

SB696

# Big Island Invasive Species Committee



March 2, 2009

Testimony of the Big Island Invasive Species Committee  
**In Consideration of**  
**Senate Bill 696 Relating to Coqui**

**Senate Ways and Means Committee**  
**Tuesday March 3, 2009 9:30 a.m. Rm. 211**

The Big Island Invasive Species Committee (BIISC) submits the following testimony and comments to S.B. 696 relating to coqui frogs. **BIISC supports the intent of the measure with reservations.**

BIISC recognizes that the coqui frog is an injurious and invasive pest species within our State. Enormous and valiant efforts have been made to control coqui populations and limit its spread to other areas. Kauai is on the verge of complete eradication; Oahu has eradicated their Wahiawa population, yet new infestations continue to pop up; Maui has significantly reduced its coqui infestation; while the Big Island has reached population estimates where eradication simply is not feasible and efforts should focus on containment to limit the spread to other islands (e.g. ports-of-entry, nurseries). That said current control accomplishments across the State are in jeopardy of losing ground without continued support. This will in effect allow populations to re-establish themselves, spread to other areas and essentially wasting previous investments of time, effort and money. Allocation of resources should go to areas most likely to have the greatest impact, control goals are realistic and cost effective, and project evaluations implemented to address future needs.

Though BIISC understands that coqui control is an extremely important issue, under the currently proposed cuts to the Invasive Species Committees, BIISC anticipates a loss of up to 50% of its funding. This will significantly reduce our operational efforts, not only for coqui but for all other invasive species control programs currently underway. Additional coqui funding could assist, but should not be done at the expense of other conservation programs. In particular, moving focus away from a comprehensive approach to deal with invasive species within the State, currently coordinated by the Hawaii Invasive Species Council would undermine existing efforts. BIISC does not support a reallocation of Natural Area Reserve Funds or a reduction in HISC funding as a means to increase funding for work on coqui frogs.

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Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i  
Regarding S.B. 696 Relating to Coqui Frogs  
Senate Committee on Ways & Means  
Tuesday, March 3, 2009, 9:30AM, Room 211

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*The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a private non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of Hawaii's native plants, animals, and ecosystems. The Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of natural lands for rare and endangered native species in Hawai'i. Today, we actively manage more than 32,000 acres in 11 nature preserves on O'ahu, Maui, Hawai'i, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and Kaua'i and also work closely with government agencies and private landowners on cooperative land and marine management projects.*

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The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i submits the following comments regarding S.B. 696 Relating to Coqui Frogs.

We appreciate the crisis situation that exists with respect to coqui frog invasions, particularly on Hawai'i island and other locations in the State, and we support a strong and coordinated response to address these invasions.

However, we hope that the necessary response to coqui will not prevent the State and its partners from also devoting appropriate attention and funding to other pests that have become established in Hawai'i or worse pests that could come here. The task of the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) is to provide a comprehensive, statewide approach to invasive species including prevention, early detection, control, research and education programs. This effort necessarily results in prioritization based on a variety of issues including human health, safety and well-being, economic harm, and the threat to the health and function of the environment.

We are also concerned about unintended financial impacts. For example, in Fiscal Year 2007 the Legislature's provision of additional funding for coqui control was really a shifting of existing funds from other invasive species programs, which then caused layoffs in the Island Invasive Species Committees and a hiatus in the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council's research grant program.

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