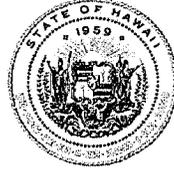


TESTIMONY
SCR38/SR22

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DUANE OKAMOTO
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 Fax: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WATER, LAND AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2009
2:45 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 229**

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 38
SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 22
URGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PLAN FOR INCREASING AID AND ASSISTANCE TO
ORGANIC FARMERS**

Chairperson Hee and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 38 and Senate Resolution No. 22. These resolutions urge the development of a plan for increasing aid and assistance to organic farmers.

The HDOA acknowledges that this measure has merit; however, given the current fiscal difficulties and strain on limited state resources to meet current responsibilities, it would not be prudent to "employ all resources available" in order to pursue enactment of this additional initiative at this time.

The HDOA is currently active in supporting organic farming. HDOA is administering three federal grants relating to organic farming: (1) National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program; (2) National Organic Program; and (3) Federal State Marketing Improvement Program for organic seed marketing/production. The state Matching Marketing Funds Program currently supports projects for distribution improvement, accreditation and website design that benefit the organic industry. In May 2009, HDOA will administer the federal Organic Production Survey.

From: penny levin [pennysfh@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 29, 2009 8:47 PM
To: WTLTestimony
Subject: testimony IN SUPPORT of SCR38_SR22 and ~~HB1436-HD1-SD1~~

Aloha Chair Hee and WTL Committee Members;

I am in SUPPORT of SCR38 and SR22 which call for a plan to increase resources to organic farmers in the State of Hawaii. The HDOA, Hawaii Farm Bureau and the University of Hawaii have ignored or payed only peripheral lip service to organic farmers and small growers for far too long. All I can say is, it's about time! Please include an amendment to insure that this effort goes beyond the planning stage and resource allocation is actually implemented.

I also ~~SUPPORT HB1436-HD1-SD1~~ which allows for education programs on agricultural lands provided that it is secondary to active agriculture activities on the land. One of the significant issues that must be resolved if we are to increase the use of agriculture lands for farming and become for food self-sufficient is to inspire more youth and adults to farming. The opportunity for agriculture education on-farm is an important part of engaging more people in farming and educating them about what it takes to be a farmer.

Please support these initiatives.

Mahalo

Penny Levin
Wailuku, Maui

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2009 7:06 PM
To: WTLTestimony
Cc: tracey@kauaioutcallmassage.com
Subject: Testimony for SCR38 on 4/1/2009 2:45:00 PM

Testimony for WTL 4/1/2009 2:45:00 PM SCR38

Conference room: 229
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Tracey Schavone
Organization: Individual
Address: POBox 676 Anahola, HI
Phone: 808-822-4465
E-mail: tracey@kauaioutcallmassage.com
Submitted on: 3/30/2009

Comments:

From: Louisa Wooton [kunana@juno.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2009 5:29 AM
To: WTLTestimony
Subject: support SCR 38

Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs

Senator Clayton, Hee, Chair
Senator Jill Tokuda, Vice Chair

Wednesday April 1, 2009, 2:45 pm, Room 229
RE: SCR # 38

To the Committee:

As a farmer and member of **the Hawaii Organic Farmers Association (HOFA)** **I do support SCR 38**, which urges the development of a plan for increasing aid and assistance to organic farmers. **However, I feel that the resolution should be amended to include the Hawaii Organic Farmers Association (HOFA) in the development of the plan.**

The Hawaii Organic Farmers Association has been working closely with several UH CTAHR researchers and specialists, who have been instrumental in providing educational programming to organic farmers and those conventional farmers who are transitioning to more sustainable methods in recent years. Hawai'i's producers continue to request that additional research, training and outreach be made available to those who are farming organically. UH CTAHR is instrumental in helping farmers support environmental stewardship and reduce the risk of invasive species entering the state by increasing the production of locally grown product for the market.

HOFA also works closely with the SOH Department of Agriculture (DOA), which has recently provided funding to **HOFA** for the development of a website with an online searchable database to connect the producers with buyers, chefs and vendors. The DOA has also recently funded our request for financial assistance with the organic reaccreditation review, scheduled for November 2009.

I appreciate the efforts of these Hawaii State Government organizations to support organic farming through its support of **HOFA**, Hawai'i's *home-grown* certification agency.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony.

Sincerely yours,

Louisa Wooton, Chair
HOFA Certification Committee
Co Owner Kaua'i Kunana Farm
Kilauea, HI

From: Michael & Patti [wisevalentine@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2009 8:12 AM
To: WTLTestimony
Subject: SR 38 and 22

To the honorable Legislators of Hawai'i,

I am an individual and a resident of Kaua'i. I am in support of any and all support for the organic farmers of Hawai'i, if it is truly support.

I am asking that the Hawai'i Organic Farmers Association (HOFA) be included in the development of any plans involving support and/or decisions being made on behalf of the organic farmers of our state.

HOFA has inspected and certified over 400 farms in our state, and has been doing so for years. If anyone in our state has a sense of what's going on and what's needed at these farms, it would be HOFA. More than CTAHR, more than the Dept of Ag, HOFA has the pulse on organic farming in our state. Please include them in these discussions.

Many thanks,

Patti Valentine
PO Box 194
Kapa'a, HI 96746

Hawaii Farmers Union

www.hawaiifarmersunion.org

Eden M. Peart

P.O. Box 1863

Honokaa, HI. 96727

Wednesday, April 1, 2009 2:45 p.m.
Conference Room 229
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

THE SENATE

THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION OF 2009

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AGRICULTURE, AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Senator Clayton Hee, Chair

Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Vice Chair

Committee Members:

Senator Robert Bunda

Senator Carol Fukunaga

Senator Russell S. Kokubun

Senator Dwight Y. Takamine

Senator Fred Hemmings

TESTIMONY RE: ~~SCR 37, SR 21~~, SCR 38, SR 22, ~~HB 1436, HD1, SD1~~

Aloha Senators,

Hawaii Farmers Union is the newest subdivision of the National Farmers Union. Established in 1902, NFU is the oldest general farming organization in the United States, representing nearly 300,000 family farmers, ranchers and fishers. Since our Charter meeting in November 2008, we have approximately 105 signed members on 4 islands with membership growing weekly.

We really look forward to working with legislators to create legislation that addresses our vision for a thriving agriculturally-based economy in Hawaii. Along with the strength and relevance of National Farmers Union grassroots driven policy, and authoritative role in federal policy, we anticipate utilizing the excellent models currently flowering such as Washington State's Local Farms-Healthy Kids Act which was signed into law in 2008. This act created a Farm-To-School program whose purpose is to help schools purchase local farm products. It is complementary to other programs which were designed to increase access to Washington-grown foods for vulnerable populations and encourage markets for farms in the state.

Incorporating these best ideas and practices with Hawaii Farmers Union members and affiliates' initiatives will result in a generative and economically resilient framework for establishing and nurturing the Hawaii-grown model of sustainability that is already emerging.

HFU listening and visioning sessions are planned for late spring 2009. We welcome the participation of Hawaii state and country lawmakers! At the federal level many congress members are NFU members, for example Representative Collin Peterson, Chair of the House Agriculture Committee. HFU extends a personal invitation to each of you to join us.

Concerning the specific legislation before you, HFU defers to the testimony of HOFA, with the additional suggested amendment of including Hawaii's newest (and USA's oldest!) general farming organization – Hawaii Farmers Union as a stakeholder in all pertinent agriculture-related policy and legislation.

Many thanks for your work.

Me ke aloha,

Eden M. Peart
Hawaii Farmers Union

TESTIMONY
SCR38/SR22
(END)