



## HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

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**LATE**



February 12, 2008

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Hawaiian Affairs  
 Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair / Senator J. Kalani English, Vice Chair

By: Richard C. Botti, Pres. or Lauren Zirbel, Gov't Relations

Re: SB 2585 RELATING TO HONEY

### Chairs & Committee Members:

While we understand the concerns of local honey producers, we have problems with Hawaii creating its own ground rules that are contradictory with federal laws.

The Agricultural Marketing Act (AMA), which requires country of origin labeling for meat, produce, seafood and peanuts, include an express provision preempting state CoO labeling. USDA has taken the position that the AMA preempts state CoO laws that address the same commodities covered by the federal law.

The opinion of our National Association is that while honey is not listed as a covered commodity in the federal law, the federal law preempts state CoO labeling requirements even for those commodities that aren't expressly covered by the federal law because Congress (in its infinite wisdom) expressly identified the food products that should be labeled and therefore equally as expressly concluded that certain commodities should not bear origin labeling.

We need to take the same route that applies to other made-in-Hawaii products. Promote labeling of Hawaii products as Hawaii products, while prohibiting products from claiming they are made in Hawaii when they are not. This is called accentuating the positive.

**LATE**

## **HAWAII BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION**

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### **TESTIMONY OF IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2585**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS  
FEBRUARY 12, 2008, ROOM 224, AT 2:45PM, THE STATE CAPITOL**

*Aloha* Chairperson Tokuda and Members of the Committee!

As President of the Hawai'i Beekeepers' Association, owner of Manoa Honey Company, and on behalf of all beekeepers, consumers of fine Hawaiian honey, and farmers whose crops depend on pollination by our honey bees, I wish to **testify in strong support of SB2585 that establishes Country of Origin Labeling requirements for any honey sold in the state of Hawai'i under HRS Chapter 147.**

Our bill is modeled on the state of Florida's bill that has been in effect, without legal challenges, since 1979. SB2585 would require clear country of origin labeling of all honey and part-honey sweeteners that are sold in the state of Hawai'i. This is a fair trade equity issue. We are the victims of blatantly illegal and unfair trade practices by foreign and domestic importers, packers, and distributors of adulterated, contaminated and mislabeled honey. Low prices have discouraged many of our beekeepers and now, with the discovery of the blood sucking *Varroa* mites on our bees here, our costs are escalating rapidly.

On the mainland over the past several years there has been a major decline in the number of beekeeping businesses, in the number of colonies producing honey, and in the number of colonies available for pollination of food, fiber, fodder and fuel crops. As pure US produced honey becomes scarce the prices increase. As a result, **to offset the decrease in domestic honey massive amounts of honey, and "honey-like" products are being imported from China, Argentina, Viet Nam and other countries, and often "dumped" in our markets mislabeled as products of the USA.** This has the effect of depressing market prices for local honeys and forcing beekeepers to abandon the business. The decline in the number of US beekeepers has caused crises in pollination of some high value crops on the mainland.

The potential severe consequences of a decline in the apiculture enterprise in the state of Hawai'i are not widely appreciated as yet, but there can be no doubt that it would pose a serious challenge to our food security and further reduce our food production self-sufficiency of pollinator dependant crops such as cucumbers, melons, squash, citrus fruits, coffee, macadamia nuts, mango, guava, avocado, lychee, longan, and many specialty fruits and vegetables that require honey bees to optimize their yields. If we loose our beekeepers what will we do here in Hawai'i when *Varroa* have killed off all of the feral honey bee colonies and crop yields drop to below economically viable levels?

As I testified earlier, our industry's larger goal is to cooperate in achieving the urgent goals of moving toward **improving our food self-sufficiency, protecting our food security and developing our food production sustainability.**

All we are saying, again, is **give our bees a chance.** . . to compete on an equitable basis!

Michael M. Kliks, PhD  
President, Hawaii Beekeepers' Association, 3081G Paty Drive, Honolulu, HI 96822

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**HAWAII ISLAND HONEY COMPANY**  
**HILO, HAWAII**

**TESTIMONY OF IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2585**  
**FAXED TO 1-808-587-7220**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**  
**FEBRUARY 12, 2008, ROOM 224, AT 2:45PM, THE STATE CAPITOL**

*Aloha* Chairperson Tokuda and Members of the Committee!

As owner of *Hawaii Island Honey Company*, producer of a about 100,000 pounds annually of the world's finest honeys, and a member of the Hawaii Beekeepers' Association, and on behalf of all beekeepers, consumers of fine Hawaiian honey, and farmers whose crops depend on pollination by our honey bees, I wish to testify in strong support of SB2585 that establishes Country of Origin Labeling requirements for any honey sold in the state of Hawaii under HRS Chapter 147.

SB2585 is modeled on the state of Florida's Produce Labeling Act of 1979, that has very effective in protecting honey for almost 30 years and has never been challenged. SB2585 would require clear country of origin labeling of all honey and part-honey sweeteners that are sold in the state of Hawaii. This is a fair trade equity issue. We are the victims of blatantly illegal and unfair trade practices by foreign and domestic importers, packers, and distributors of adulterated, contaminated and mislabeled honey. Low prices have discouraged many of our beekeepers and now, with the discovery of the blood sucking *Varroa* mites on our bees here, our costs are escalating rapidly.

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Michael Cummings, Owner, *Hawaii Island Honey Company*, Hilo Hawaii  
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