



May 29, 2024

TO: The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC)

SUBJECT: Testimony in support of rulemaking for high-priority invasive pests

Aloha Chair Chang, Chair Hurd, and esteemed members of the HISC,

The O'ahu Invasive Species Committee (OISC) strongly supports developing a rulemaking process to better address the regulatory gaps when managing high-impact invasive species through the HISC. Current Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR) have thus far been ineffective in addressing the gaps in regulation that have led to outbreaks of some of the world's worst invasive species, including little fire ant (*Wasmannia auropunctata*) and coqui frog (*Eleutherodactylus coqui*).

While current HAR through the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) should continue to be refined to best address invasive pests that threaten the agriculture industry, additional rules to help better manage invasive species that harm our watersheds and natural resources are very much needed. OISC recommends working with invasive species managers at all levels to develop a comprehensive list of invasive species that threaten to disrupt our way of life. This includes those species that are already here wreaking havoc on our resources, as well as those species suspected to arrive at our shores that have been identified as particularly harmful invaders. HISC should revisit this list regularly and provide a means to update this list as needed.

Invasive species continue to be a key driver in the extinction of rare and endangered species endemic to our State. Costs to control and manage these species will expand exponentially alongside the costs of damages that invasive species cause to our economy, agriculture, and way of life. The cheapest and most effective means of invasive species management is prevention, and more comprehensive rules governing invasive species management in Hawai'i will be a crucial tool in saving these resources for future generations.

Sincerely,

Nate Dube, OISC Manager