



HB 3424 RELATING TO EXPANDING KALO FARMING
House Committee on Agriculture

February 8, 2008
Room: 325

9:15 a.m.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** H.B. 3424, which directs the chairperson of the Board of Agriculture to identify both lands throughout the state that are suitable for growing kalo and individuals interested in becoming kalo farmers. When analyzing potential kalo lands, the chairperson would take into consideration a parcel's acreage, access to water and lease or rent rates. In addition, the chairperson would determine what agriculture loan programs or other financial resources are available to kalo farmers.

Kalo is a sacred plant in Hawaiian culture, regarded as the elder brother of Native Hawaiians, and poi, made from the corm of kalo, serves as the staple food of the traditional Hawaiian diet. OHA strongly supports this effort as it will help strengthen Native Hawaiian culture and ensure that kalo farmers will once again thrive in Hawai'i.

OHA urges the Committee to PASS H.B. 3424. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Hawaii
Crop
Improvement
Association

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Testimony by: Sarah Styan
HB 3424, Relating to Taro
House AGR Committee
Friday, Feb. 8, 2008
Room 325: 9:15 am

Position: Support

Chair Tsuji, and Members of the House AGR 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.

Appreciation is expressed for this and other taro measures introduced this year. While HCIA member companies do not grow taro, nor do we plan to grow taro, we have and continue to support the preservation and protection of taro in Hawaii.

This bill calls for the Department of Agriculture, with the assistance of the Department of Business and Economic Development and Tourism, and UH – CTAHR to provide baseline information about land and water access suitable for taro farming, as well as outreach to interested taro farmers, and business/training programs to ensure their success as taro farmers.

We support this as it will lead to the sustainability of the taro industry, and help with successful production of agricultural lands. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.