



Hawaii Agriculture Research Center

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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES
ON
WATER, LAND, OCEAN RESOURCES & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
AND
AGRICULTURE**

**SENATE BILL 2849 SD1 HD1
Relating to Agricultural Lands**

March 24, 2008

Chairs Ito and Tsuji and Members of your Committees:

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 2849 SD1 HD1 Relating to Agricultural Lands but requests an amendment for consideration and a suggestion.

A significant opportunity has been provided to HARC regarding the Del Monte village which includes *agricultural worker rental housing* and agribusiness facilities in the state's agricultural district regarding plantation subdivisions. The former committee on Energy and Environmental Protection modified the senate version's change in 205-4.5 (12) which speaks to Plantation Community Subdivisions.

At the recommendation of the Office of Planning the committee removed the word, increased, as it refers to existing structures on page 8 line 1 and 2.

Previous language in SB2849 SD1
where the existing structures are used, rehabilitated, or *increased* for use as follows:

Amended language in SB2849 SD1HD1
where the existing structures are used or rehabilitated for use as follows:

The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs agreed to amend the original version of SB 2849 to ensure that the future use of the Del Monte village would meet the state's land use

SB2849 SD1 HD1, March 23, 2008
HARC

law. Under Del Monte housing in this village was used for agricultural rental housing and that is the intent of its future use. Its industrial area was used for services needed to support agriculture and that is the intent of its future use. The county is willing to consider a variance for existing uses since without a single agricultural activity, such as pineapple, the village will not conform to the current county rules. They are supportive of maintaining rental agricultural housing to preserve this much needed function. HARC wants to 'ensure' that there is no question as to whether the intended use of this village will conform to allowable uses in a state agricultural district.

HARC also sees the need for additional agricultural rental housing and has stated from the beginning to evaluate this property for additional houses. Some of the houses that were originally in this area have already been demolished. The prior thinking has been to provide the former workers the ability to own their the homes they have lived in and that is well and good. However, what HARC is proposing is to maintain affordable rental housing for agricultural workers and there is no doubt that more of that is needed. We are trying to develop something here for the diversification of agricultural that is needed not temporarily deal with the past.

I urge you to consider moving forward in time and allowing the word increased to be added back in to this measure.

HARC also offers a suggestion that might be considered by this committee. Since the companion bill HB2503 passed to the senate essentially unchanged and has been referred to only the Committee on Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs, that this bill, SB2849 SD1, be amended to remove the references to solar systems on agricultural land and leave only the amended portion in SD1 of 205-2.5 (12). That would result in two proposed measures each with a specific subject matter:

HB2503 which allows solar systems on agricultural land where agricultural activity is the primary use of the land, and

SB2849 which provides for agricultural rental housing and the agribusiness support activities in former plantation community subdivisions.

Thank you for your consideration of these important agricultural matters.



Hawaii Farm Bureau
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March 24, 2008

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND,
OCEAN RESOURCES & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
AND
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON
SB 2849
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Chair Ito and 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 supports **SB2849** permits the use of lands in agricultural land use districts to be used for agricultural energy facilities provided that the primary activity of the agricultural energy enterprise is agricultural activity.

The introduction of this Bill is timely, with the increase interest in installation of renewable energy facilities on agricultural lands. We recognize and support the importance of solar energy in Hawaii's future and that it does provide significant opportunities for our farmers and ranchers. We believe that this is part of being self sufficient and by encouraging agricultural operations to generate its own source of power via solar they can be self contained and not be so reliant on the normal public utility.

We respectfully request your support and passage of this measure.

Thank you.