

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

1354

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 29 2007

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 266

Honorable Colleen Hanabusa  
President of the Senate  
Twenty-Fourth State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2007  
State of Hawaii

Madam:

Your Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs, to which was referred Governor's Message No. 266, submitting for study and consideration the nomination of:

CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

G.M. No. 266      SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO,  
for a term to expire 12-31-2010,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal statement and resume submitted by the nominee, and finds Sandra Lee Kunimoto to have the necessary qualifications to be nominated as the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination of Sandra Lee Kunimoto from the Department of Defense; the Agribusiness Development Corporation; the Nature Conservancy; the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation; the Maui County Farm Bureau; the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts; the Hawaii Agriculture Research Center; the Hawaii Crop Improvement Association; the Hawaii Coffee Association; Maui Pineapple Company, Ltd.; the Hawaii Aquaculture Association; the Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.; Mycogen Seeds; Green Point Nurseries; the Hawaii Egg Producers Association; the Lalamilo Farm Lots Association; the Hawaii Forest Industry Association; the Molokai Irrigation System Water Users Advisory Board; the Hawaii Papaya Industry Association; the Waimanalo Agricultural Association; the Trust for Public Land; and thirty-eight individuals.



Sandra Lee Kunimoto was appointed as the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture in 2003. Previously, Ms. Kunimoto was the Administrator of the Business Development and Marketing Division at the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism from 2001 to 2002 where she oversaw three areas, including investment and business analysis, service trade, and product trade, and served as the Acting Director of the Department during the Administration transition in December 2002. As the Director of Marketing and Business Development for the Hawaii Agriculture Research Center, from 1995 to 2001, she developed an emerging business segment for the center for the purpose of attracting new businesses into the State, and was part of a collaborated effort to build a multi-industry coalition to work with government agencies and advance the agricultural sector. All together, Ms. Kunimoto has twenty-five years of professional experience in agriculture and its related fields, which has allowed her to blend her knowledge of agriculture with the business of agriculture.

Ms. Kunimoto received her Bachelor of Science in the Biology of Natural Resources from the University of California at Berkeley and her Master of Business Administration from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. She later completed a professional internship at CI Foods Systems Co., Ltd. in Tokyo, Japan through the Japan-America Institute of Management Science, which provided her valuable insights and experience in expanding the global marketplace and the opportunities and challenges this expansion imposes on Hawaii's agricultural industry.

Overwhelming testimony indicates that Ms. Kunimoto has dedicated her career and life to the advancement and expansion of Hawaii's agricultural industry and is a committed and driven advocate for agriculture. Her management style consists of inclusiveness, cooperation, and respect and she has built valuable partnerships within and outside of the Department of Agriculture that have resulted in many cooperative projects, such as the protection of important agricultural lands, agricultural-related biosecurity initiatives, emergency and disaster response, farm labor assistance, financial assistance for farmers, marketing alliances, and animal quarantine initiatives.

Your Committee finds that under Ms. Kunimoto's tenure as the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture, the Department of Agriculture has made comprehensive amendments to the State's animal quarantine rules, has established and implemented a state biosecurity program and a seal of quality program, has begun to



address agri-terrorism concerns, and has effectively responded and provided assistance to agricultural producers affected by the floods and earthquake in 2006. After the spring floods and the October 15, 2006, earthquake, Ms. Kunimoto was a visible and reassuring presence for the affected farmers as the Department of Agriculture was diligently working on solutions to address their concerns.

Your Committee further finds that Ms. Kunimoto is dedicated to accomplishing further goals for the Department of Agriculture. First, she hopes to develop additional initiatives to ensure the future continued use and viability of agricultural lands through the identification and designation of important agricultural lands. It is vital to relieve the pressures of and provide incentives for residential developers who are using agricultural lands for residential purposes to build elsewhere, such as on rural or mixed-use districts, and keep agricultural districts for agricultural purposes only. Secondly, she firmly believes in providing further opportunities for community engagement to promote agriculture and ensure a future workforce for the agricultural industry, especially when many farmers are beginning to retire without any interested individuals to succeed them and continue their farming operations. Lastly, she is committed to strengthening the Department's biosecurity program, which she believes requires ongoing discussion and guidance.

Your Committee recognizes and notes concerns with the current management and operational status of the irrigation systems statewide, especially with respect to the Molokai Irrigation System. Ms. Kunimoto believes further discussion and community input and engagement are necessary to effectively tackle repair and maintenance and user fee issues. She fully recognizes the concerns the water users have with respect to the Molokai Irrigation System and is currently working with the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands in that department's regional planning study, which is expected to be completed soon. Your Committee urges the Department of Agriculture to consider the issues relating to the Molokai Irrigation System as a top priority in order to achieve an adequate level of satisfaction with the system users.

To this end, your Committee further finds that Ms. Kunimoto's evidenced commitment to the ideals and values of integrity, duty, respect, loyalty, and public service combined with her rich experience and heightened understanding of the multi-faceted components of the agricultural industry make her the best nominee



to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs that are attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the nominee, has found the nominee to be qualified for the position to which nominated and recommends that the Senate advise and consent to the nomination.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Water, Land,  
Agriculture, and Hawaiian  
Affairs,




RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN, Chair



The Senate  
 Twenty-Fourth Legislature  
 State of Hawaii

**Record of Votes of the  
 Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs  
 WAH  
 (Advise and Consent)**

Governor's Message No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:		
GM 266	WAH	3/21/07		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its decision.				
The Recommendation is to:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advise and Consent (2340) <span style="margin-left: 150px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Not Advise and Consent (2345)</span>				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
KOKUBUN, RUSSELL S. (C)	X			
TOKUDA, JILL N. (VC)	X			
FUKUNAGA, CAROL	X			
HEE, CLAYTON	X			
SLOM, SAM	X			
<b>TOTAL</b>	5	0	0	0
Recommendation:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <span style="margin-left: 150px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted</span>				
Chair's or Designee's Signature:				
				
Distribution:				
Original File with Committee Report	Yellow Clerk's Office	Pink Drafting Agency	Goldenrod Committee File Copy	

\*Only one Governor's Message per Record of Votes