

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DUANE OKAMOTO
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 Fax: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2009
9:00 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 312**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 212
RELATING TO FARMERS**

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 212. The purpose of this bill is to establish the beginning farmers assessment task force to investigate and report on programs to assist beginning farmers. The task force would conduct a study of the current state of resident owners of agricultural assets; conduct public outreach to resident owners to assess their willingness to rent agricultural assets; and identify networks of potential beginning farmers. The measure encourages increased production of agricultural products with current agricultural assets by seeking potential beginning farmers.

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) acknowledges the need to encourage beginning farmers but given the current fiscal difficulties, it would not be prudent to pursue enactment at this time.