

TESTIMONY
HB 1611, HD2

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
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SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WATER, LAND, AGRICULTURE, AND
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2009
4:15 P.M.
ROOM 229

HOUSE BILL NO. 1611, HD 2
RELATING TO LABELING OF MEAT AND FISH PRODUCTS

Chairperson Hee and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill No. 1611, HD 2, relating to the treatment of pre-packaged meat with gas or other technology to enhance its color only. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) offers comments only on the proposed changes to Chapter 159, and defers to the Department of Health regarding the proposed changes to Chapter 328.

The state meat inspection program under the Chapter 159, HRS, Hawaii Meat Inspection Act was eliminated and inspection duties and responsibilities were turned over to the USDA Food Safety Inspection Service in the mid-1990's. The administrative rules governing the state meat inspection program were repealed soon thereafter.

Despite the possibility for meat to appear fresh to the consumer because of the gas treatment, it still may have high bacterial levels indicative of spoilage though the meat is within the labeled 'use, sell or freeze by' date listed on the package, the HDOA has no authority to enforce Section 2 of this bill or to compel the USDA to enforce the measure if passed.

Honorable Senator Clayton Hee
Chair, Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs
Monday, March 23, 2009, 4:15 p.m. Room 229

Re: support of HB 1611 HD2

Aloha Sen. Hee and committee members!

We support the passage of HB 1611 HD2. For many years we have watched consumers of raw fish be misled by gas treated fish products. In addition there have been several incidents in Hawaii where gassed fish products were seriously suspected of making Hawaii residents ill.

The sales of these untruthfully labeled products hurt local fishermen by reducing the prices paid for locally caught fish and by confusing the consumer into believing that these gassed products, either fish or meat, are equivalent to fresh locally produced or caught products.

Please pass HB 1611 SD2.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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(END)