

**LINDA LINGLE**  
Governor



State of Hawaii  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512

**SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DUANE K. OKAMOTO**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON  
AGRICULTURE  
AND  
WATER, LAND, OCEAN RESOURCES & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

January 30, 2008  
8:30 A.M.

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2293  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairpersons Tsuji and Ito and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 2293 which provides for the purchase of the Galbraith lands in central Oahu by the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC). The Department of Agriculture supports the intent of this bill provided that its passage does not displace the priorities in the Executive Biennium budget.

We suggest that ADC also be authorized to the use of condemnation through eminent domain as one of the means it may consider in acquiring the land. We also suggest that the funds to purchase the land be through general obligation bonds as a previous evaluation by ADC showed that it would be difficult for the lease rents derived from the property to cover the payments of a reimbursable bond.



STATE OF HAWAII  
**AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
235 S. Beretania Street, Room 205  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
Phone: (808) 586-0186 Fax: (808) 586-0189

TESTIMONY OF ALFREDO LEE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON  
AGRICULTURE  
AND  
WATER, LAND, OCEAN RESOURCES & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

January 30, 2008  
8:30 a.m.

HOUSE BILL 2293  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairpersons Tsuji and Ito and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2293. The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) supports the intent of this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact the priorities in the Executive Biennium budget. The ADC welcomes the opportunity to preserve this piece of valuable agricultural land in central Oahu.

We appreciate the authority this bill gives to ADC to acquire, maintain and/or transfer permanent conservation easements in accordance with the Natural Resources Conservation Service's farm and ranch land protection program; and to contract with a qualified financial institution to perform lease management services.

We have a recommendation on the funding mechanism. Although ADC is authorized to issue revenue bonds, according to bond experts, ADC does not qualify to do so at this time due to the lack of a substantial cash flow or a strong asset base. We therefore suggest the use of general obligation bonds (G.O. bonds), which does not have such a requirement of ADC.

Lastly, ADC wishes to point out that Galbraith Estate owns half of Lake Wilson and the Wahiawa dam which could be a potential liability for the state if we took ownership.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments on this bill.

TESTIMONY BY GEORGINA K. KAWAMURA  
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
STATE OF HAWAII  
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND  
WATER, LAND, OCEAN RESOURCES & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS  
ON  
HOUSE BILL NO. 2293

January 30, 2008

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

House Bill No. 2293 authorizes, among other things, the Agribusiness Development Corporation to issue revenue bonds to acquire agricultural lands owned by the George Galbraith Estate. Presumably, the lands will be leased to persons for agricultural purposes. The bonds will be repaid from lease rentals.

We wish to point out that there may be federal tax implications in using tax-exempt revenue bonds to acquire agricultural property for use by private individuals. Tax-exempt financing of agricultural lands are only permitted under limited circumstances, namely for beginning farmers and then only up to \$250,000. More expensive, taxable revenue bonds may be necessary to finance the program if tax-exempt financing is not permitted.

Furthermore, the acquisition of agricultural lands must generate sufficient revenue in order to repay the debt service associated with a bond issue. The Agribusiness Development Corporation must demonstrate their ability to repay the bonds prior to the bonds being issued.

**COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

**Rep. Clift Tsuji, Chair**

**Rep. Tom Brower, Vice Chair**

**COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, OCEAN RESOURCES & HAWAIIAN  
AFFAIRS**

**Rep. Ken Ito, Chair**

**Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair**

**TESTIMONY – HOUSE BILL 2293**

**January 30, 2008**

**REPORT TITLE: Galbraith Estate; Agricultural Lands; Agribusiness**

Representatives Tsuji, Ito and Members of the Committees:

My name is Josie Bidgood and I represent Bank of Hawaii in its role as the trustee of the trust established by the Estate of George Galbraith (deceased). Bank of Hawaii and its predecessor have been the trustee for more than 100 years.

We have become aware of House Bill 2293 and are here to provide an update on activity related to the sale of the Galbraith lands.

Under decisions made by both the Hawaii and U. S. Supreme Courts, the trust terminated in April 2007.

As there are in excess of 500 beneficiaries, the trustee will liquidate all assets of the trust to facilitate distribution. This includes selling the remaining acreage in Central Oahu.

