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September 29, 2025

SUBMITTAL

TO: Co-chairs and Members
Hawaii'i Invasive Species Council
State of Hawaii

FROM: Rob Hauff, Chair Resources Working Group and
Chelsea Arnott, Invasive Species Coordinator
Hawaii'i Invasive Species Council

SUBJECT: Requesting approval of the Fiscal Year 2026 Hawaii'i Invasive Species
Council budget

Background:

Since its inception in 2003, the Hawaii'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) has disbursed funding to support interagency invasive species projects that:

- Expand agency's capacity to work on priority issues,
- Fill gaps between agency mandates or existing agency programs, and/or
- Advance our collective knowledge through research and development of new tools.

Funds are disbursed via an intra-governmental granting process wherein state, county, and federal offices may submit requests for funding and meet to collaboratively draft a recommended budget for HISC review.

For Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26), the legislature appropriated \$5,750,000 to the HISC as its primary base amount of funds. Supplemental funds of \$1,500,000 were also provided to the HISC budget by the legislature. The HISC appropriations are subject to a 10% expenditure restriction by the Department of Budget and Finance and 5% overhead from the Division of Forestry and Wildlife (Forestry and Wildlife) at the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) as the administrative host of the HISC. The account that the HISC appropriation is allocated to, LNR402, was subject to a 20% reduction in FY23 - FY25 which carried over to FY26. A cost breakdown of the base and supplemental provided in Tables 1 & 2.

Table 1: Breakdown of FY26 HISC Base Budget

HISC base	\$ 5,750,000.00
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20% Reduction	\$ -1,503,845.75)
5% Overhead	\$ -185,920.00
10% Restriction	\$ - 527,746.00)
Total	\$ 3,532,488.25

Table 2: Breakdown of FY26 HISC Supplemental Budget

Supplemental Funds	\$ 1,500,000.00
5% Overhead	\$ - 65,678.00
10% Restriction	\$ - 186,432.00
Total	\$ 1,247,890.00

This year the legislature also appropriated an additional \$4.25M in funds to HISC through Act 236. The allocation of these funds aligns with the communication to legislators during the 2025 session and approval by the Council at the May 28th meeting. The allocation is set forth below:

- \$1.725M 5 Island Invasive Species Committees
- \$865,500 for research projects that enhance tools and technology.
- \$300,000 for Biocontrol
- \$300,000 for HISC capacity (grant management, compliance, and operations)
- \$525,000 interagency monitoring for high impact pests at critical control points (CRB, invasive ants, Africanized bees, Japanese Beetle, and mosquitos).

HISC Program Support Budget (Act 236 and HISC base funds):

The FY26 HISC Program Support total budget is \$693,419.63. This total is comprised of \$393,419.63 that is subtracted from the HISC's base funding and the \$300,000 provided through Act 236. Program Support details are as follows:

- The “HISC Program Support Team” planning section entails two full-time positions, the HISC Planner & Early Detection/Rapid Response Community Liaison. Both positions provide critical functions to the Council including coordination of multi-agency meetings, tracking and implementation of State and internal plans, development of species-specific response plans, management of the PEST.org public pest reporting website, outreach, and overall state coordination. HISC Planning section budget provides associated travel, supplies, and other costs associated with administration of the HISC and its supported projects. HISC is employing a student part time to assist with processing 643-Pest.org reports.
- Intermittent support for programmers and administrators associated with online product development under the Hawai‘i Biodiversity Information Network (HBIN). HBIN manages the online pest reporting system 643pest.org as well as other invasive species web-based products; and
- Support for the Hawai‘i-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment, which employs one weed risk assessor.
- With the additional funding to support HISC capacity through Act 236, the Program Support will fund
 - A data manager at .25 FTE to assist with the development of data sharing protocols across agencies and the supporting the creation of a public facing

dashboard in cooperation with Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (HDAB), and

- An interim strategy for HISC that will provide guidance on objectives and key actions to work towards in the next 2-3 years to improve statewide coordination and policy direction through the Council and its network.

HISC Port of Entry Monitoring Program (PoEM) (Act 236 funds): This program provides surveillance for five high-risk pests at state airports and harbors and received an allocation of \$525,000 from Act 236 that will support the entirety of the program for twelve months. The PoEM program includes:

- The Invasive Species Research and Projects Coordinator who coordinates the program and works with scientists and practitioners to identify research needs and priorities that can advance invasive species knowledge, technology, and tools; and
- Support to the Island Invasive Species Committees and Hawai‘i Ant Lab that provide staff to perform the regular monitoring and response for the program and each of the State airport ports and seaports.

