

**LATE**



LAND USE RESEARCH  
FOUNDATION OF HAWAII  
700 Bishop Street, Ste. 1928  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Phone 521-4717  
Fax 536-0132

March 11, 2008

The Honorable Jill Tokuda, Chair and Members  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 244  
Honolulu, HI 96813

BY E-MAIL

Dear Chair Tokuda and Members:

**Subject: Testimony on House Bill No. 3208 Relating to Agriculture**

My name is David Arakawa, and I am the Executive Director of the Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF), a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers and a utility company. One of LURF's missions is to advocate for reasonable and rational land use planning, legislation and regulations affecting common problems in Hawaii.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our testimony **in support of H.B. No. 3310 HD1**, which would appropriate funds for a grant to the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation ("Farm Bureau"). This bill would appropriate funding from the general revenues of the State of Hawaii for a fiscal year 2008-2009 grant, pursuant to the provisions of chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, for the Farm Bureau to conduct valuable agricultural research and development.

**Background.** The Farm Bureau is a non-profit (501c-5) organization, originally established 60 years ago, in 1948. Its purpose is to represent, protect and advance the social, economic and educational interests of Hawaii's agricultural sector. Farm Bureau is the largest non-profit general agriculture organization in Hawaii, and it represents approximately 1,600 farm and ranch family members located statewide, on the islands of the Kauai, Oahu, Maui, Molokai and the Big Island. Today, the Farm Bureau continues to do an excellent job working to resolve problems faced by farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural producers. The Farm Bureau is also affiliated with the American Farm Bureau Federation, which represents more than five million farm families nationwide.

LURF strongly supports all efforts toward a viable agricultural industry in Hawaii. We understand that the Farm Bureau has developed "A Strategic Plan for Hawaii's Agriculture" which identified the following fundamental problems facing the Hawaii's agricultural industry: land and water, environment and food safety, transportation, taxation and fees, farm management and labor, research development, and marketing and competitiveness.

Cutting-edge agricultural research to address these problem areas is one of the most critical factors which will allow Hawaii's agricultural industry to remain competitive locally and in the global market. Unfortunately, we understand that there has been a dramatic decline in State funding over the past decade from approximately \$4 million annually in the early 1990's to \$1.5 million annually, at the present time. We have also been informed that this substantial decrease in state funding has reduced research efforts and has resulted in missed opportunities which have had a crippling impact on the capability of local agricultural producers to remain competitive. Without this grant, further research efforts may be abandoned and Hawaii's producers will eventually lose their local agricultural market to outside competitors and will lose further opportunities to compete on a global scale.

It is important for Hawaii's agricultural industry to have access to a local private research organization, such as the Farm Bureau, to service their needs as well as to lead them to a successful future. The Farm Bureau is in the unique position to engage Hawaii's small and large farmers and agricultural stakeholders in a collaborative, cooperative and organized effort to address and assist with production issues, including food safety, best agricultural practices, quality assurance, product availability, and business training workshops. The Farm Bureau can also use its considerable credibility and expertise to coordinate and guide statewide comprehensive marketing and production efforts to strategically produce and market locally grown products to new and potential consumers who will hopefully purchase large and consistent volumes of local products.

This grant would support ongoing and new research projects involving production and marketing, conducted by various local organizations, including the Department of Agriculture, the Hawaii Agriculture Research Center, the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resource and other non-profit agencies. Such projects could enhance the production and marketability of Hawaii's agricultural industry in general, as well as specific commodities, including, but not limited to, taro, vegetable crops, coffee, papaya, ornamental nursery, tropical fruit and flowers, and macadamia nuts.

The Farm Bureau has been an active and successful advocate for the agricultural industry for over 60 years and has successfully partnered with the Department of Agriculture, CTAHR, and HARC and several other non-profit agencies on research and marketing projects.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express our views on this matter and we respectfully urge you and your committee to give **favorable consideration to this measure.**