As many of you may be aware from prior conversations and media coverage, the trustee developed a specific and well publicized process for marketing the property beginning in November 2006.

Prospective purchasers submitted written letters of intent in January of 2007 and the trustee selected the top few for the 'best and final offer' phase of the process.

These finalists submitted their best and final offers in April of 2007 and the Trustee, after evaluating all offers, engaged in negotiations with a prospective purchaser. After several months of discussions, it became clear that the parties would not be able to come to terms on the sale, and discussions were concluded in late 2007.

The Trust has continued to market the property. First, discussions are being held with parties which submitted unsolicited expressions of interest after learning that the first round of offers had concluded. In addition, the trustee has issued requests for proposals to several real estate brokerage firms, and anticipates selecting a listing broker around mid February. The property is expected to be publicly marketed at that time. At all times, the property has been presented to prospective purchasers as agricultural land. It is made clear that the zoning, for the most part, is AG-1 and that no other representations are made with regard to current or future zoning.

We appreciate the desire of the House to appropriate an unspecified sum of general funds money to purchase the Galbraith Estate lands. As trustee, we are obliged to pursue fair market value for the land and a closing date as early in 2008 as possible. In addition, the purchase price should be paid in full at time of closing to facilitate distributions to the beneficiaries. The Trust is certainly willing to consider any proposal, including one from the State, consistent with these requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Josie Bidgood  
Bank of Hawaii as Trustee  
of the Estate of George Galbraith (deceased) and  
not in its individual capacity

694.4565 (T)  
694.4032 (F)

[josie.bidgood@boh.com](mailto:josie.bidgood@boh.com)

HAWAII FARM BUREAU FEDERATION  
2343 ROSE STREET  
HONOLULU, HI 96819

JANUARY 30, 2008

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE &  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, OCEAN  
RESOURCES & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2293  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairs Tsuji and Ito and committee members:

My name is Alan Takemoto, Executive Director, of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, which is the largest non-profit general agriculture organization representing approximately 1,600 farm and ranch family members statewide.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation supports HB 2292, which authorizes issuance of revenue bonds to purchase land in central Oahu from the Galbraith Estate and appropriates funds to purchase the lands. It also enable the ADC to contract with lending institutions to provide lease management services

The Galbraith Estate has one of the best and productive agricultural lands in the State. If the State can purchase and management these lands, we will ensure that agriculture in Hawaii will increase productivity and capacity. This authority given to ADC will allow many smaller farm operations, who may currently unable to afford large tracts of land, to gain access to these prime agricultural lands at affordable lease rents with long term leases.

We urge this committee to approve the passage of this measure.

Thank you.



## **Hawaii Agriculture Research Center**

99-193 Aiea Heights Drive, Suite 300  
Aiea, Hawaii 96701  
Ph: 808-487-5561/Fax: 808-486-5020

### **TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND WATER LAND OCEAN RESOURCES & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

**HOUSE BILL 2292 and 2293**

**RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

**January 30, 2008**

Chairmen Tsuji and Ito and Members of your respective Committees:

My name is Stephanie Whalen. I am President and Research Director of the Hawaii Agriculture Research Center (HARC). I am testifying today on behalf of the center, our research and support staff, and our members and clients.

#### **HARC supports the intent of House Bill 2292 and 2293 Relating to Agriculture.**

HARC supports the acquisition or placement of a permanent easement on agriculture lands with strategic functions for the future of food security on each island.

One element to recall is that the Agribusiness Development Corporation was initially set up to help in the transition of large scale agriculture to a more diverse agricultural sector. ADC had a sunset date. That date had to be removed as it approached since the transition is taking longer than anticipated especially during the economic stagnation of the '90s in the state and the lack of funds for the implementation of the many state agricultural plans that have been written.

