

~~FEB 14 2008~~

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FEB 26 2008

8:30am



HAWAII BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

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TESTIMONY OF IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2584 SD1 BEFORE THE SENATE CPH COMMITTEE; FEBRUARY 26, 2008, ROOM 229, AT 9:00AM

Aloha Chairperson Kokubun 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 SB2584 SD1 that both establishes Country of Origin Labeling requirements for any honey sold in the state of Hawai'i and recognizes and defines honey as a commodity under HRS Chapter 147.**

The COOL language of our bill is modeled on the state of Florida's bill that has been in effect, without legal challenges, since 1979. SB2584 SD1 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 and our numbers are rapidly dwindling!

The recognition of honey as an important agricultural commodity is long overdue. Kiawe honey was the first commercial export commodity in this state and has been in continuous production since 1857. In 1918 production reached an all time high of 2.4 million pounds by some 30,000 colonies with a value in today's dollars of about \$20,000,000. Today honey production is only about one-third of that amount. Today, our beekeepers produce the finest, purest honeys in the world but the very existence of our industry, and the future of diversified fruit and vegetable agriculture in Hawai'i is being challenged by our recent discovery of the parasitic mite ***Varroa destructor***, and by the continued presence of **un-naturally cheap, adulterated or contaminated and, or, mislabeled "honey" in our marketplaces.**

This bill will permit us to develop a standard of identity for honey and to establish rules that can be enforced at the state level by consumers and producers of honey. This bill does not seek to gain unfair trade protection for the producers and sellers of Hawai'i's world class honeys. If our beekeepers are to survive and prevail, they will need to have the encouragement provided by a legal framework that defines and protects their naturally pure and healthy products . . . and provides them with the option of bringing tort actions in civil courts.

Our larger goal is to move toward **food self-sufficiency** and to protect all members of the agricultural community in Hawai'i, especially honey producers, and those involved in diversified agricultural activities that require pollination. At the same time we are also **protecting the consumers' future ability to choose** from a wide variety of high quality, locally grown fruits and vegetables. . . as opposed to being forced to purchase products imported from foreign countries with a 6,000 mile long supply chain that is vulnerable to unforeseeable, and unavoidable disruptions in the future. This is a **food security** issue as well as **food supply sustainability** issue.

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?

Again, all we are asking is **give our bees a chance** . . . to compete on an equitable basis!

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

FEB 26 2008

9:31⁴

testimony

From: Michael M. Kliks, PhD [mmkliks@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2008 9:22 AM
To: testimony
Cc: Sen. Russell Kokubun; Sen. David Ige; Sen. Will Espero; Sen. Les Ihara, Jr.; Sen. Norman Sakamoto; Sen. Brian Taniguchi; Sen. Gordon Trimble
Subject: Amendment to and Strong Support for SB2584 SD1



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Aloha Chairperson Kokubun and Members of the Committee!

As President of the Hawai'i Beekeepers' Association, owner of Manoa Honey Company, and on behalf of all beekeepers, co-owners of fine Hawaiian honey, and farmers whose crops depend on pollination by our honey bees, **I wish to offer and amendment testify in strong support of SB2584 SD1 that both establishes Country of Origin Labeling requirements for any honey in the state of Hawai'i and recognizes and defines honey as a commodity under HRS Chapter 147.**

Our industry asks that this bill be amended to include a Standard of Identity for honey by adopting **CODEX STANDARD 12-1981, Rev.1 (1987) and Rev. 2 (2001)** that has been submitted to the USDA. Along with including honey as an agricultural commodity under HRS Chapter 147, this Standard of Identity will allow the HDOA to write rules that will provide a means of identifying and regulating products labeled as honey that do not meet these internationally recognized standards.

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