

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEAN M. MATSUKAWA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2025  
10:00 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 325 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1449  
RELATING TO PLANT CARE COMPONENTS**

Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1449 relating to plant care components. The bill authorizes the Department of Agriculture to adopt rules and establishes administrative penalties to establish and enforce the plant care component program and appropriates funds and establishes positions for purposes of the plant care component program.

The Department of Agriculture (Department) supports this measure and offers some amendments for clarity. The Department appreciates the ability to establish rules that enable the Department to clearly effectuate the program, including defining specific restrictions on movement, establishment of fees and penalties.

Regarding HRS 141-18(b), on page 6, beginning on line 8, the phrase "entering the State" conflicts with HRS 150A-5(9) as a commodity is not considered to have "entered the State" until it has been inspected and passed. To remedy this, the Department suggests the following language for section (b):



“(b) No person shall distribute within the State any plant care component that originated from outside the State unless:

- (1) The plant care component was subjected to a treatment prior to entering the State; or
- (2) The plant care component has been treated immediately after arrival in the State, as certified by the department of agriculture.”

The Department suggests amending the definition of “Plant care component” found on page 8, line 10 to clarify the specific types of wood chips or compost that are subject to regulation. There are other wood chips that are used for cooking, livestock or animal bedding, fuel for fires, or processed for indoor decorative purposes, which present lower risks. The proposed amended definition is listed below:

“Plant care component” or “component” means any quantity of wood chips or compost that is used in the care or propagation of plants, or filter socks.”

To further clarify the administrative penalty process proposed in section (d), the Department suggests adding additional definitions for “Board” and “Person” as listed below:

“Board” means board of agriculture.

“Person” means any individual, firm, corporation, association, or partnership or any organized group of persons whether incorporated or not.

The Department is appreciative of the inclusion of inspection staff to effectuate this program. The Department believes that the inclusion of (7) Plant Quarantine Inspector IIIs (3-O’ahu, 1 each in Kaua’i, Maui, Hilo, and Kona) and (1) Plant Quarantine Inspector IV (O’ahu). The annual salary costs would be \$471,168 (7 x \$58,296 + \$63,096).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



## HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

1151 PUNCHBOWL ST, #325  
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UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

MARY ALICE EVANS  
BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &  
TOURISM

DEXTER KISHIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Chelsea Arnott, HISC Coordinator on behalf of  
HISC Co-Chair Sharon Hurd and Co-Chair Dawn N.S. Chang

### House Committee on AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Friday, January 31, 2025

10:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

### In consideration of HOUSE BILL 1449 RELATING TO RELATING TO PLANT CARE COMPONENTS

House Bill 1449 authorizes the Department of Agriculture (HDOA) to adopt rules and establishes administrative penalties to establish and enforce the plant care component program. The Bill appropriates funds and establishes positions for purposes of the plant care component program. Plant Care components are defined as any quantity of wood chips, compost, or filter socks (mesh tube containing plant material). **The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (Council) supports this measure.**

To protect Hawaii's agricultural and horticultural industries and State forests from injurious, harmful, or detrimental insects or plant diseases, Hawaii Revised Statute 141-2 authorizes HDOA to perform the following activities, quarantine, inspection, fumigation, disinfection, destruction, or exclusion of specified plant materials (including plant care components) upon introduction or at any time or place within the State. Additionally, no person shall distribute within the State any plant care component that originated outside the State, unless the plant care component has been treated immediately after entering the State, as certified by HDOA.

This bill proposes that any person who commits a related plant care component violation may be assessed an administrative penalty of no more than \$10,000 for each offense. When administering the fee, the Board has the authority to review each case individually based on gravity of the violation. The bill also provides for the establishment of HDOA quarantine staff positions to implement the plant care component program.

HISC supports this bill as it furthers our commitment to strengthen Hawaii's biosecurity efforts to prevent infested components from entering Hawaii, intercept infested components at the border, and prohibit them from being transported intrastate.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.



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Aloha Chair Kahaloha, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports HB1449.**

HB1449 is poised to significantly contribute to the sustainability and effectiveness of plant care practices across Hawaii by authorizing the Department of Agriculture to adopt comprehensive rules and establish a plant care component program. At its core, this bill fosters a regulatory framework that ensures the safety and quality of plant care components, which is crucial for the health of Hawaii's unique ecosystems. By appropriating funds and establishing positions for the program, the bill lays the groundwork for structured oversight, which is essential for maintaining agricultural integrity and ecological balance.

