

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DUANE K. OKAMOTO
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2008, 10:30 A.M.

HOUSE BILL NO. 2593
RELATING TO DROUGHT MITIGATION

Chairperson Oshiro and Members of the Committee:

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; however, we have concerns about the adverse budgetary impact that this bill will have on the Executive Supplemental Budget request, 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.



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 COMMITTEE
ON
FINANCE**

February 21, 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. While the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) recognizes the importance of mitigating the effects of drought, as it is consistent with the goals and objectives of our program and the Hawaii Drought Plan, the Department nonetheless is unable to support this measure as funding for projects would negatively impact the Executive Supplemental Budget request.

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.

Council Chair
G. Riki Hokama

Director of Council Services
Ken Fukuoka

Vice-Chair
Danny A. Mateo

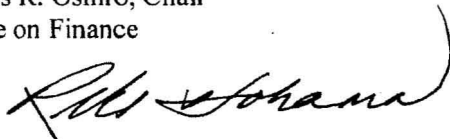
Council Members
Michelle Anderson
Gladys C. Baisa
Jo Anne Johnson
Bill Kauakea Medeiros
Michael J. Molina
Joseph Pontanilla
Michael P. Victorino



COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov/council

February 19, 2008

TO: Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: G. Riki Hokama
Council Chair 

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF FEBRUARY 21, 2008; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2593,
RELATING TO DROUGHT MITIGATION**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds for drought mitigation projects in each county of the State.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I support this measure for the following reasons:

1. The implementation of the drought mitigation plan developed by the counties' drought committees is of vital importance to Maui County, which has been under the constant threat of drought for several years.
2. The lingering drought and near-drought conditions have affected the entirety of Maui County's agriculture industry, from the independent family farmers to the agribusiness stalwarts that have historically provided steady employment. Maui County's invaluable green environment has also suffered, with native species put at risk. The efforts of those who have developed mitigation plans, involving improved water storage and conservation, merit additional support to protect the economy and ecology.
3. While Maui County has been doing its best to provide for the prudent conservation of the County's precious water supply by encouraging the use of reclaimed water and imposing restrictions on the use of potable water for the irrigation of golf courses, much remains to be done. The funds provided by this legislation would jumpstart additional efforts supported by the county drought committees.

For the foregoing reasons, I support this measure.

Council Chair
G. Riki Hokama

Vice-Chair
Danny A. Mateo

Council Members
Michelle Anderson
Gladys C. Baisa
Jo Anne Johnson
Bill Kauakea Medeiros
Michael J. Molina
Joseph Pontanilla
Michael P. Victorino



Director of Council Services
Ken Fukuoka

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February 20, 2008

TO: Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Committee on Finance

FROM: Danny A. Mateo
Council Vice Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "DM", is written over the name "Danny A. Mateo" in the "FROM:" field.

DATE: Thursday, February 21, 2008

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF FEBRUARY 21, 2008; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2593,
RELATING TO DROUGHT MITIGATION**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds for drought mitigation projects in each county of the state.

I am aware that Council Chair G. Riki Hokama, Maui County Council, has submitted testimony in support of this measure. As the Vice Chair of the Maui County Council I concur with the testimony submitted by Chair Hokama and urge you to support this measure.



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 FINANCE

Chair Oshiro 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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HAWAII FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
2343 ROSE STREET
HONOLULU, HI 96819

FEBRUARY 21, 2008

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 2593
RELATING TO DROUGHT MITIGATION

Chairs Oshiro 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 2592, which appropriates funds for drought mitigation projects in each county of the state.

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 beyond the drought period as it will take time for normal production levels to begin.

In 2000, legislation was enacted for a 4 percent tax credit and it expired in 2005 as utilization was low due to only obtaining a 4 percent tax credit. We had urged and continue to urge that the tax credit for this issue that impacts the entire agricultural industry be increase to a substantial amount as list in this bill at 50 percent.

We need to make sure that sufficient tax incentives are at the level to truly encourage farmers and ranchers to make substantial investments in drought mitigation facilities.

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

Thank you.

Hawaii
Crop
Improvement
Association

Sarah Styan, President
P.O. Box 609
Waimea, Hawaii 96796
Phone: 808- 338-8300 ext 113

Testimony by: Sarah Styan
HB 2593, Drought Mitigation
House FIN Committee
Thursday, Feb. 21, 2008
Room 308: 10:30 am

Position: Strong Support

Chair Oshiro, and Members of the House FIN Committee:

My name is Sarah Styan. I am a Kauai resident, President of HCIA and research scientist of Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Waimea Research Station. 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.