



Hawaii Agriculture Research Center

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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

HOUSE BILL 2503

RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL LANDS

February 5, 2008

Chair Morita and Members of the Committee:

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 is suggesting an amendment to HB 2503 if the committee decides to approve this proposal.

A significant opportunity has been provided to HARC regarding the Del Monte village which includes *agricultural worker rental housing* and industrial facilities. (see attached map) on over 100 acres of land. However, it appears that the existing permissible uses in the state's agricultural district regarding plantation subdivisions **is limited to employees or former employees with a property interest in the land.**

HARC would like you to consider an amendment on page 7 line 8 through 16:

“Plantation community subdivisions, which as used in this ~~paragraph~~ chapter means [a] an established subdivision or cluster of employee housing, community buildings, and [acreage] agricultural support buildings [established] on land currently or formerly owned, leased, or operated by a sugar or pineapple plantation[; and in residential use] where the existing structures are used or rehabilitated for use as provided herein:

- (A) The employee housing is occupied by employees or former employees of the plantation[; provided that] and the employees or former employees shall have a property interest in the land;
- (B) The employee housing units shall be rented or leased at affordable rates for agricultural workers; or
- (C) The agricultural support buildings shall be rented or leased to agricultural operators or agricultural support services;”

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Hawaii's agricultural needs.

**Testimony before the
House Committee on

Energy & Environmental Protection**

H.B. 2503 – Relating to Agricultural Lands

**Tuesday, February 5, 2008
8:45 am, Conference Room 312**

**By Arthur Seki
Director of Technology
Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc.**

Chair Morita, Vice Chair Carroll, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Arthur Seki – I am the Director of Technology in the Energy Solutions & Technology Department at Hawaiian Electric Company. I am testifying on behalf of Hawaiian Electric Company (HECO) and its subsidiary utilities, Maui Electric Company (MECO) and Hawaii Electric Light Company (HELCO), hereby referred to collectively as the HECO Utilities.

We support H.B. 2503 that permits the use of lands in agricultural land use districts to be used for agricultural-energy facilities.

As you may know, HECO Utilities are committed to exploring and using biofuels in its existing and planned generating units. The use of biofuels can reduce the State's dependence on imported oil and increase the amount of renewable energy from sustainable resources. This commitment by the HECO Utilities is demonstrated by the following initiatives:

- HECO's next power plant (100 MW) on Oahu (located at Campbell Industrial Park) will be 100% biofueled;
- MECO tested biodiesel in its diesel engines and combustion turbine at Maalaea power plant and will conduct further tests;

- HECO and MECO are partnering with BlueEarth Biofuels to build a 40 million gallon per year biodiesel production plant on Maui;
- HECO is developing test plans for a biofuel blend demonstration in a steam boiler generating unit on Oahu;
- HELCO will be testing biodiesel blends in a diesel engine on the Big Island;
- MECO will be testing glycerin (biodiesel by-product) in a Kahului steam boiler on Maui; and
- HECO is providing seed funding to the Hawaii Agriculture Research Center (HARC) and the agriculture departments at the University of Hawaii's Manoa and Hilo campuses to conduct biofuel crop research.

In conclusion, HECO Utilities support H.B. 2503 as a way to stimulate the development of locally produced biofuels.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.