However, unless the legislative intent has changed for this body the mechanisms proposed to be established that have a perpetual factor should consider how these mechanisms will be handled when ADCs work is finished and it is no longer needed

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Libby Smithe**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President – Wahiawa Community & Business Association

**Daniel Nakasone**

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President – Wahiawa Community & Business Association

**COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

**COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, OCEAN RESOURCES & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

**Date: Wednesday, January 30, 2008**

**Time: 8:30am**

**Place: Conference Room 325**

**State Capitol**

**415 South Beretania Street**

**HB – 2292**

**HB – 2293**

**Committee is requesting 5 copies**

## **COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

Rep. Clifton Tsuji, Chair and members

## **COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, OCEAN RESOURCES & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

Rep. Ken Ito, Chair and members

### **Galbraith Trust Lands**

**The Wahiawa Community and Business Association supports HB – 2292 and HB 2293 for the following reasons:**

The loss of 2,100 acres of prime agricultural lands in central Oahu is only part what's at stake.

1) The loss of AG-1 zoned lands, the highest agricultural land designation by the State of Hawaii for prime and most productive agricultural lands. Oahu can ill-afford to lose any more large tracts of prime agricultural lands for a host of reasons.

- It will be a setback to Hawaii if we are to move towards food self-sufficiency and food security. Central Oahu and the North Shore can supply Honolulu and beyond with a diverse selection of high quality, local fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Open spaces and scenic resources are critical to the visitors' experience and our own quality of life. The vast majority of visitors who come to Oahu have been here before and nearly half of them go to the North Shore. These lands sit in the saddle of the Koolau and Waianae ranges and it's on the "Circle Island Corridor". These lands represent part of Oahu's "last stand" in terms of wide-open rural spaces.
- Wide open spaces serves as a water catchment area and irrigation of agricultural crops recharges our aquifers. Development of these lands will facilitate quicker run-offs into the ocean.

2) Development of these lands will remove a critical "agricultural buffer zone" or Army Compatible Use Buffer that could restrict the army's ability to train its troops here on Oahu. The majority of troops are based on this island but the U.S. Army provides a significant economic benefit to the community and businesses throughout the state. In fiscal year 2005, \$1.9 billion was invested directly into Hawaii's economy. The loss of training areas and access to training areas, because of nearby development, could reduce troop levels stationed in Hawaii. Any downsizing will negatively impact the health of our economy.

3) The integrity of the State Historic Monument Kukaniloko will be compromised if surrounded by development. Kukaniloko provides a cultural experience for visitors and local residents alike and view plains are intrinsic to this historic site.

4) Management of Lake Wilson's water resource is critical to farmers from Wahiawa to the North Shore. Lake Wilson provides an economically viable source of water for pineapple, seed crops and diversified agriculture.

Management of the lake's dam and water levels are also critical to flood risk issues in Waialua.

To disconnect viable agriculture on these specific 2,100 acres and the water adjacent to these lands threatens the sustainability of Central Oahu and North Shore agriculture. Lake Wilson water used for agriculture also recharges the aquifer on the North Shore.

Tourism, the military and agriculture are pillars of our economy. Do we want to jeopardize the health of Hawaii's economy and our quality of life for "Gentlemen Estate Farms"? Let's continue to live Aloha and Malama ka Aina! The long-term negative impact on our economy and quality of life are at stake.

Respectfully,

**Libby Smithe**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Wahiawa Community and Business Association

**Dan Nakasone**

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Wahiawa Community and Business Association



**THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND'S TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF  
HB 2293**

**House Committee on Agriculture  
House Committee on Water, Land, Ocean Resources and Hawaiian Affairs  
Wednesday, January 30, 2008, 8:30 a.m., Room 325  
(25 Copies Needed) Fax to 586-6659**

Dear Chairpersons Ito, Tsuji and Committee members:

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) supports HB 2293 Relating to Agriculture.

TPL conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come. Nationwide, TPL has five program initiatives: (1) providing parks for people, (2) protecting working lands (farms, ranches, and forests), (3) conserving natural lands (wilderness, wildlife habitat), (4) safeguarding heritage lands (cultural and historical resources), and (5) preserving land to ensure clean drinking water and the natural beauty of our coasts and waterways. In Hawai'i, TPL has worked with public and private partners to conserve over 36,000 acres of land in the State.