Island Invasive Species Committees (ISCs) (Act 236 funds): \$1.725M in funds provided by Act 236 was evenly divided between the five ISCs. This island-based coalition focuses on early detection and control of high-threat species, including the critical work pertaining to the high-priority pests of Little Fire Ant, Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle and Coqui frog. These funds are in addition to the FY26 HISC awards. The remaining balance of \$5,661,958.62 is available for interagency program and project grants. A breakdown of these amounts is provided in Table 3 compared to FY25 funding amounts.

Table 3: Overview of FY26 HISC Funding vs FY25 HISC Funding and Amount Available for Submitted Applications

Funding Description	FY26	FY25
Total Submitted Requests	\$12,303,067	\$8,083,419.17
HISC Base Budget	\$4,780,378.25	\$4,779,230.00
Act 236	\$1,275,000	NA
HISC Program Support	\$693,419.63	\$465,797.09
Port of Entry Monitoring Program	\$525,000	\$240,056.11
Amount Available	\$5,661,958.62	4,059,457

Discussion:

The preparation of the FY26 recommended budget for the HISC was accomplished through the following process:

- A call for proposals was released June 9, 2025, with applications for projects and programs due July 19, 2025. The call for proposals included a separate deadline for research projects due July 30, 2025. Eligible projects and programs include state, county, and federal agencies as well as land-grant universities that propose projects that benefit invasive species work in Hawai‘i.

- As described in the proposal guidelines, applications needed to demonstrate applicability to the five funding priorities based on the strategies outlined in the “HISC & CGAPS 2025 Joint Strategy: In support of the Hawai‘i Interagency Biosecurity Plan”.
- Members of the Resources Working Group (RWG), comprised of eleven managers and staff from the Departments represented on the Council and designated by Council members as well as HISC Support Staff (See Table 4 below), evaluated proposals, scoring them based on the projects ability to address the five funding priorities. Additional points were possible for sector relevancy and providing leveraged funding. The total amount of points possible is 57. A quantitative score for each proposal is calculated and provides a ranking of lowest scoring to highest scoring proposals. Scores are factored into the application’s funding request and the total available HISC funds to produce a recommended award amount that serves as a starting point for the discussion at the Resources Working Group meeting. Proposals that scored low based on the quantitative evaluations and hit a low bracket relative to other proposals, are not recommended for FY26 HISC funding and not part of the Resources Working Group discussion. This year, there were three low scoring proposals that were in this bracket and one additional proposal that was voluntarily removed from consideration by the applicant.
- On September 18, 2025, the Resources Working Group (RWG) facilitated a virtual meeting to discuss the merits of each application and develop a balanced, recommended budget for FY26 HISC funding. This is not a public meeting, however applicants are invited to attend to address questions or comments that may arise by members of the RWG during discussion. The recommended FY26 HISC Budget approved by the HISC Resources Working Group is provided in Attachment 1.
- Requests received for FY26 funding totaled \$12,303,067 across 53 proposals. One applicant requested their proposal be removed from consideration during the evaluation process, and three failed to score high enough to be considered for funding by the RWG. For the remaining 50 proposals, the Resources Working Group recommended partial funding based on the amount requested, application merit (e.g., score), and the overall amount of available funding. Applicants were asked at the time of submission to indicate whether their projects were scalable, indicating that a partial award would be useful in contributing toward the overall project budget. With only having total available \$5,661,958.62, the Resources Working Group is responsible for balancing the budget and ultimately reducing the requests by half (See Figure 1). This leaves most applicants with the responsibility of securing additional funding sources for their projects.

