

To: Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair  
Senator Kalani English, Vice Chair  
And Members of the Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs Committee

**LATE**

From: Chris Kobayashi and Demetri Rivera  
Waioli Farm, Hanalei, Kauai, Hawaii

Re: HB 3425 relating to Taro, Apple Snails, and Research  
Hearing on 3-11-08 in Conference Room 224 at 2:45 pm.

**Testimony in Support of HB 3425**

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to send testimony in support of HB 3425, a farmer based apple snail control research.

The Apple Snail problem has been identified by taro farmers as being a major invasive pest to our industry. Currently, to our knowledge, nothing is being done to address the control of this invasive with environmentally safe applications in the water. We do use screens to catch the bigger snails. We walk our fields, row by row to check for snails and their egg masses.

E Kupaku Ka `Aina, The Hawaii Land Restoration Institute, completed a report- "Statewide Strategic Control Plan for Apple Snail in Hawaii" in which farmers were interviewed throughout the state. Both the institute and DASS confirmed that Apple Snails contribute to 18-25% of farmers' crop losses. This is huge and only drives home how hard it is to control the Apple Snail in aquatic conditions.

Without a doubt, we need to have studies done to find environmentally friendly and sound controls or better yet, eliminate the Apple Snail where possible.

The Apple Snail was brought into Hawaii through the aquarium trade. No one knew, including DOA, at the time that this snail could multiply so rapidly, spread so quickly in many of our waterways and then damage and consume taro and cause losses to the farmers. About 15 years ago, DOA did try to help the farmers by using copper sulfate. Since then there were some other research done but none have been touted as the way to control the snails. In the meantime, the snail population was exploding and spreading. If we continue to do nothing, then those numbers will continue to grow exponentially. There are still some farming areas which still do not have the apple snails. **We can and must do all that we can NOW to protect the areas that are not infested, halt the spread, control the populations, and eliminate where and when possible. If we don't do anything now, years later we'll look back and say, "we should've done something back then in February 2008".**

Here is a request to amend the intent and wording of this bill:

1. Last paragraph, Section 1: where it says "The purpose of this Act is to provide funding for statewide taro research that focuses specifically on ~~the apple snail problem.~~" **request a change to say** "*The purpose of this Act is to provide funding for statewide taro research that focuses specifically on promising taro-farmer based apple snail control research, as recommended in*

the Statewide Control Plan for this species, including laboratory testing and field monitoring of the organic soil conditioner described in this Plan."

2. Section 2: where it says "There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much thereof as maybe necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 for statewide taro research that focuses specifically on ~~the apple snail problem.~~" **request a change to read** "There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$350,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 for statewide taro research that focuses specifically on farmer-based apple snail control research and practice."

3. Section 2 last line: where it says "The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of agriculture for the purposes of this Act." **request a change to read** "The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of agriculture in consultation with 'Onipa'a Nā Hui Kalo and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, for the purposes of this Act."

Please support this long over due, important legislation for Apple Snail control, HB 3425, so that we farmers can spend more time farming and growing healthy foods for the people of Hawaii.

Mahalo nui.

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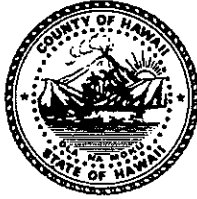
**BOB JACOBSON**

**Councilmember**

*Chair, Environmental Management Committee*

*Vice-Chair, Finance Committee*

*Vice-President Hawai'i State Association of Counties*



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**HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL**

*County of Hawai'i*

March 10, 2008

**LATE**

Committee on Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs

Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair

Senator J. Kalani English, Vice Chair

Hearing Tuesday, March 11, 2008, 2:45 p.m.

Conference Room 224

Re: HB 3425 RELATING TO TARO

I strongly support HB 3425 HD 2. I support the appropriation of funds for statewide taro research that focuses on the apple snail problem. This invasive species is devastating our taro crops. Taro is an important crop to both Hawaiian agriculture and Hawaiian culture.

I urge you to pass HB 3425.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob Jacobson".

Bob Jacobson