As development pressures and urban sprawl increase on O'ahu, our local community has become increasingly concerned about land use, food self-sufficiency and security, natural resource depletion, and economic dependency on imported food and products. The people of Hawai'i have agreed that agricultural preservation and self-sufficiency are important and embodied these values in our State Constitution, which requires the State to "conserve and protect agricultural lands, promote diversified agriculture, increase agricultural self-sufficiency and assure the availability of agriculturally suitable lands." Art. XI, sec. 3.

Agricultural land located in Central O'ahu, such as the 2,100 acres currently for sale by the Galbraith Estate, are key to Hawai'i's future food security and self-sufficiency. These lands are close to local markets and transportation corridors, and have ample supplies of irrigation water. The Galbraith lands also serve as an important recharge area over our drinking water aquifer. The lands are the gateway to the rural North Shore, and are the "first domino" parcel of agricultural lands that will inevitably convert to gentlemen's estates or residential subdivisions, if we do not act in a timely fashion.

TPL supports HB 2293 because it would authorize ADC to acquire agricultural lands, such as the Galbraith lands, to protect agricultural lands and promote diversified agriculture. HB 2293 would also allow the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) to purchase and accept permanent conservation easements in accordance with the Natural Resources Conservation Service Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP). The FRPP program has enabled private landowners across the nation to voluntarily dedicate thousands of acres of agricultural or ranch land to agricultural or

ranch uses in perpetuity, preventing piecemeal urban sprawl, and preserving rural lifestyles. In Hawai'i, the Maui Coastal Land Trust used this fund to purchase a conservation easement on 168 acres of ranchland at Kainalu Ranch on Moloka'i, assuring that this land will never be developed or subdivided for residential or other non-agricultural purposes. This successful program has a proven track record on the mainland and in Hawai'i. Allowing ADC to purchase such easements and access the FRPP program is consistent with the underlying purpose of HRS Chapter 163D and the Hawai'i Constitution to conserve and protect agricultural lands.

TPL supports HB 2293 and is ready to assist the State and other conservation partners in collaborative efforts to acquire the Galbraith lands.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lea Hong". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lea Hong  
Hawaiian Islands Program Director



Date: January 29, 2008



To: Rep. Clift Tsuji, Chair, House Committee on Agriculture  
Rep. Ken Ito, Chair, House Committee on Water and Land

From: Ernest Tottori, Chairman of HPC Foods Ltd.  
288 Libby St., Honolulu, HI 96819  
Tel./Fax : 808 848 2431 / 808 845 5155

Ref.: HB 2293, a bill to enable the state to purchase the Galbraith Estate lands.

Aloha Rep. Tsuji, Rep. Ito and members of the House committee on Agriculture, Water and Land. I am Ernest Tottori with HPC Foods Ltd. I have been involved with agriculture and agribusiness all my life.

I urge your leadership in passing HB 2293. For diversified agriculture to take hold and produce food that would contribute to "import replacement", diversified agriculture must move from the background to the forefront occupying good agricultural lands that were once only reserved for sugar and pine. HB 2293 takes the state a step forward in the right direction as we can reduce our dependency on imports. The Galbraith lands are some of the most productive agriculture land in the state. The higher elevation also means cooler weather that is more conducive for a whole host of crops that we are importing.

Already farmers like Larry Jeffs and Aloun Farms could potentially loose their leases on Ewa due to development. Purchasing the lands of the Galbraith Estates allow farmers to establish new enterprises. Along with long term leases, they can nurture the land and produce a variety of produce that is currently imported.

We have lost the broiler industry, loosing the dairy industry and potentially the egg industry all due to high feed prices and lack of land for the farmers to grow the feed. Yet Hawaii has all the seed corn companies growing corn here. Without land, farmers become nomadic, our communities become vulnerable to events beyond our control and we put our food supply at risks. I urge you to pass HB 2293 so that we can finally begin to fulfill Article XI Section 3 of our constitution on agriculture lands and land banking for the future generation. This is a rare opportunity that is before us. It may never happen again. It is time to act for our children's future. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted

  
Ernest Tottori

**HEPA Cooperative  
dba Hawaii Egg Producers Association  
841 Bishop Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813**

**Testimony for HB 2292 and HB 2293**

Chairperson Tsuji and members of the Committee and Chairperson Ito and members of the Committee,

My name is Sharon Peterson Cheape, Vice President of the Hawaii Egg Producers Association which represents all commercial egg producers in the State of Hawaii. I am writing in regards to the Galbraith Trust Lands which consists of 2,100 acres of prime agricultural land located in central Oahu.

