Gmail [redacted]

We failed to listen. We are sorry. Here is our commitment to change.

Hawaii Invasive Species Council <aloha@hischi.org> Thu, Oct 29, 2026 at 11:30 AM
Reply-To: Hawaii Invasive Species Council <aloha@hischi.org>
To [redacted]

HISC / A LETTER TO HAWAIʻI

Hawaiʻi Invasive Species Committee

INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

ACCOUNTABILITY · COMMUNITY · MĀLAMA ʻĀINA

We failed to listen. We are sorry.

A direct apology to Indigenous practitioners and our communities. A renewed commitment to listen, learn, and act.

01 02 03

Listen	Learn	Act
Honor community knowledge	Follow the evidence	Show measurable care

Aloha kākou,

We owe Hawai‘i’s people and ‘āina a direct apology.

We failed to listen with the care, humility, and seriousness our responsibility required. Indigenous practitioners, land stewards, and community groups deserved meaningful engagement. We did not provide it. Their knowledge, observations, and proposals deserved a fair hearing and an honest response. Too often, they met dismissal or silence.

> That failure belongs to us.

We allowed attachment to familiar approaches, fear of changing direction, and concern for our own credibility to interfere with the work. We did not move quickly enough to examine promising alternatives or build the relationships this work requires. Communities carried the burden while we fell short.

We are sorry for failing to listen. We are sorry for the opportunities we missed to learn, collaborate, and act. We ask for forgiveness, knowing that words alone cannot restore trust.

Our renewed leadership accepts responsibility for changing our conduct. We will

listen respectfully, evaluate evidence fairly, and make our decisions and results open to the people we serve.

01 / COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE

Listening must change how we work.

Indigenous practitioners and community groups must have a meaningful role in shaping the questions, priorities, and evaluation of this work. We will seek participation from community groups and local organizations, recognize their contributions, and provide an honest response to their proposals.

Native Hawaiian knowledge will be attributed to its knowledge holders and shared with their permission. We will distinguish that knowledge from modern microbial research while making space for both to inform responsible stewardship.

02 / COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE

Learn from the evidence.

The Pacific Community's **2026 CRB management manual** gives biological control a central role. Its recommendations support taking these tools and community participation seriously.

> **FROM THE MANUAL · PAGES 24, 33, 47 TO 49**
>
> Its integrated approach combines **OrNV, a virus targeting CRB; sanitation to remove breeding material; and *Metarhizium majus* for larvae in breeding sites that cannot be removed**. Sanitation needs community support. Its community application guidance includes landowner agreement, records, and follow-up checks.
>
> **Read the manual's integrated approach**

The manual advises against insecticide treatments on established coconut palms because of residue risks. It also identifies exceptions: protection of immature palms and expert-guided eradication of a recent invasion. We should represent both parts of that guidance accurately.

The manual's fungal recommendation is *M. majus*, historically called *M. anisopliae* var. *majus*. That naming history does not make all strains or products interchangeable. See the fungal-control discussion.

Pacific field research strengthens the case for evaluation. A Solomon Islands trial of *M. majus* AgR-F717 found fewer larvae in treated breeding bins at four months, but not significant differences at two or six months. Read Villamizar et al. (2024).

Our commitment is practical: learn from this work, pursue appropriate local authorization, and evaluate biological tools alongside breeding-site management and clear monitoring.

03 / LITTLE FIRE ANTS

A dedicated response for our communities.

Little fire ants deserve sustained attention and lasting relief. Fungal tools warrant serious evaluation, with communities helping shape the work.

Hawai‘i’s little fire ant, *Wasmannia auropunctata*, differs from the red imported fire ant, *Solenopsis invicta*. Little fire ants nest in vegetation as well as on the ground. Results in another ant species can guide research, but cannot establish the same outcome here.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SUPPORTS

Little fire ants: A 1991 study by Castiñeiras and colleagues specifically evaluated *M. anisopliae* and other microbial agents against *W. auropunctata*. We verified its library record, but not the full methods or results, so we cannot assign it an efficacy rate.

Other fire ants: Meng et al. (2025) reported about **83% worker mortality** after experimental exposure of *S. invicta* to a particular *M. anisopliae* strain. Hassan et al. (2024) also found reduced survival and disrupted movement and foraging. These demonstrate biological activity in the tested ants, not LFA colony eradication. Mortality study · Behavior study.

Ant nests in the field: In a small Colombian trial, López and Orduz (2002) classified five of five *Atta cephalotes* leaf-cutting-ant nests treated with *M. anisopliae* M-137 bait as dead, versus none of five controls. Their assessment

combined four weeks without traffic and excavation. This is a different species and formulation. Read the field study.

A 2023 review of 85 publications shows a substantial research field, mostly laboratory work, with variable outcomes. Worker mortality, quieter nests, and lasting colony control remain different measures of success.

We will seek locally appropriate trials that identify the strain and formulation, compare treated and untreated areas, monitor ground and vegetation nests, and track recurrence, native-species effects, and costs. We will report what works and what does not, with Indigenous practitioners, residents, and local groups involved throughout.

COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

Hear the reports. Document the results.

COMMUNITY OBSERVATIONS · REPORTED EXPERIENCES

Reports shared with this initiative describe fewer CRB or little fire ants on Hawai‘i’s islands, and sometimes no further sightings, after the use of fungal soil amendments. These community reports deserve to be heard and documented. They have not been independently verified; timing alone does not establish cause, and no sightings does not establish eradication.

The studies above tested specific fungal strains and formulations. They did not test the soil amendments described in these reports and do not establish those amendments’ pest-control

performance or authorize such use. A soil-amendment description or a testimonial does not change those limits.

04 / OUR COMMITMENTS

How we will be accountable.

01 **Listen and share responsibility.**
Create meaningful opportunities for Indigenous practitioners, community groups, residents, and researchers to shape our work.

02 **Advance promising biological options.**
Pursue appropriate research, registration, and permit pathways, with clear milestones and explanations of unresolved requirements.

03 **Publish results and full costs.**
Report successes, unsuccessful trials, uncertainties, labor, materials, and monitoring costs so affordability can be evaluated honestly.

04 **Disclose interests and support local capacity.**
Make funding relationships and potential conflicts visible, and prioritize practical education, shared resources, and local participation.

Please judge this apology

by what we do next.

We ask for forgiveness. We accept responsibility for doing better. We intend to earn trust through respectful relationships, transparent decisions, and measurable care for Hawai‘i’s people and ‘āina.

With humility and renewed commitment,

The Leadership
Hawai‘i Invasive Species Committee

Independent community initiative. This is not an announcement from the State of Hawai‘i or the government Hawaii Invasive Species Council.

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