



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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Protection Not Porkbarrel

Hawai'i residents, including our congressional delegates, are aware of the damage caused by the brown tree snake after it was accidentally introduced to Guam as a ship stowaway in the 1950s. We understand the negative ecological and economic consequences that would result from the introduction of brown tree snakes to our historically snake-free islands, and we rely on our leaders to protect Hawai'i. Our congressional delegation, led by Senator Inouye, secures earmarks to stop the movement of brown tree snakes in airplanes, ships, and cargo entering Hawai'i from Guam. These earmarks largely support the USDA – Wildlife Services' Brown Treesnake Interdiction Program on Guam, which removes 10,000 snakes on average each year from cargo facilities, air- and seaports, planes and ships. However, the importance of this issue is lost to many on the continental U.S. because a vast majority of U.S. states have snakes as part of their natural ecosystem, and most people easily avoid any negative consequences caused by snakes. This very issue underscores the importance of earmarks as a mechanism for supporting the priorities of individual states, and as noted by Richard Borreca (Battle over federal earmarks more symbolism than substance, SA 11/19/10), the focus should be on how the other 99% of the federal budget is spent.

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