

Department of Land and Natural Resources
Division of Forestry and Wildlife
Invasive Species Program
Testimony Regarding Agenda Item VI.1.
Update on Plant Quarantine Interim Rule 26-1

1. The coconut rhinoceros beetle was detected in Kona on the Big Island and began spreading at an alarming rate.
2. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity was petitioned to issue the Plant Quarantine Interim Rule 26-1 to prevent or slow the human-assisted spread of the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) on Hawaii Island.
3. The interim rule relies on collaboration with local businesses that transport CRB host material to enter into Compliance Agreements, receive CRB training, and use best management practices to prevent or slow the spread of CRB.
4. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) collaborated with the CRB Response program and the Big Island Invasive Species Committee (BIISC) on Interim Rule 26-1.
5. Interim Rule 26-1 took effect on March 25, 2026, and all covered businesses were required to complete training and enter into Compliance Agreements by May 1, 2026.
 - a. BIISC has offered 26 training sessions. Has DAB signed and issued any Compliance Agreements to businesses that have received the training?
6. To successfully implement Interim Rule 26-1, DLNR strongly recommends that
 - a. DAB designates a local PQ inspector as the point of contact for enforcing compliance agreements with BIISC and CRB Response in Kona, and
 - b. hold regular communication and coordination meetings to ensure that businesses comply with the best management practices outlined and required by the compliance agreement program.
7. PQ should report to this Board on the progress in enforcing the compliance agreements at the next meeting.
8. CRB has the potential to cost the state hundreds of millions of dollars in economic, cultural, and natural resource damages if it becomes widespread and established. These costs would be borne by both government and private landowners, making investment in CRB control highly cost-effective. DLNR urges DAB to act urgently.