

February 5, 2009

LATE
Testimony

Dear Representative Joey Manahan

My name is David Gridley and I own a small wholesale roasting company on Maui and have worked with coffee farmers throughout the state for the last twenty years. I was a founding member of the Hawaii Coffee Association and the Maui Coffee Association and currently sit on their Boards.

I oppose HB448 and HB 931 and am in favor of HB 1471

Bills HB931 and HB 448 are directly aimed at undermining companies that are the biggest purchasers of Hawaiian Grown Coffee. Many of these companies blend Hawaiian coffees which allows us to sell more Hawaiian Coffee. Most of these companies also work to truthfully represent the amount of Hawaiian coffee in these blends.

I have been working for years on the development of coffee as a positive, viable agricultural product for our state. I have worked with industry and the Hawaii Dept of Agriculture to clean up the misrepresentation that occurs when some companies are deceptive in their labeling practices. We all came together to develop and pass the Truth in Labeling law which did alot to clean up misleading labeling.

We have come along way. Coffee is now the third largest Agricultural product in the state. We are selling all the coffee we can raise at record prices. We have enhanced the demand for coffee from all over Hawaii, as well as Kona. To change the minimum required in Hawaiian origin blends to 51% from 10% (probably tripling the price to the consumer) and make companies change their name and trademarks will have a devastating impact on the entire industry!!

Why would anyone want to undermine a positive growing industry in the face of difficult economic times? This is an attempt by a few contrary, disgruntled, vocal farmers in Kona that represent a fraction of the coffee produced in the state. Why are any of our legislators even considering it? Do they want to severely cripple one of the state's most positive growth industries?

PLEASE CONSIDER THIS AND STOP HB931 AND HB448 NOW!!!!!!

Sincerely
David Gridley
President
Maui Oma Coffee Roasting Co.