Our state has seen dramatic losses in agribusiness in the last 2 years with the closing of several livestock operations and crop farmers. These losses have already made a negative impact on our food security and sustainability of our island's resources. We need to stop and take a good look at what is at stake here and take immediate action to move forward and secure this prime agricultural land before it is gone forever.

These 2,100 acres are situated at a high elevation which makes it ideal for growing many types of crops. Also noteworthy are the two wells situated on this land which Delmonte put in and used for irrigation. Both of these factors are significant assets already in place for any agricultural operation which would greatly add to our states economy and food security. Imagine how much food could be produced on these 2,100 acres!

The Hawaii Egg Producers Association also supports the intent of HB 2293 which authorizes the issuance of revenue bonds to purchase land in central Oahu from the Galbraith Estate; appropriate funds to purchase the lands; enables the Agribusiness Development Corporation to contract with lending institutions to provide lease management services.

Thank you for your support of Agriculture and the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Respectfully,

Sharon Peterson Cheape

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**From:** Terry Phillips [tapgotaloha@yahoo.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 29, 2008 4:37 PM

**To:** AGRtestimony

**Subject:** Subject: Testimony on House Bill No. HB 2292 and HB 2293 Relating to Agriculture; and HB 2316 in the preservation of productive Agriculture lands

January 29, 2008

The Honorable Clift Tsuji, Chair,  
Representative Tom Brower, Vice Chair and Members  
Committee on Agriculture  
The Honorable Ken Ito, Chair  
Representative Jon Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair  
Committee on Water, Land, Ocean Resources & Hawaiian Affairs  
Hawaii State House of Representatives  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 325  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Tsuji, Chair Oshiro and Members:

**Subject: Testimony on House Bill No. HB 2292 and HB 2293 Relating to Agriculture; and HB 2316 in the preservation of productive Agriculture lands**

My name is Terry Phillips and I am currently employed in the Marketing Department of Aloun Farms in Kapolei. However, I would like to testify with my personal support of House Bill No. HB 2292 and HB2293, relating to Agriculture; and for the support of HB2316 which addresses the preservation of agricultural lands.

You may have brought your family to visit the local pumpkin patch, taken them to a taro festival or a celebration of sweet onions. You may have seen and purchased produce grown by local farmers at your local grocers or farmers market to enjoy with your family. Or maybe, like me, you grew up during a time and can still remember when agriculture supported whole communities. I grew up in Waipahu and can still remember sugar cane fields, plantation homes, cane haul roads and how the community of Waipahu was affected by the closure of Oahu Sugar's Waipahu Mill. At one time Hawaii was a sea of light green sugar cane fields, contrasted by the dark green crowns of pineapple. The sea of sugar cane across from my family home is now a community called Waikele. The pineapple fields where I played as a child, is now home to Waipio Gentry. As our community grew larger, the demand for housing and the infrastructures that support our island families grew with it. This increased the use of land for homes and decreased the number of lands designated for agriculture. As large agricultural corporations pulled out, more and more lands were sold to developers. This has lead to fewer open spaces and has taken good and productive, agricultural lands out of hands and out of our children's lives forever.

These three bills go hand in hand to preserve remaining agricultural lands in our island home. As our community continues to grow, so shall the need for housing, water, food and services. Agricultural lands are essential to procuring a sustainable existence for future generations of Hawaii families. Hawaii agriculture addresses more than farming. It reaches deep into the communities to provide jobs and far into the soil to replenish the aquifers that feed our water wells. It keeps the soil from eroding into our oceans and destroying coral reefs. Agriculture provides jobs, nourishes our families and the environment we live in. It helps Hawaii to be sustainable. What we decide today, will set in motion the events of tomorrow. Once the lands are developed they are gone forever. This is our opportunity to identify the importance of prime agricultural lands and to take the steps to protect them for the future generations.

Thank you for allowing me to share my testimony with you.

