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March 23rd 2026

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

Re: Agenda Item IV-C-1: Review and Approval of the 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 urge you to approve the Petition for Interim Rulemaking to Regulate the Transportation of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (*Oryctes Rhinoceros*) Host Material on Hawai'i Island.

As the Petition states, Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) was first detected in Hawai'i on the Island of O'ahu in 2013. Since that time, the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (referred to as DAB in this petition) and its partners worked to prevent the spread of CRB. Ultimately, those efforts were not successful and CRB is now established and widespread on O'ahu where it is decimating coconut groves, hala, and endangered palms. For the first 10 years, DAB was able to prevent the movement of CRB to other islands of the State. This unfortunately changed in May of 2023 when CRB was detected on the Island of Kaua'i, where it is now widespread, and

in October 2023, when CRB larvae were collected in the Waikōloa Village area of Hawai'i. After the initial detection on Hawai'i Island, adult CRB were detected in the Waikōloa area in 2024, and since March of 2025, CRB was detected outside the Waikōloa area at multiple sites on west Hawaii Island, near the Kona International Airport and within the Keāhole Agricultural Park.

The petitioners have worked with the Plant Quarantine Branch (PQB) and businesses operating within the infested area, and this rule sets manageable parameters that will reduce the impacts of human-spread of CRB to non-infested areas. Without a rule in place, Hawai'i Island will suffer devastating losses of native (endangered) species, food security, and of the economy. We still have a chance to change that trajectory.

As a Practitioner of ulana launiu and other crafts of niu, it is imperative that these regulations are put into effect ASAP. Niu is very special and important to our culture and traditions as we consider it the tree of life, kumu niu.

Now with confirmed reports of other Host plant species that the CRB are attacking, we need to act now to stop the spread and to combat the issue of where the original infestation has occurred.

I/We urge the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity to approve this Interim Rule to prevent the spread of CRB across Hawai'i Island and across non-infested areas across the pae 'āina.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Aloha,

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