

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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**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. 2593
RELATING TO DROUGHT MITIGATION**

Chairpersons Tsuji and Ito and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 2593. The purpose of this bill is to provide funding to pursue drought mitigation projects and measures in each county of the state. The department supports the intent of this bill provided it does not impact the priorities set forth in our Executive Biennium Budget, and defers to the Department of Land and Natural Resources regarding the proper expending agency.

The effects of drought on agriculture can be devastating. With the possibility of drought lasting for years, crop yields can fall dramatically and farms can close. Approximately two years ago, the Commission on Water Resource Management assisted in the creation of drought committees in each county. The committees then came up with potential projects to implement to mitigate the effects of drought. This bill represents recognition of the importance and need for these projects.

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**TESTIMONY OF THE CHAIRPERSON
OF THE COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

on House Bill 2593 – Relating to Drought Mitigation

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

January 30, 2008

The purpose of House Bill 2593 is to provide an unspecified amount of funding to pursue drought mitigation projects and measures in each county of the State. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports the intent of this measure, as it is consistent with the goals and objectives of our program and the Hawaii Drought Plan, but we are unable to support this measure as the funds are not included in the Executive Biennium Budget.

Droughts have severely affected Hawaii in the past, and as part of a natural climate cycle, droughts will impact the State in the future. In addition to agriculture and livestock industries, drought induced impacts will also affect other segments of the community, such as water supply, commerce, environment, public health and safety.

The Department concurs with the importance of drought planning and the effective implementation of mitigation measures and strategies. The Hawaii Drought Plan and the County Drought Mitigation Strategies identify and recommend implementation of drought mitigation actions, subject to available funding. These Drought Mitigation Strategies were developed in consultation with key stakeholders who participated as members of the respective local County Drought Committees to identify and prioritize projects to help reduce the impacts of drought in their communities.

Should available funding be identified in support of these projects, the Department recommends that such funding be provided directly to the counties for implementation of drought mitigation activities at the county level.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HAWAII FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
2343 ROSE STREET
HONOLULU, HI 96819

JANUARY 30, 2008

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

TESTIMONY ON HB 2593
RELATING TO DROUGHT MITIGATION

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 2593.

Drought is one the most debilitating factors that continues to face farmers and ranchers statewide. When drought occurs, farmers and ranchers are the first segments of the community to be asked or required to cut back on water usage. Without adequate water, farmers and ranchers income and production will be dramatically affected.

The State Drought Plan consists of four county drought committees who focus on specific actions to mitigate drought in their respective county. However, we need to make sure that sufficient amount of funding is made available to implement the plans. Last year the legislature passed a \$4 million appropriation funding bill, whereby \$1 million would go to each county. We believe this was a good start, but additional funding will be needed to prepare us for future drought conditions.

We respectfully ask that you support the passage of this measure.

Thank you.



Maui County Farm Bureau

*An Affiliate of the American Farm Bureau Federation and Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation
Serving Maui's Farmers and Ranchers*

TESTIMONY

HB 2593

RELATING TO DROUGHT MITIGATION

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

Chair Tsuji and Ito and Committee Members:

My name is Warren Watanabe, Executive Director of the Maui County Farm Bureau, a non-profit general agriculture organization and an affiliate of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation.

MCFB on behalf of our member farmers, ranchers and agricultural organizations, **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB 2593, providing funding for drought mitigation measures.

MCFB recognizes and appreciates the legislature for passing Act 238 during the 2007. The Governor has released the funding and projects are underway on Maui to improve the intakes for water delivery to the County Kula Agricultural Park as well as \$200,000 for planning for stormwater recapture to provide new sources of water for agriculture. The stormwater recapture planning will dovetail well with the ongoing CIP project for the Upcountry Dual line. The dual line provides infrastructure to deliver water, however, without additional water supplies, those users may be at risk of not having water during times of drought. The \$200K project is a good first step to increase agricultural water deliveries in Upcountry Maui. After approval of Act 238, the Maui County Drought Council identified the above projects as the top priority for our County. Each of the other Counties have done the same.

This appropriation seeks to continue this process of working on the Drought Mitigation projects identified by the various County Drought Councils. It is by whittling away, project by project that we can increase Hawaii's ability to withstand drought periods. Drought mitigation projects must be undertaken ahead of a drought. When the drought comes, it is too late.

We respectfully request passage of this measure to increase Hawaii's ability to withstand droughts.

1/29/08

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

HOUSE BILL 2593

RELATING TO DROUGHT MITIGATION

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 strongly supports of House Bill 2593 Relating to Drought Mitigation.

Conservation of water and its appropriate management in times of shortage is a critical issue for island communities. Strategic planning for drought mitigation is important and has been accomplished by our counties with input from their respective communities. As water becomes the limiting factor for society water conservation and improved management should rise to the top of the state's priorities.

Funds are now needed to implement the counties plans.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**Hawaii
Crop
Improvement
Association**

Adolph Helm, President-Elect
19 Hua'ai Road, PO Box 339
Hoolehua, Hi 96729
Phone: 808-567-9421

HB2593, Drought Mitigation
House AGR/WLH Committees
Wednesday, Jan. 30, 2008
Room 325: 8:30 am

Position: Support

Chairs Tsuji and Ito, and Members of the Hse AGR/WLH Committees:

My name is Adolph Helm. I am a Molokai resident, and Project Manager of Dow Agro-Science, an HCIA member company. The HCIA represents seed production and research facilities operating in Hawaii for nearly 40 years. The HCIA is comprised of five member companies that farm an estimated 8,000 acres on four islands, valued at \$97.6 million in operating budget (2006/2007 HASS). We are proud members of Hawaii's diversified agriculture and life sciences industries.

Your support is requested for this appropriations request that would fund implementation of the counties' drought mitigation plans. Hawaii is still recovering from about ten years of drought. We must be pro-active in capturing water and holding it in reserve for drought conditions.

Your support of this measure is appreciated. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Maui Land & Pineapple Company, Inc.

Wes Nohara
870 Haliimaile Road, Makawao, HI 96768
(808) 870-8695

Re: HB 2593/SB2645, Drought Mitigation

Hearing Date: January 30, 2008

Position: Support

Chair Clift Tsuji and Chair Ken Ito
Hawaii House of Representatives
Committees on Agriculture/ Water, Land and Hawaiian Affairs

Chairs Tsuji and Ito, and Members of the Committees on AGR/WLH:

I am Wes Nohara, General Manager for Maui Land & Pineapple Co., Inc.'s organic farming operations. I also serve on Maui's Drought Mitigation Committee. I support this bill because droughts have occurred throughout our Island's history and it will hit us again soon. The difference is, today our increased population demand for water has exasperated the seriousness and urgency for drought mitigation measures.

Many of us who are familiar with Hawaii agriculture know that we are still recovering from a decade of drought conditions. The good news is that Hawaii has developed a drought plan that looks at a coordinated emergency response mechanism and outlines steps to mitigate the effects of future drought occurrences. Further, each county's drought committees developed a county specific drought mitigation strategy.

Funding support is needed to put these plans in action, before there are no options for water for agriculture or for residential and other business use.

Your support of this bill is urged. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.