

MAR 14 2007

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO STUDY LABELING
REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO THE USE OF HAWAII-GROWN COFFEE
NAMES.

1 WHEREAS, specialty agricultural crops, such as coffee,
2 tropical fruit, macadamia nuts, chocolate, and vanilla,
3 constitute one of the fastest expanding areas of agricultural
4 production for the State; and

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6 WHEREAS, coffee requires a specific combination of sun,
7 soil, and water, and is successfully grown in only a limited
8 number of locations around the world; and

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10 WHEREAS, the Kona weather pattern of bright, sunny
11 mornings, humid rainy afternoons, and mild nights create
12 favorable coffee growing conditions; and

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14 WHEREAS, the care, skill, and cultivation practices of Kona
15 coffee farmers, most of whom operate small family-owned farms,
16 have built a reputation for quality among coffee consumers; and

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18 WHEREAS, the Kona coffee name only applies to coffee beans
19 grown in North and South Kona, thus, coffee that is grown
20 elsewhere in Hawaii cannot be called "Kona coffee"; and

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22 WHEREAS, under section 486-120.6, Hawaii Revised Statutes,
23 the Kona coffee name is permitted to be used on a package of
24 blended coffee that contains at least ten per cent coffee by
25 weight from Kona; and

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27 WHEREAS, the origin and percentage of the other coffees
28 contained in the package of blended coffee is not required to be
29 listed on the package label or advertisement; and

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31 WHEREAS, as a result, a package of blended coffee could be
32 labeled as "Kona coffee" even though it only contains ten per
33 cent of real Kona coffee and ninety per cent of coffee grown in
34 foreign countries; and
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1 WHEREAS, the existing labeling requirements for Kona coffee
2 causes consumer fraud and confusion, and degrades the "Kona
3 coffee" name; and
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5 WHEREAS, furthermore, coffee roasters on the mainland are
6 not bound by any labeling requirements relating to the use of
7 Kona coffee or the "Kona coffee" name, which adds to consumer
8 confusion; and
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10 WHEREAS, in the December, 2004, issue of *Consumer Reports*,
11 a writer confused Kona coffee blends with Kona coffee, and
12 mistakenly rated Kona coffee as "second rate" without
13 differentiating between pure and blended Kona coffees; and
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15 WHEREAS, in 2005, United States Congressman Ed Case
16 introduced H.R. No. 3535 to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act
17 of 1946 to require country of origin labeling for macadamia
18 nuts; and
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20 WHEREAS, similar legislation efforts for Hawaii-grown
21 coffee, whether on the national or state level, could establish
22 better truth-in-labeling standards for Hawaii-grown coffee and
23 lessen coffee consumer confusion; now, therefore,
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25 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth
26 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2007,
27 that the Department of Agriculture is requested to study the
28 existing labeling requirements relating to the use of the "Kona
29 coffee" or other Hawaii-grown coffee names; and
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31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
32 is requested to:
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- 34 (1) Examine the existing labeling requirements relating to
35 the use of the "Kona coffee" or other Hawaii-grown
36 coffee names;
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- 38 (2) Identify the problems with the existing labeling
39 requirements for Hawaii-grown coffee;
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- 41 (3) Develop stricter labeling requirements under state law
42 and department rules for the use of the "Kona coffee"
43 and other Hawaii-grown coffee names; and
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- (4) Develop ideas for a uniform national labeling standard and requirements for coffee roasters to abide by for the use of the "Kona coffee" or other Hawaii-grown coffee names; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture is requested to submit a written report to the Legislature of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the 2008 Regular Session; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture; the Dean of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawaii; the President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation; the President of the Hawaii Coffee Association; the President of the Kona Coffee Council; the President of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association; and any other statewide coffee organizations.

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