

## Testimony in Support of SB 2925

Aloha Chair Tokuda and Senate Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs Committee Members,

My name is Jasmyrn Sarns. I am here today on behalf of Moms Going Green to testify in support of bill SB 2925.

Moms Going Green is a locally based non-profit organization. We are committed to educating parents and children about how they can make environmentally conscience choices in their daily lives to help improve their family's health and the health of Mother Earth. We do this by offering free public workshops in the community.

This bill really caught our attention because organic food is one of the main topics in our workshops. From our experience in the public, we've found that the awareness of the importance of eating organic food is really growing quickly. Not only are the people that attend our workshops already aware of, and very concerned about, the pesticides that contaminate their produce, they also want to eat healthier foods, and do what's best for the environment.

Another thing we discuss is the importance of buying locally. Transporting foods from the mainland and overseas has a huge carbon footprint, compared to growing those foods locally. Not to mention the risk of importing invasive species to the islands.

So by promoting organic agriculture and increasing the supply of locally grown produce, we can address many important issues at the same time such as:

- promoting agriculture that is healthier for the land
- growing food that is healthier for people to eat
- reducing carbon emissions from unnecessary transporting produce from the mainland that could be grown here
- and benefiting our local economy by producing products that are in high demand locally, rather than importing them

So in conclusion, we are strongly in favor of our local government doing anything you can to promote local organic agriculture, and on behalf of Moms Going Green, I urge you to also support bill SB 2925.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jasymn Sarns  
Kailua

Personal Testimony Presented  
before the  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs  
January 31, 2008  
2:45 p.m.  
by  
Dr. Andrew G. Hashimoto

**LATE TESTIMONY**

SB 2925, Relating to Agriculture

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

My name is Andrew Hashimoto. I serve as the Dean of UH Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) and an ex-officio member of the Board of Agriculture. I am pleased to provide this personal testimony on Senate Bill 3208, which establishes a state organic program under the direction of the Department of Agriculture and appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture to implement a state organic program. This testimony does not represent the position of the University of Hawai'i or of CTAHR.

I support SB 2925.

The popularity of agricultural products grown using organic agriculture practices has increased remarkably in recent years. According to the Organic Trade Association's 2006 Manufacturer Survey, U.S. retail sales of organic food are growing at close to 20 percent per year, from \$3.6 billion in 1997 to \$13.8 billion in 2005. Here in Hawai'i, consumer demand for organic goods outpaces supply. Because organic farmers use only a proscribed set of pest control options, imported organic produce is an important route by which new pests and diseases organisms can enter the state, and replacing those imports with locally grown organic goods can remedy this risk. Expansion of organic agriculture production in Hawai'i will also provide consumers with the freshest organic produce and enable local farmers to benefit from consumer demand for organic goods and receive a price premium for their crops.

A state organic agriculture program administered by the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture and developed in partnership with stakeholders in the organic agriculture community will expand the resources available to organic growers and help expand of the market for goods grown organically in Hawai'i. For these reasons, I support SB 2925.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



FRUITS & VEGETABLES  
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**MA'Ō Organic Farm**

P.O. Box 441, Wai'anae, Hawai'i 96792  
Tel/Fax: 808.696.5569 (farm)  
waianaeorganic@hawaii.rr.com  
www.waianaeorganic.com

an area based project of the Waiana'e Community Re-Development Corporation

January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008

Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs  
State Capitol  
415 Beretania Street  
Honolulu HI 96813

**LATE**

*Sent via fax to 587-7220*

Regarding: Support of SB 2925, RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Aloha Senator Tokuda:

My name is Gary Maunakea-Forth, I am a resident of the Wai'anae community, and an organic farmer. In 2001, I helped to establish the MA'Ō Community Food Security Initiative, a non-profit project of the Wai'anae Community Re-Development Corporation (WCRC) in order to create a community food system, that fights hunger, improves nutrition, strengthens local organic agriculture and empowers local families to move towards self-sufficiency. WCRC developed a series of interconnected youth leadership development activities as a core objective with MA'Ō Organic Farms established as both the primary training venue and the long-term source of sustainability. Our products are highly sought after, sold at top restaurants like Town, Alan Wong's and Nobu; and available to local consumers at natural food stores and at the KCC farmer's market. We have dozens of local customers demanding our products, but presently we farm only 5-acres. With the help of the support of the Legacy Lands Conservation Program will hopefully expand this year.

I am writing in strong support of SB 2925, it is imperative for the future of local agriculture that the State becomes actively involved in programs that especially support Hawai'i's small family farms. In my 8-years as an organic farmer I concur with the points made in the bill, I would like to highlight that local demand is enormous, while local supply is miniscule. In Hawai'i, there are numerous pressures on small farms, and the few young people that desire this lifestyle are not supported. A cohesive strategy to make the most of the organic opportunity needs to be implemented. I urge the State to commitment resources before we lose this economic, environmental and culture opportunity.

