

SB 2520



STATE OF HAWAII
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
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TESTIMONY OF ALFREDO LEE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

February 5, 2008
2:45 p.m.

SENATE BILL 2520
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE EAST KAUAI IRRIGATION SYSTEM

Chairperson Tokuda and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on Senate Bill 2520, which would appropriate general funds to be expended by the Department of Agriculture for the operation and maintenance of the East Kauai Irrigation System.

We are concerned about the duplication of funding created by this proposal. The ADC wishes to point out that last year, Act 213 required the ADC to expend \$50,000 annually, from its general fund appropriation during fiscal years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, for the operation and maintenance of the East Kauai irrigation system by the East Kauai Water Users' Cooperative.

Thank you.

HAWAII FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
2343 ROSE STREET
HONOLULU, HI 96819

FEBRUARY 5, 2008

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

TESTIMONY ON SB 2520
RELATING TO DROUGHT MITIGATION

Chair Tokuda 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 SB 2520.

I am writing in support of the East Kauai User's Cooperative (EKUC) and to request your Committees' support of this funding request. The EKUC, a volunteer group, has operated the East Kauai Irrigation System for more than two years, servicing more than 4,000 acres of agricultural lands. Without this volunteer effort, the 22-mile irrigation system would have been abandoned and Kauai farmers left without water.

The cost to operate this system is a continuing challenge as the operation and maintenance is more than the income from the system's users.

State support for the East Kauai Irrigation System is essential to keep Kauai agriculture and farmers in the green.

We just were informed that the East Kauai Users Cooperative have enough funding that will last through fiscal year 2009 and will not be seeking funds this year. We, therefore, ask that this measure be held for that reason.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.



Hawaii Agriculture Research Center

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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

SENATE BILL 2520

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE EAST KAUAI IRRIGATION SYSTEM

February 5, 2008

Chair Tokuda 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 supports Senate Bill 2520, Making an Appropriation for the East Kauai Irrigation System.

It is important that the existing irrigation systems that service land that has significant potential to be put into diversifying agriculture production are supported and maintained. Much of the lands serviced by this system are no longer farmed by Lihue sugar plantation. Just as in other areas that have been made available for agricultural diversification, it will take time for these lands to be taken up by multiple agricultural enterprises. Farmers already in the area are doing their part to organize, expand operations and contribute financially to the operation of the system. They need assistance until other agricultural businesses get started and contribute to the water delivery operation.

In the long view, it is imperative that surface water continue to be captured and put to efficient and beneficial uses. This is an age old practice throughout the world. If surface water is not available, agriculture in these areas in the future would have to rely on groundwater and compete for its use. Groundwater is naturally purified and should be reserved to keep the cost for potable use affordable and plentiful.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

**Hawaii
Crop
Improvement
Association**

Paul Koehler, Past-President, Board Member
2111 Piilani Highway
Kihei Hawaii 96853
Phone: 808-879-4074 Fax: 808-879-0499

Testimony by: Paul Koehler

SB 2520, Relating to Appropriations for E. Kauai Irrigation System
Senate AHW Committee
Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2008
Room 224: 2:45 pm

Position: Strong Support

Chair Tokuda, and Members of the Senate AHW Committee:

My name is Paul Koehler. I am a Maui resident, Past-President and sitting Board Member of HCIA. The HCIA represents seed production and research facilities operating in Hawaii. 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.

This measure along with other water infrastructure policies assist the farmers of Hawaii, who without capacity and access to water would not be able to farm the most fertile land.

Your support of measures that address the water needs of Hawaii's farmers are appreciated.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Jerry Nishek
3-1550 Kaunualii Highway
808-245-7747

Re: SB2520, East Kauai Irrigation System

Hearing Date: Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2008 2:45 pm Room 225

Position: Support

Chair Jill Tokuda
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs

Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committees on AHW:

I am Jerry Nishek, a nurseryman and a former director of the East Kauai Soil and Water Conservation district. Support of this is very critical to Kauai to keep agriculture viable on Kauai. With out water there is no agriculture. The systems on this island are in dire need of upkeep and repairs to keep them providing water to the farming and ranching community.

I am writing in support of the East Kauai User's Cooperative (EKUC) and to request your Committees' support of this funding request. The EKUC, a volunteer group, has operated the East Kauai Irrigation System for more than two years, servicing more than 4,000 acres of agricultural lands. Without this volunteer effort, the 22-mile irrigation system would have been abandoned and Kauai farmers left without water.

The cost to operate this system is a continuing challenge as the operation and maintenance is more than the income from the system's users.

State support for the East Kauai Irrigation System is essential to keep Kauai agriculture and farmers in the green. Please support this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.

Sincerely

Jerry Nishek