

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 COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
FEBRUARY 13, 2008
11:15 A.M.**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2083
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL PROCESSING FACILITIES**

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 2083. The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds to establish a state agricultural processing facility. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) is in support of the intent of this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact our priorities in our Executive Biennium Budget.

Increased local market distribution through new retailers and a focus on purchasing local items is providing an unprecedented opportunity for Hawaii producers to expand to meet this increasing demand. A local processing facility would not only create new jobs but would allow for close control of the manufacturing processes and better serve the needs of local businesses.



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February 13, 2008

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON
HB 2083
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL
PROCESSING FACILITIES

LATE
Testimony

Chair Tsuji 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 (HFBF) supports HB 2083, which appropriates funds to establish a state agricultural processing facility.

In today's world, our economy has become so globalized that it has changed the way we are able to process or manufacture products. Agriculture is no different as it has become difficult to process our own raw agricultural crops into value added products. If a Hawaii farmer wants to process his product into a higher value added product, he is often times forced to send it to the mainland as we lack the facilities to handle all types and quantities. The other challenge is the cost of transportation that often times discourage farmers to venture into this area.

Hawaii is losing millions of dollars as we lack the ability to process our own agricultural products. We need to be creative and find our niche market as it is difficult to compete with the global economy. An agricultural processing facility here in Hawaii will provide the farmers an opportunity to establish another market for their product.

We do recognize that the State will have its challenges running and managing such a facility and believe a private entity may be more appropriate. The Farm Bureau is interested in taking an active role in this development and operation of this processing facility.

We appreciate your support and passage of this measure.

Thank you.