

LATE

HAWAII FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
2343 ROSE STREET
HONOLULU, HI 96819

FEBRUARY 7, 2008

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

TESTIMONY ON SB 2915
RELATING TO TARO

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 2915, which creates the taro security and purity task force and appropriates funds for that purpose.

This measure is aimed to assist the taro farmers to be able to fully discuss the many production issues facing the taro industry. SCR 206 approved in last year's Legislative Session gave impetus for the taro industry and respective organizations to come together in a cohesive and collaborative manner to discuss taro farmer production issues such as apple snail devastation, taro leaf blight, and pocket rot disease.

Farm Bureau supports this effort to improve the taro farmer's ability to not only sustain themselves but also to expand and improve their long term success. We offer any assistance that our organization can provide to help in this process.

We urge this committee to approve the passage of this measure.

Thank you.

To: Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair
Committee on Agriculture & Hawaiian Affairs

Fr: Penny Levin, Executive Director
E kūpaku ka 'āina

Re: SB2915 creating a taro security & purity task force

Aloha Chair Tokuda & committee members,
I am a conservation planner & taro farmer in Maui.
I am testifying in support of SB2915 with
amendments.

There have been decades of research and decision-making by agencies and institutions without taro farmers. We have been considered "cooperaters" rather than "collaborators." This task force represents the first time that all the agencies and institutions involved in taro research and crop security are willingly at the table.

The collective message from the SCR206 dialogue was - let this continue, and let it be funded so taro farmers can participate and real action can occur.

Taro farmers also said; let us be the voice that leads so that research and action that comes from the task force will stem from the lo'i and not the clouds.

The first amendment change is to Section 2 (pg 4) where it reads "For administrative purposes... the task force shall be placed within the department of agriculture" to read "within the Office of Hawaiian Affairs."

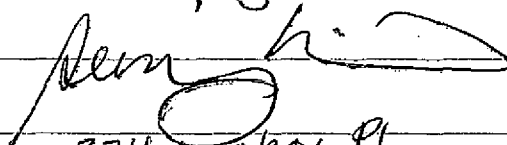
The second ~~amendment~~ ^{change} to this bill is in Section 3 (pg 4) adding to the list of entities "5) 'Ōmipā'a Nā Hui Kalo." This is a statewide organization of farmers, cultural practitioners and educators.

The third change is under Section 8, appropriations (pg 6-7). First, that Section 8(1), (2) and (5) be combined so that more flexibility is created to meet the needs of task force priorities. \$375,000 (combined)

Under Section 8(1) we ask for the following change "for the convening of the taro security and purity task force, ~~and~~ the conducting of dialogues and the implementation of task force priorities on all islands."

Lastly, the last sentence in this section should be changed, for consistency, to read "shall be expended by ~~the department of agriculture~~ the office of Hawaiian Affairs."

Mauihilo for this opportunity
to testify



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**Hawaii
Crop
Improvement
Association**

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Testimony by: Paul Koehler
SB 2915, Relating to Taro
Senate AHW Committee
Thursday, Feb. 7, 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.

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. As testified in other sessions, HCIA respects the cultural significance of taro, and supports the Hawaiian community's discussion of research and development for taro.

We offer our support of SB 2915, which provides funding to support the continuation of the Department of Agriculture discussion under the auspices of SCR 206, as well as the specific appropriations listed to assist in the revision of Bulletin 84, Taro Varieties in Hawaii (1939), and for the protection of the Molokai taro varieties collection.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.

LATE

**Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs**

February 7, 2008 at 2:45 p.m.

by

Dr. Gary K. Ostrander

Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education &
Interim Dean for the John A. Burns School of Medicine
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2915 Relating to Taro

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair English, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 2915.

In October 2007, SCR 206 afforded a representative cross section of the community to come together to discuss the critical problems facing taro production in Hawai'i today. The stakeholders present that day successfully began a dialogue addressing problems and potential solutions for issues ranging from importation regulations to invasive species.

I am here to voice our support for the continuation of that dialogue.

SB 2915 establishes a much needed task force dedicated to finding cooperative solutions for the protection of taro. This bill is critical because it requires all stakeholder groups to work together. We believe that only through a commitment of cooperation and community engagement will any protection or security program truly be successful. Therefore, I eagerly urge you to support this bill as is with the requested appropriations.