However, the implementation of this bill will have notable implications on the cost of compost in Hawaii. Specifically, with increased compliance costs, including treatment and certification, compost producers and distributors will likely experience an uptick in operating expenses. These costs will likely be transferred to consumers, escalating the price of compost—a vital resource for farmers. Moreover, the mandatory certification process and logistical challenges for inter-island transport could further strain the supply chain, potentially diminishing the availability of locally produced compost. This reduction may lead to consolidation in the market, with producers opting for higher-priced compost to offset regulatory expenses, thereby impacting the broader agricultural community.

Given these potential cost effects, it is prudent to request additional funding for the Compost Reimbursement Program (HRS §141-16) to mitigate these increased expenses and ensure continued affordability and access to compost. By augmenting this program, the state can help offset the prospective cost burden on our farmers and prevent the escalation of food production and landscaping prices, thereby safeguarding the economic vitality and sustainability of Hawaii's agricultural and horticultural sectors.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union



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January 31, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1449**  
RELATING TO PLANT CARE COMPONENTS

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference  
10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

**The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 1449**, which authorizes the Department of Agriculture to adopt rules and establishes administrative penalties to establish and enforce the plant care component program and appropriates funds and establishes positions for purposes of the plant care component program.

HFB recognizes the importance of preventing destructive invasive species from entering the State and how difficult it is to manage those that become established in our islands. We appreciate the difficult work of HDOA and its partners in preventing entry and their efforts to eradicate or control these detrimental animals, insects, weeds, diseases, and other pests.

Properly treating plant care components before they are distributed or transported within and from the State would help prevent invasive species from entering and spreading throughout the State. The Legislature addressed this concern with Act 197, Session Laws of Hawaii 2024, by requiring the Department of Agriculture to certify treatments performed on wood chips, compost, and filter socks and placing certain restrictions on distributing or transporting plant care components without prior treatment certification from the HDOA.

Proper resources, authorities, and funding for HDOA are critical for protecting Hawai'i's environment and economy and the health and lifestyle of its people through the support of invasive species prevention, control, research, outreach, and planning. This measure will provide HDOA with tools and resources to help prevent new invasive species from entering Hawai'i by authorizing the HDOA to adopt rules and administrative penalties related to the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

January 29, 2025

To: Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Subject: **HB1449**, Relating to plant care components

Aloha,

I am submitting testimony in strong support of **HB1449**, which authorizes the Department of Agriculture to adopt rules, enforce plant care standards, and allocate funding for the Plant Care Component Program. This bill is essential for strengthening Hawaii's food system and ensuring the sustainability of local agriculture, for a number of reasons:

1. Support of a stronger agricultural system: Hawaii's food system depends on crop health. However, invasive species, plant disease, and poor soil conditions threaten agricultural productivity. By establishment and enforcement of clearly defined standards of plant care, this bill helps farmers with the necessary protections and guidance to grow and maintain healthy crops. This directly helps food security by ensuring stable and reliable production.
2. Preventing crop loss: Pests and plant disease are the leading causes of Hawaii's crop loss. When crops fail, farmers not only face financial hardship, but also the availability of food decreases. By strengthening the Dept. of Agriculture's ability to enforce plant health regulations, this bill helps protect crops and reduce the likelihood of loss from leading causes.
3. Reducing Hawaii's dependence on imported food: We currently import 90% of our food. This makes the state vulnerable to supply chain disruptions and price fluctuations. By improving plant care, this helps our ability to produce local food, reducing reliance on expensive imports and building a more resilient food system.
4. Investing in sustainable farming practice: By allocating funding and establishing staff positions, this bill ensures the Plant Care Component Program is effectively enforced. Supporting plant health on a systemic level aligns with Hawaiian values of aloha 'āina and our long-term sustainability goals.

I respectfully urge the committee to **pass HB1449** to protect our local food systems and ensure a more self-sufficient future for Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Jeanette Burdick & the Food+ Policy Team

#fixourfoodsystem

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**The Food+ Policy internship** develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.