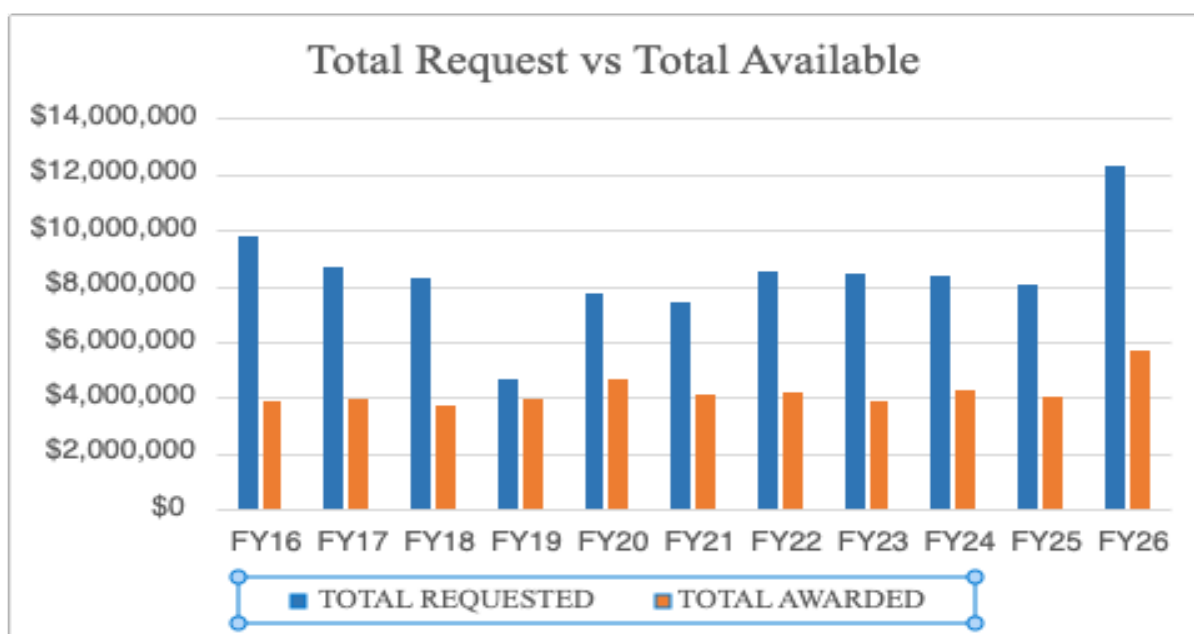


Figure 1: The total requested and the total available for HISC funding by year.

Table 4: FY26 HISC Resources Working Group Members

Name	Department
Rob Hauff, Chair	DLNR, Forestry & Wildlife
Lizzy Monaghan	DLNR, Aquatic Resources
Rachel Beasley	DBEDT, Office of Planning & Sustainable Development
Richard Kim	HDOA, Plant Industry Manager
Matt Kurano	DOH, Vector Control Branch
Mike Melzer	UH, College of Tropical Agriculture & Human Resilient
Christy Martin	UH, Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit
Tomo Murata	DOT, Planning
Chelsea Arnott	HISC Program Support
Mason Russo	HISC Research and Projects Coordinator
Jonathan Ho	Plant Quarantine Branch Manager

Legal Authority:

- HRS 194-2 (a): Establishes the HISC for the purpose of cabinet-level coordination and planning among state departments, federal agencies, and international and local initiatives; and
- HRS 194-2 (a)(4): Directs the HISC to create and implement a plan for prevention, early detection, rapid response, control, enforcement, and education.

Recommendations:

- i. That the Hawai‘i Invasive Species Council approve the FY26 budget for HISC support and an interagency budget for invasive species projects and programs recommended by the Resources Working Group provided in Attachment 1, and

- ii. That, should the Department of Budget and Finance make any changes to the restriction on expenditures, the HISC delegate authority to the HISC Program Support Staff to identify best way to apply additional restrictions to project funds, or to identify best uses of any released funds, and
- iii. That, if there are any changes in the scope or implementation of projects over the course of the year, the Council delegate authority to the HISC Program Support staff to make adjustments to project funds or reassign project funds from any project that does not proceed in a timely manner.

Attachment 1:

- FY26 HISC Budget Recommendations of the HISC Resources Working Group

Attachment 1

Considerations for decision-making by Resources Working Group members:

- Preference to fully fund smaller project requests versus partially funding larger requests. This will ensure the product/deliverables are met rather than being severely scaled down to the point where the funding is no longer impactful.
- Members needed a clear demonstration on how project findings would be applicable to on-the-ground efforts. If that was not made clear or the impact was not determined to be significant, the application was either greatly reduced or zeroed out.
- ISCs were prioritized as critical programs to try and increase funding for. Excess funds that were available at the end of the first round of reviews for programmatic requests were added to the ISC budget, specifically to KISC. Excess funding of \$50,000 was moved from the project requests category to programs and distributed to BIISC and MISC/MoMISC.
- An excess of \$106,500 remained at the end of the process. Members decided that this funding would be best saved for rapid response/emergency needs that could come up during the fiscal year. Members suggested that this would be a best practice to continue in future funding years.

Evaluation Categories:

To address the increase of applications and provide more balance to the review process, applications were split between three categories as described below for the RWG meeting discussion:

- Programmatic Requests: A collection of related projects managed in a coordinated way to obtain benefits and control not available from managing them individually. Typically, higher operating costs.
- Project Requests: A *temporary* endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result.
- Biocontrol Requests: Projects that are specifically addressing the use of biocontrol, does not have to be classical.
- Additional Considerations for Coqui Request: Projects were specifically solicited to address coqui frogs in Hawai'i. Applications were subject to a secondary evaluation process from land managers that are addressing ongoing infestations.