Sincerely,

Gary Maunakea-Forth

Hawaii  
Crop  
Improvement  
Association

Sarah Styan, President

P.O. Box 609

Waiméa, Hawaii 96796

Phone: 808- 338-8300 ext 113

**LATE TESTIMONY**

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Testimony by: Sarah Styan  
SB2925, Relating to Agriculture  
Senate AHW Committee  
Thursday, Jan. 31, 2008  
Room 224: 2:45 pm

Position: Support Intent

Chair Tokuda and Members of the Senate AHW Committee:

My name is Sarah Styan. I am a Kauai resident, President of HCIA and research scientist of Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Waimea Research Station. The HCIA represents seed production and research facilities operating in Hawaii for nearly 40 years. 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.

HCIA believes in co-existence of all farming practices, whether it might be organic, conventional and biotechnology methods. We continue to be supportive of increasing the organic agriculture sector. Certainly, with a robust organic agriculture sector there will be less reliance on imported organic produce, which contributes to the importation of invasive species into Hawaii. Consumer demand for organic produce is at an all time high and Hawaii grown organic produce will increase its contribution to the general revenue of the State.

However, we also believe that the responsibilities outlined for the organic program, while some are specific to the organic industry, is applicable to the greater growth of Hawaii's agriculture industry. The Department of Agriculture's efforts should be supported, in terms of adequate staffing and resources, to actively develop, promote and protect Hawaii's agriculture industry. Hawaii has much to offer in its unique, Hawaii-grown agriculture produce and products.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.

# LATE TESTIMONY

Senate Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs Committee

Written Testimony in support of SB 2925

Thursday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008

Rm. 224 of the State Capitol

I am Tara McLean Co-founder of Moms Going Green a non-profit organization aimed at helping families make informed decisions about the health of their families as well as the impact those decisions have on the environment.

I am testifying today in strong support of SB 2925 this bill will help establish a State Organic Program under the Department of Agriculture.

I am very passionate about this bill it represents so much of what our organization is trying to achieve. Through education, the people of Hawaii are becoming aware of their responsibility to the environment and that the actions of each of us combined has a huge impact. One of the topics we cover is the importance of eating organic foods and to stop supporting commercial farming because of its detrimental effects it has on the environment.

Over the last year alone we have seen a dramatic increase in the demand for Organic produce and goods. Not only does Moms Going Green encourage people to buy and eat organic but to also buy locally. Due to the increased demand on the local farmers they are not able to keep up with the demand. We have to import more and more produce from the mainland and even overseas. There are many reasons why this will have an ill affect on the environment as well as the islands, examples being: transportation of import ads to green house emissions as well as the ongoing threat of the introduction of foreign invasive species to the islands.

What I like so much about this bill is that on a local level we will be able to expand organic agriculture here in Hawaii, this will enable us to have fresher organic produce with the least carbon footprint. A strong organic farming industry will only bring health to the islands, environmentally, physically and economically.

Thank you so much for your time and I urge you to please pass this bill and remember that we did not inherit this planet from our parents we are borrowing it from our children.

# LATE TESTIMONY



TO: SENATOR JILL TOKUDA, CHAIR  
SENATOR J. KALANI ENGLISH, VICE CHAIR  
MEMBERS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

FROM: CHERYL VASCONCELLOS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
HANA HEALTH

DATE: January 30, 2008

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF S.B. 2925**  
**RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**  
**Thursday, January 31, 2008**  
**2:45 p.m.**

I am speaking in support of S.B. 2925 which establishes a state organic program under the direction of the State Department of Agriculture. The Häna Fresh farm, a project of Hana Health, is aimed at fulfilling the health center's mission to promote a healthy lifestyle and reduce the risk factors associated with the development of chronic disease through improved access to and consumption of nutritious, fresh produce. Häna Fresh is growing high quality, organic produce which is the foundation for all of Häna Health's nutrition/meal programs.

Although the benefits of the Hana Fresh farm are numerous and far reaching, we now understand the significant challenges of organic farming in a state where EVERYTHING grows well – weeds, insects, mold, mildew, and the list goes on.

A program that will support the needs of organic farmers, in such areas as inter-island shipping, transitioning from conventional to organic farming practices,

research and development into organic practices that will work in our tropical climate, training and technical assistance, etc. will be a welcome addition to the state Department of Agriculture.

We look forward to the further "greening" of Hawaii through this important legislation. Thank you.

**CAPITOL RELATIONS INC.**

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January 30, 2008

Memo Letter via Fax

To: Sen. Jill Tokuda, Chair  
Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs

**LATE**

Fr: Rick Klemm

Re: SB 2925, 2924, and 3176

My client Monsanto has concerns about the preambles to the bills (SB 2925 being heard tomorrow) above. The preambles, likely unintentionally, seem to imply that organic farming is somehow better for human health and sustainability of the environment than other farming methods — not necessarily true.

In one place in all three bills the language is of special concern: **“without the use of toxic substances, such as pesticides and fertilizers.”** In actuality, organic farming, though it does not use most so-called synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, depends heavily on pesticides and other farm chemicals. The difference between pesticides used by organic and modern farmers is **not** their toxicity, but rather their origin, i.e. whether they are extracted from natural plants, insects, or mineral ores (organic) or are chemically synthesized (modern). *Organic farming involves the use of toxic chemicals.*

Our suggestion is to amend the above bills by deleting the preamble language ending with “such as pesticides and fertilizers.” This removes contentious language without harm to the preamble’s “pumping up” of organic farming.

Thank you for your attention.