



COORDINATING GROUP ON  
ALIEN PEST SPECIES

STATEMENT BY

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**BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE  
FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**UNITED STATES SENATE**

**OCTOBER 27, 2011**

Aloha Chairman Akaka and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christy Martin and I am the spokesperson for the Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS), a voluntary public-private partnership formed in 1995 to protect Hawai'i from invasive species. On behalf of CGAPS, thank you for your support and recognition of the importance of protecting Hawai'i and the continental United States from the onslaught of invasive species.

As both a state comprised of isolated islands and a major gateway between Asia and the continental US, Hawai'i has some unique challenges and valuable opportunities in preventing the movement of invasive species. Many of these challenges and opportunities are summarized in the collaboratively-produced 2009 CGAPS 10-Point Vision and Action Plan ([www.cgaps.org](http://www.cgaps.org)). Although CGAPS has accomplished a number of tasks set forth in the original Action Plan, there is still a lot of work to do, some of which will require sustained political support. The CGAPS Steering Committee offers the following points for consideration by the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia:

1. Provide clear direction to the US Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration by making statutory changes clarifying that state and federal biosecurity and quarantine programs at US airports are core airport functions.
  - Specifically, clarify or establish policy that provides provisions for airports to use revenue to support such functions to ensure the safe and effective movement of passengers and cargo throughout this country.
  - To further facilitate cooperation, communication, and the effective inspection and movement of cargo at US air and sea ports. CGAPS recommends the Subcommittee issue a directive establishing a preference for joint federal-state inspection facilities at ports of entry.

2. Authorize and provide an avenue for information sharing among agencies to facilitate and streamline DHS-CBP and USDA-APHIS notification of state inspection agencies when pests of state concern are intercepted or suspected.
3. CGAPS is supportive of Senator Akaka's proposed amendment to S. 1546, the Homeland Security Act of 2002, and two additional supplements are recommended:
  - Restore Sect. 421a. Office of Agriculture Inspection, which establishes an Assistant Commissioner for Agriculture position within DHS-CBP.
  - Allow federal and state inspection agencies to enter into memoranda of agreement to facilitate cross training of inspectors on their respective pests of concern, allow for collaboration at the highest staff levels, and, identify through task orders, specific agreements to protect the State of Hawai'i and the United States from invasive species.
4. Provide assistance and support for the reauthorization of the Brown Treesnake Control and Eradication Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-384, 7 USC §§8501-8507) to require dedicated appropriations and inspection and quarantine capabilities, as necessary, for all cargo and conveyances leaving Guam to prevent the further spread of the brown treesnake in the Pacific eco-region.
5. Support the timely revision of the Lacey Act, Injurious Wildlife section (Code of Federal Regulations, title 50, part 16), to effectively prevent invasive vertebrate introductions into the United States.
6. Review and support regional multi-agency biosecurity planning efforts for Pacific islands, including Hawai'i. As the gateway between Asia and the continental US, Hawai'i must be provided special consideration.
  - The Micronesian Biosecurity Plan and the Pacific Safeguarding Initiative are two of the efforts that have the potential to have a positive impact. Recognize and encourage the development of regional biosecurity efforts and support integrated planning and implementation that incorporate the social, economic, environmental, and human health concerns for the entire Pacific region, not exclusive of Hawai'i.
7. Elevate as a priority the inspection and quarantine actions on animals and commodities that are vectors of non-domestic animal diseases and human health pests. Evaluate the various authorities and abilities to inspect and take quarantine action on vectors of human diseases and non-domestic animal diseases.
8. As the Subcommittee moves forward in the discussions of agency coordination on invasive species, CGAPS requests that consideration also be given to aquatic invasive species prevention issues, marine and freshwater.

Finally, I would like to provide two illustrations of successful models that could be expanded. First, in December of 2009, furloughs and Reduction-In-Force layoffs resulted in the loss of state agriculture inspectors. O'ahu went from 58 inspectors to 35, and staffing focused

around Honolulu International Airport, which receives more than 90% of air cargo, the primary source of new invasive pests. Kahului Airport on Maui has federally-funded inspectors as a result of the settlement of the Kahului runway expansion lawsuit. Therefore, Maui went from 17 inspectors to 14, all stationed at the new ASAP federal-state inspection facility at Kahului Airport. Between July 1 and December 31, 2010, **Kahului inspectors made 639 pest interceptions in air cargo**, while there were **87 pest interceptions at Honolulu International Airport**. Clearly, adequate staffing and inspection facilities are necessary.

Second, USDA APHIS Wildlife Services uses traps, night fenceline searches, and detector dogs to keep brown treesnakes (BTS) out of cargo and conveyances leaving Guam, and to exclude them from the island's electrical power stations. It is not mandatory for cargo and conveyances to be inspected for BTS prior to leaving Guam. Therefore, this program has largely relied on Wildlife Services staff to reach out to the many freight consolidators, shippers, and the military to form cooperative relationships and work with them to conduct inspections in a timely and manner. Through these efforts, **an average of 10,000 brown treesnakes are removed each year**, thereby protecting the economy and environment of receiving islands, states, and nations. The cost to Hawai'i's economy if BTS were to become established is estimated at \$2.14 billion per year.

Federal agency collaboration is clearly important for protecting Hawai'i from invasive species, and we hope that these successes can serve as models for the rest of the nation.

On behalf of CGAPS, I appreciate the desire of the Subcommittee members to improve the prevention and abatement of the threats of invasive species to the United States and for the opportunity to provide these points for your consideration. Mahalo nui loa.

*Disclaimer: The CGAPS Steering Committee and members participate in CGAPS inasmuch as the actions and views presented are allowable and do not include prohibited practices for government employees or the appearance of such practices.*