



**LATE**

**HB 2832 HD1 SD1**  
**RELATING TO TARO SECURITY**  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

March 24, 2010

9:30 a.m.

Room: 211

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **OPPOSES** HB2832 HD1 SD1, which requires the Taro Security and Purity Task Force to implement the recommendations in its report submitted pursuant to Act 211, Session Laws of Hawaii 2008, and submit a final report on implementation prior to the convening of the regular session of 2015.

OHA opposes this measure because it does not provide for a state general fund appropriation and therefore represents an unfunded five-year legislative mandate for OHA to administer.

In 2008, the Legislature passed SB2915 SD2 HD1 CD1, which called for the creation of the Taro Security and Purity Task Force. SB2915 SD2 HD1 CD1 contained a state appropriation of \$325,000, which was to be matched dollar-for-dollar by OHA. However, when Governor Linda Lingle signed Act 211 into law, she vetoed the state's appropriation for the task force, leaving the Act as an unfunded mandate for OHA to be the sole financier, as well as the administrator, of the task force. In 2009, OHA expended nearly \$84,000 on task force activities that included expenditures on a meeting facilitator, meeting space, travel and other expenses for 18 members to attend 21 meetings on seven islands. In addition, OHA dedicated the equivalent of two full-time staff positions to the administration activities of the task force.

Although OHA understands and embraces its kuleana to support the cultivation of kalo, the staple of the traditional Hawaiian diet and the sacred elder brother of the Hawaiian people, we note that kalo is not only significant to Native Hawaiians, it is also critical to the cultural identity of the entire state. In recognition of this, the Legislature recently designated kalo as the official plant of the state. By funding the continuing work of the task force with general funds, the Legislature demonstrates the states' commitment to the perpetuation and protection of this important plant. This commitment was already demonstrated by OHA through its 100 percent funding of the planning work of the task force.

While OHA values the work of the task force we have already invested considerable resources into the task force's efforts. Like the rest of the state, OHA has also been impacted by the financial crisis. Further, the needs of the Native Hawaiian community have grown in all areas in response to the financial difficulties that are impacting all of us. The most equitable way to evaluate the work of the task force, alongside all of the competing priorities and needs

of the Native Hawaiian community, is through our grants process not the legislative process. Therefore, we have asked the task force to partner with a nonprofit group and go through our grants process, as every other program benefiting Native Hawaiians does, to receive OHA funding.

OHA urges the Committee to HOLD HB2832 HD1 SD1 or to provide for an appropriation of sufficient general funding for the task force to continue its work.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**kim2 - Jo Ann**

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**From:** Melissa McFerrin [mmcferrin@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 23, 2010 7:59 PM  
**To:** WAM Testimony  
**Subject:** WAM Hearing - Wed March 24, 9:30am, Room 211 - Relating to Taro Security  
**Attachments:** image001.jpg; image003.jpg; HB2832HD1March242010.doc

## **Kauai County Farm Bureau**

*Affiliated with Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation*

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*The Voice of Kauai's Agriculture*



March 24, 2010

**ATTN:** Ways and Means Committee  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim (Chair), Senator Shan S. Tsutsui (Vice Chair) and committee members

**RE:** HB2832 HD1, SD1 – Relating to Taro Security  
Comments of Kauai County Farm Bureau; Roy Oyama, President

**HEARING DATE:** March 24, 2010 – 9:30am, Conference Room 211

Kauai County Farm Bureau on behalf of our member farm and ranch families, affiliated with Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, **respectfully submits the following comments on HB2832 HD1 SD1**, Requires the taro security and purity task force to implement the recommendations in their report submitted pursuant to Act 211, Session Laws of Hawaii 2008, and submit a final report on implementation prior the convening of the regular session of 2015.

1. Kauai currently supplies **over 80%** of the total taro production in the state of Hawaii based on the 2008 statistics from the USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS). Approximately 60% of the state's taro is grown in Hanalei Valley.
2. KCFB respects and recognizes the role taro plays in the Hawaiian culture and, we also have members who represent commercial taro. We strongly believe that commercial taro culture can coexist with taro grown for cultural and traditional practices and commercial taro culture does not need to follow traditional methods to contribute to our state or be deserving of support. We'd like to ask caution, that this measure should not be interpreted to address all of taro culture in Hawaii.
3. This year has been extremely difficult for everyone. The public and the Legislature and the agricultural community been required to take extraordinary measures to ensure that the basic needs of Hawaii are met. At the same time critical needs exist in agriculture. For this reason, we would not support the use of General funds for this measure at this time.
4. When considering the overall taro security for Hawaii, it is important to take a pragmatic view of the industry, and prioritize needs especially those which are already time sensitive. One such critical need identified for the Hanalei Valley taro farmers is the repair of their in-take, which has been in need of repair for the past 15 years. This past November the major flood diverted 100% of their water and the entire Hanalei Valley taro fields were without water. The taro farmers only have a temporary repair and the next flood will again divert their water from their fields putting a large volume of taro production at risk. Kauai Taro Growers will be seeking federal, state, county and private funding to help repair it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments. Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact KCFB President, Roy Oyama directly at 332-9426 or [oyama\\_farm@yahoo.com](mailto:oyama_farm@yahoo.com).

## kim5 - Deborah

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 23, 2010 10:08 PM  
**To:** WAM Testimony  
**Cc:** aipohaku@hotmail.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for HB2832 on 3/24/2010 9:30:00 AM

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Testimony for WAM 3/24/2010 9:30:00 AM HB2832

Conference room: 211  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Vince Kana`i Dodge  
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Submitted on: 3/23/2010

### Comments:

We are small time taro farmers in Wai`anae. This task force has greatly helped to unify taro farmers and its recommendations come out of that unity. Life can be pretty tough for farmers. The task force is a solid voice of the taro farmers. The recommendations will help us and therefore help all of Hawaii. The recommendations need to be followed through with.

After all the years of other agencies making decisions for us, the report represents the first time that the voice of taro farmers are leading the discussion. It's important that the recommendations of this report do not sit on a shelf like so many other task force reports.

In these difficult economic times, supporting the recommendations of the task force translates to jobs, greater food self-sufficiency, new small businesses, cultural renewal, improved crop diversity and farm health, greater community resiliency....

### Continuation of the task force will:

- 1) Ensure that this important group, whose strength lies in the diversity of taro farmers on its body, remains together as a voice for taro farmers and a mechanism for dialogue among farmers and other stakeholders statewide.
- 2) Keep discussions open and ongoing as we seek solutions to outstanding issues.
- 3) Allows us to continue with our kuleana of implementing the recommendations of the report and Act 211 We ask your support for HD2832 SD1.

mahalo!

Vince Kana`i Dodge