

**Date:** 03/30/2009

**Committee:** Senate Higher Education  
Senate Water, Land, Agriculture and  
Hawaiian Affairs  
Senate Education and Housing

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Resolution:** SCR 121 REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES, IN COOPERATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, AND THE HAWAII FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP OF STAKEHOLDERS TO CONSIDER THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM IN HAWAII'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

**Purpose of Resolution:** Working Group; Farm to School; College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources

**Department's Position:** If this resolution is adopted, the Department of Education (DOE) will, as requested in the resolution, participate in a working group convened by the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources to consider the feasibility of establishing a farm to school program in Hawaii's public schools.

The DOE has been working with the Department of Agriculture and the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation on identifying and then increasing the quantity of local produce purchased by the DOE.

LINDA LINGLE  
Governor



SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DUANE K. OKAMOTO  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
1428 South King Street  
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TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING  
AND  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
AND  
WATER, LAND, AGRICULTURE, AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS  
MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2009  
1:40 P.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 225

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 121  
REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE  
AND HUMAN RESOURCES, IN COOPERATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, AND THE HAWAII FARM BUREAU  
FEDERATION, TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP OF STAKEHOLDERS TO CONSIDER  
THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM IN HAWAII'S  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Chairpersons Sakamoto, Tokuda, Hee and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 121. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) supports this resolution and will work in cooperation with the University of Hawaii, CTAHR, the Department of Education and the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation to convene a working group to consider the feasibility of establishing a farm to school program in Hawaii's public schools.

The HDOA appreciates the committees' efforts to support programs that give students the choice to eat healthier, more nutritious local produce, connects schools with local farms, teaches students about food cultivation, and substantially expands the market for local farmers.

The HDOA is working toward increasing food self-sufficiency in Hawai'i, raising production and demand of locally grown foods and decreasing our dependence on imported foods. The Department has already been convening discussions with public and private institutions, and industry stakeholders, to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables from local producers. The findings and recommendations from the working group will complement and enhance our efforts.

## LATE TESTIMONY

**Testimony for SCR 121**  
Kevin Yongki Chung  
Secondary Student Council

Aloha, my name is Kevin Chung. On behalf of the Secondary Student Council of Hawaii, which is composed of student representatives from various public and private schools throughout the state of Hawaii, I would like to give my full support of SCR121. At the 2008 conference, a substantive majority of the council voted in support of having a farm to school program in their school. Research shows that such a program would benefit Hawaii's declining farming industry, boost student health, and improve Hawaii's economy and environment. In order to examine the program's viability, certain designated parties ought to discuss the matter and make a careful examination of the circumstances, with the hopes of sustainably implementing the program in the future. By having groups and individuals actively engaged in assessment of a program that shows so much potential, we make sure that a great idea does not go to waste. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SCR 121.

## LATE TESTIMONY

Dear Senators:

*(Amended section in italics)*

Thank you for giving the public the opportunity to comment on SCR 121. With these comments, I would like to reiterate my support for SB 1179 SD1, now having changed to SCR 121 upon its third reading.

Since the last reading of the bill and my earlier comments, parent volunteers at Sunset Beach Elementary school have helped to start a kids' farmers' market every other Friday after school. This time frame is in direct competition with Ice Cream Friday, a PTCA fundraiser. We solicit produce donations from people in the community and have the kids sell them to their classmates, parents, teachers, staff, the public, with adult supervision, of course. The response has been overwhelming. Our first market day resulted in EVERYTHING being sold. There were children standing in line to buy one starfruit, or a few tangerines instead of buying ice cream across the way. Parents also stood in a long line to buy produce for their families. This overwhelmingly positive response from the children, the school and the community shows that children will choose to eat healthy if they are presented with the opportunity to do so.

The Sunset Beach farmers' market club has decided that with the proceeds of the farmers' market, we would like to offer a healthy snack at recess for the children to continue to reinforce healthy eating. We are currently in the process of figuring out the volunteer logistics for this particular outcome of the market. We hope to have local farmers provide the fruits and vegetables. In a state like Hawai'i, with abundant sunshine, and a year round growing season, there is no reason why we should not be helping farmers sell their products to local schools, and why our children's health should not be benefiting from the proximity of farms throughout much of the state. This would alleviate the absurdity of shipping food products such long distances, contributing to higher costs, higher fuel consumption, and lower quality food because of the distances it has to travel.

As I stated in my previous testimony, farm to school programs can have many interrelated positive impacts: keeping dollars and jobs in Hawai'i; providing fresh, nutritious produce to students; instilling healthy eating habits in Hawai'i's keiki; supporting Hawai'i's farmers; keeping agricultural lands intact by preventing development; and reducing our dependence on imported food thereby moving Hawai'i towards sustainability and food security.

*Apparently, the DOE already introduced guidelines in 2007 that schools should be providing healthier school lunches with "minimally processed fruits and vegetables*

*from local sources to the greatest extent possible" (Kaiser Permanente, Partners in Health Publication, Spring 2009). Schools have until the 2010-11 academic year to comply. SCR 121 would enable the process to occur more smoothly and seamlessly.*

SCR 121 is also an excellent opportunity to advance the farm to school process in Hawai'i. The feasibility study could provide much of the information and links to resources that individual school staff, the statewide educational system, farmers, vendors, and distributors need in order to determine how to best work toward increasing the amount of fresh, locally grown produce provided in school lunches for Hawai'i's children. However, we should not stop at a feasibility study. I respectfully urge you to amend the bill to implement policies to aid in the procurement process for the DOE to be able to source produce more easily directly from Hawai'i farmers and to make sure that the 5 week school lunch calendar can be amended to include healthier alternatives within the federal guidelines.

Please support this bill and farm to school in Hawai'i.

SCR 121– Email Testimony

Monique Mironesco, Ph.D.

University of Hawai'i, West O'ahu

Assistant Professor, Political Science

(more importantly) Parent and SCC member

Sunset Beach Elementary School

March 27, 2009