Table 1: Overview of HISC FY26 Funding Breakdown

Funding Description	FY26
Project and Program Grants (HISC Base & Act 236)	\$5,661,958.62
HISC Program Support	\$693,419.63
Port of Entry Monitoring Program	\$525,000
Invasive Species Committees	\$1,725,000
Total	\$8,605,378.25

Projects not recommended funding based on low score and scalability:

- USDA APHIS - Develop + assess methods for mass production of indigenous entomopathogenic nematode cultures \$102,722
- UH CTAHR - Portable RAA-Based Diagnostic System for Early Detection of Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death \$140,585
- UC San Diego – Coqui Acoustic Disruption \$497,508

Table 2: Recommended Budget for Project Requests

Number of considered Programmatic Applications: 14

Total Requested: \$7.5M

Total Available: \$3,825,212

Application Number and Title	Organization	Submitted Request	Overall Application Score	Recommended Award
12: Engaging the Public to Protect Maui County from Invasive Species - Maui/Molokai Invasive Species Committee	UH PCSU	\$289,013.00	19	\$110,197
01: Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death Outreach and Extension – University of Hawai'i	UH CTAHR	\$58,779.15	21	\$22,749
07: Invasive Species Control + Outreach in the Ko'olaus – Ko'olau Mtns Watershed Partnership	UH PCSU	\$205,448.00	22	\$83,298
16: Early Detection & Rapid Response and Control – Kaua'i Invasive Species Committee	UH PCSU	\$1,085,516.00	23	\$560,125
04: Priority Weed Control – O'ahu Invasive Species Committee	UH PCSU	\$1,195,230.67	25	\$566,686
05: Outreach & Education – O'ahu Invasive Species Committee	UH PCSU	\$367,612.56	26	\$126,147
17: Public Outreach and Education on Kauai – Kaua'i Invasive Species Committee	UH PCSU	\$213,942.00	27	\$239,839
02: Widespread Invasive Species Mitigation Program – Big Island Invasive Species Committee	UH PCSU	\$536,184.00	28	\$266,684
06: Early Detection & Rapid Response on O'ahu – O'ahu Invasive Species Committee	UH PCSU	\$383,053.64	28	\$135,665
10: Community Engagement and Pest Early Detection & Rapid Response – Big Island Invasive Species Committee	UH PCSU	\$502,492.00	28	\$274,255

09: Invasive Plant Prevention, Early Detection & Control on Hawai'i Island – Big Island Invasive Species Committee	UH PCSU	\$679,141.00	29	\$336,969
11: Detection and Control of Invasive Species in Maui County – Maui/Molokai Invasive Species Committee	UH PCSU	\$1,451,288.00	31	\$739,803
13: Hawai'i Ant Lab Core Funding	UH PCSU	\$450,000.00	34	\$281,970
08: Coordination & Outreach for the Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species	UH PCSU	\$98,000.00	37	\$80,825

Table 3: Collective Totals and Summary for Island Invasive Species Committees

Program	Total Submitted Requests	Total Recommended Award	% Filled	FY25 Funding	Diff (FY26-25)
BIISC	1,717,817	\$ 877,908.50	51%	\$850,166.000	\$27,742.502
MISC/Mo MISC	1,740,301	\$ 850,000.00	49%	\$725,074.00	\$124,926.005
OISC	1,945,897	\$ 828,497.59	43%	\$762,500.00	\$65,997.588
KISC	1,299,458	\$ 799,964.00	62%	\$714,369	\$85,595.001
ISCs Total	6,703,473	\$ 3,356,370.10	50%	\$3,052,109	\$304,261.096

Table 4: Recommended Budget for Project Requests
Number of considered Project Applications: 32
Total Requested: \$3.4M
Total Available: \$2,124,032

Application Number and Title	Organization	Submitted Request	Overall Application Score	Recommended Award
26: Compatibility of an introduced coffee berry borer parasitoid and entomopathogenic fungi treatments	UH CTAHR	\$115,883.00	9	\$39,398
24: Targeted RNAi-Based Herbicides for Landscape-Scale Control of Widespread Invasive Plants	UH Molecular Biosciences & Bioengineering	\$144,983.00	10	\$54,769

