities leaving an infested area rather than within it, and that the proposed rule is internally inconsistent, burdensome to regulate, and likely ineffective at preventing spread.

Those findings undermine the legal and factual basis for imposing an emergency rule that broadly restricts routine agricultural operations.

From a legal standpoint, this rule is also vulnerable. It is overbroad, not narrowly tailored to actual risk pathways, and interferes with lawful commercial activity without compensation. By materially burdening our ability to sell sod—our core business—it raises serious due process and regulatory takings concerns under both the U.S. and Hawai'i Constitutions.

I want to be clear: we support CRB containment. What we oppose is a blunt instrument that harms compliant farms while failing to address the root causes of infestation.

A workable and fair approach would be to:

First, narrowly target actual high-risk materials such as unmanaged wood piles, palm debris, and green waste stockpiles.

Second, focus enforcement on parcels with documented breeding sites or negligent sanitation practices.

Third, allow responsible agricultural operators like sod farms to continue normal sales under simple best-management-practice standards, with targeted inspection only where there is evidence of infestation.

Fourth, include an economic impact analysis and mitigation measures for businesses whose operations would be restricted.

This Board has an opportunity to protect Hawai'i's agriculture without destroying legitimate agricultural businesses in the process. I respectfully ask that you not adopt the proposed interim rule in its current form and instead direct staff to develop a narrowly tailored, risk-based approach that targets actual CRB pathways without crippling compliant farms.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Peter Hix

Managing Partner

Southern Turf Hawaii

Mililani Estate Cacao



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

*Hale o nā Luna Makaʻāinana*

January 27, 2026

To: Chairperson Sharon Hurd  
Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity

From: Representative Kirstin Kahaloa  
Hawaiʻi State House of Representatives

**RE:** Support Testimony for Interim Rulemaking to Regulate the Transportation the Transportation of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Host Material on Hawaiʻi Island (Item IV. B1, Plant Quarantine Branch)

Aloha Chair Hurd and Members of the Board,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Item IV.B.1 under the Plant Quarantine Branch, for the petition to initiate interim administrative rulemaking pursuant to HRS §150A-9.5 to contain and slow the spread of the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) on Hawaiʻi Island and throughout the State.

This petition is timely, necessary, and should be viewed as one comprehensive and coordinated request, with its components working together to address an urgent and escalating biosecurity threat. The intent is clear: treatment and monitoring alone will not stop CRB. Without enforceable rules governing the movement and handling of CRB host material, Hawaiʻi Island risks repeating the devastating trajectory already seen on Oʻahu and Kauaʻi.

This petition appropriately proposes a permit and compliance agreement framework to regulate the movement, handling, and distribution of CRB host material—both from designated infested areas to other parts of the State, and within infested areas themselves. This is critical because CRB host material extends far beyond live palm trees. It includes potted plants, mulch, compost, green waste, wood and tree chips, plant propagation media, and other decomposing organic materials that move frequently through landscaping, construction, nursery operations, and green waste systems. Without clear standards and best management practices, these everyday pathways can unintentionally transport CRB and rapidly expand the infestation.

Importantly, this petition does not seek to shut down economic activity or impose unreasonable burdens on residents or businesses. Instead, it proposes a practical, structured, and enforceable system that allows work to continue under permits and compliance agreements while ensuring basic safeguards are in place to reduce human-assisted spread. A clear regulatory framework benefits responsible operators by providing consistency, fairness, and clarity—while ensuring there are consequences for bad actors who place the broader community at risk.

Representative Kirstin Kahaloa  
*Ka Luna Makaʻāinana*

State House District 6: Kailua-Kona, Hōlualoa, Keauhou, Kealakekua, Captain Cook, Nāpoʻopoʻo, Hōnaunau  
State Capitol 415 S. Beretania Street, Room 403 Honolulu, HI 96813

A permit and compliance agreement system also reflects the practical realities of enforcement on Hawai‘i Island. While state inspection capacity is limited, clear rules allow for a shared responsibility model—where businesses and operators follow best management practices, maintain records, and self-certify compliance, while the State retains the authority to audit, inspect, and enforce when necessary. However, experience has shown that voluntary compliance alone is insufficient to prevent the spread of CRB. Education and outreach are essential, but they must be paired with enforceable standards to change behavior at scale and ensure accountability. Without clear rules, there is no baseline for compliance and no meaningful mechanism to intervene when risky practices occur.

It is also important to acknowledge the enforcement challenges facing the County of Hawai‘i. Counties do not have the legal authority, staffing capacity, or regulatory tools to monitor or restrict the movement of CRB host material across job sites, nurseries, green waste facilities, and private properties. Expecting counties to control pest pathways without state-level regulatory authority places them in an untenable position and leaves dangerous gaps that CRB will exploit. This responsibility rests with the State, the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and this Board—and state-level action is essential to provide uniform standards and enforceable authority.

For Hawai‘i Island, the stakes are deeply personal. CRB threatens our agricultural lands, community landscapes, visitor economy, and native ecosystems, including endangered and culturally significant loulu palms already under extreme pressure. Once CRB becomes widespread, containment becomes far more difficult and far more costly—financially, environmentally, and culturally. Hawai‘i Island still has a narrowing window where meaningful containment is possible, but that window depends on timely and decisive state action. Delay increases risk. Clear rules provide certainty. Action now gives us our best chance to succeed.

This petition also aligns squarely with the direction set by the Hawai‘i State Legislature through the passage of Act 236, Session Laws of Hawai‘i 2025, which reaffirmed that biosecurity is a statewide priority and that Hawai‘i must strengthen its capacity to prevent and respond to invasive species threats. Legislative intent alone is not enough—it must be matched with implementation, coordination, and regulatory tools that can be deployed swiftly when an emergency arises. This petition represents exactly that kind of follow-through.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Board to approve Item IV.B.1 in its entirety and move swiftly to initiate interim rulemaking and implementation of a permit and compliance framework to contain CRB while containment is still achievable.

Mahalo nui for your leadership and your commitment to protecting Hawai‘i’s agriculture, ‘āina, and communities.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a.



Representative Kirstin Kahaloa  
House District 6 | Kona – Kailua to Hōnaunau  
Majority Caucus Leader and Former Chair, Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Representative Kirstin Kahaloa  
*Ka Luna Maka‘āinana*

[EXTERNAL] CRB action on Hawai'i

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From Victoria Felt <mrs.vfelt@gmail.com>

Date Sun 2/1/2026 10:15 PM

To DAB.BOARD.TESTIMONY <dab.board.testimony@hawaii.gov>

Cc jodie.hwf@gmail.com <jodie.hwf@gmail.com>

Aloha,

I realize my testimony is late, but I wanted to express my deep concern that the Island of Hawai'i is moving too slowly with its CRB biosecurity. We need to be proactive with our detection and act quickly when there's any sign of detection. CRB won't just affect our coconut trees. Once the coconuts are ravaged, they'll turn to other palms (like our native loulu) and crops (like kalo).

Please prioritize early detection, and when signs like beetle larva are found, act immediately.

Mahalo for your kokua,

Victoria Felt

[Knots In The Pines](#)

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