Sincerely,

Terry Phillips

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1/29/2008



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**From:** Martha Peterson [petersona003@hawaii.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 29, 2008 5:51 PM  
**To:** AGRtestimony  
**Subject:** HB Bill 2292 and HB Bill 2293

Alan Peterson, Partner, Peterson's Upland Farm, Wahiawa, Hawaii

for Committees AGR/ WLH/ FIN

Wednesday, January 30, 2008, 8:30 AM

HB 2292, HB 2293

Report Title: Agricultural Lands, Agribusiness, Galbraith Estate Lands, Appropriation

Dear Committee Members,

I strongly support HB 2292 and HB 2293.

Passage of these bills would preserve an undeveloped view plane and open space. A friend commented that the drive to work in Kahuku was not just a drive but a spiritual experience! I've heard many times that on the commute home, once one hits the pineapple fields the cares of the day diminish.

It would preserve agricultural land making it available to qualified farmers. Farms provide food, employment, service jobs, and interest for visitors.

Water from Lake Wilson would be used for irrigation which would then enter the aquifer. Rainfall on subdivisions generally does not all enter the aquifer. Lake Wilson was designed years ago by visionary agriculturalists to provide water for makai sugar lands. It, with its ditches and reservoirs down stream, is a valuable resource.

Included in the Galbraith land is Kukaniloko, the sacred birthing site. It must have adequate vacant land surrounding it to preserve its presence.

Government's involvement in helping to preserve agriculture is not new or unusual. Other states do it.

Government has helped our farm by allowing Ag zoning in an urban neighborhood. This has allowed us to continue at our present location. We have been in operation for almost 100 years.

A sustainable system must preserve its valuable ag lands.

Thank you very much for your thoughtful work.

Alan M. Peterson  
621-6619

1/29/2008

**Testimony to the House Joint Committee on Agriculture and Water, Land, Ocean  
Resources and Hawaiian Affairs  
Wednesday, January 30, 2008, 8:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 2292 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE, AND  
HOUSE BILL NO. 2293 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Tsuji, Chair Ito, and Members of the Joint Committee

My name is Joseph Francher and I am a resident at 129 Rose Street, Wahiawa, Hawaii. I am testifying in **SUPPORT** of House Bill No. 2292 and House Bill No. 2293, which would authorize the Agribusiness Development Corporation to purchase agricultural lands owned by the Galbraith Estate in Central Oahu.

The constitution of the State of Hawaii commits us to the preservation of our limited natural resources, to conserve and protect agricultural lands, promote diversified agriculture, increase agricultural self-sufficiency and assure the availability of agriculturally suitable lands. Such actions preserve agricultural activities in our State and promote a lifestyle beneficial to the communities at large, in regard to sustainability and reducing our dependence on sources of food and fuel external to the State, reducing stresses on our limited infrastructure capabilities, and keeping open spaces open and green. This latter benefit is so important not only to the well-being of the residents of the State, but to our tourist industry, as well.

The Galbraith Trust lands in Central Oahu represent some of the finest agricultural land on Oahu and have been in agricultural use for many, many years. That Trust ended in 2007, and the beneficiaries have placed the lands for sale to the highest bidder. Considering the location, size and vistas associated with the lands, the best use and the highest price, on an open market, would undoubtedly not be agricultural use. Development of these lands – and others in the remaining greenbelt areas of Central Oahu – for other than agriculture, may provide benefit and gain for the current and future owners of the lands, but would remove beautiful and open lands from our dwindling, suitable, agricultural land bank. The suggested use for “Gentlemen’s’ Estates” on these lands would further burden and alter our infrastructure, without measurably increasing our State’s tax revenues; the communities would be burdened for the benefit of the few “Gentlemen”.

You must act precipitously to acquire these lands now, before Market forces drive the price higher still or before the opportunity to keep these land parcels intact is lost. I support these Bills because they give the people of the State of Hawaii the opportunity to protect a large piece of country, North of Wahiawa, from being developed and they preserve the land most suited for agriculture to expand local production of food and energy, and because they promote the mission of a sustainable future for Oahu and the State of Hawaii.

I respectfully urge your support for House Bill No. 2292 and House Bill No. 2293.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. JoeF