35: Management of Turmeric Red Staining in Hawai'i - Research Proposal	UH CTHAR	\$54,799.91	10	\$45,000
03- UH - Managing Queensland Long-Horned Beetle	UH Hilo	\$108,845.00	11	\$55,000
43: Passive Acoustic Monitoring of Invasive Coqui Populations on O'ahu	UH Hilo	\$13,750.00	11	\$13,750
33: Behavioral Ecology of Invasive Mammals- Leveraging Game Camera Data to Guide Management	UH NREM	\$38,711.40	12	\$0
45: AI mobile application for rapid ID of invasive plant seeds	UH Lyon	\$62,903.76	12	\$0
51: Scaling up rat lungworm surveillance in Hawai'i a model for integrated early detection	USDA APHIS	\$134,779.00	12	\$70,000
53: Develop image-based phenotyping tool for early plant disease detection and host resistance screening	UH CTAHR	\$50,000.00	12	\$22,666
39: Integrated Weed Management of Invasive Rubus Species - Hawaii Island	UH CTAHR	\$200,000.00	13	\$98,218
19: Ecological restoration of <i>Myoporum sandwicense</i> by mitigating the impact of <i>K. myopori</i> on <i>Myoporum</i>	UH CTAHR	\$200,000.00	15	\$113,328
28: Exploring acoustic deterrents for controlling and disrupting coqui frogs	Utah State	\$146,388.50	15	\$122,000
52: Red Imported Fire Ant - Early Detection and Rapid Response Tools for Hawaii	USDA ARS	\$100,000	15	\$65,000
21: eDNA Strategy for CRB Detection on Hawai'i Island	UH Hilo	\$56,647.80	16	\$34,239
22: Survey of Guava Root-knot Nematode on Vegetable Crops in Hawaii	UH CTAHR	\$111,728.00	16	\$67,530
29: Drone-Mounted mmWave Harmonic Radar System for Invasive Pest Insect Monitoring in Hawai'i	UH Electrical & Computer Engineering	\$200,000.00	16	\$60,000

37: Design and test new devices and practices for trapping Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles	UH CRB Response	\$27,500.00	17	\$27,500
14: HACCP Training - Preventing Intro + Spread of Invasives	USFWS	\$31,250.00	18	\$21,249
18: Integrated Strategies to Control Invasive Coqui Frogs	Univ of Puerto Rico	\$291,189.59	19	\$85,000
23: Building a DNA barcode reference library to improve early detection of invasive arthropod species	UH CTAHR	\$58,529.00	19	\$42,009
30: Mobile large-scale CRB traps - a tool for control rapid response and community assistance	Colorado State	\$152,585.00	19	\$66,000
25: Evaluating Novel Pulse Electric Field Technology in Controlling Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle	UH CTAHR	\$51,168.00	20	\$51,168
38: Scaling Canine Detection with VOC Sampling for CRB Biosecurity	USDA Forest Service	\$170,000	20	\$128,439
54: Optimizing Food Preferences Bait Attractiveness and Organic Pesticide Efficacy for Little Fire Ant	UH CTAHR	\$120,039.00	20	\$100,000
36: Mites Viruses and Bees The challenges and opportunities of apicultural biosecurity in Hawaii	UH CTAHR	\$75,208.00	22	\$62,503
32: Distributed Autonomous Sensing Systems for Early Detection of Invasive Species in Hawaii	UH CTAHR	\$140,316.00	23	\$121,914
27: Understanding + controlling the spread of invasive coqui frog on O'ahu	UH CTAHR	\$51,456.00	24	\$46,651
42: A interference for Little Fire Ant	UH CTAHR	\$36,395.00	25	\$36,395
41: Ramie Moth Impacts Submission	UH CTAHR	\$87,890.00	26	\$87,890
15: Ballast Water Database	DLNR DAR	\$25,000.00	26	\$25,000
50: Assessing efficacy of LFA treatment options - Research	UH PCSU	\$200,000.00	26	\$196,436
47: Mosquito Surveillance Capacity in Hawai'i	DOH Vector Control Branch	\$164,980.00	29	\$164,980

Table 5: Recommended Budget for Biocontrol Requests
 Number of considered Biocontrol Applications: 4
 Total Requested: \$465,000
 Total Available: \$300,000

Application Number and Title	Organization	Submitted Request	Overall Application Score	Recommended Award
46: Biocontrol of invasive Rubus species (Yellow Himalayan Raspberry)	USDA Forest Service	\$129,800.00	15	\$74,880
49: Assessing releases of biocontrol agents for wiliwili gall wasp and macadamia felted coccid	UH CTAHR	\$93,940.00	16	\$57,806
44: Classical biological control of hala scale, lobate lac scale, two lined spittlebug, and coffee berry borer	UH CTAHR	\$143,792.00	18	\$99,542
48: Biocontrol of invasive plants in Hawaiian forests and rangelands	USDA Forest Service	\$97,900.00	18	\$67,773