

TESTIMONY
HCR113



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT 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, APRIL 27, 2009
2:00 P.M.
ROOM 224**

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 113
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO CONSULT WITH OTHER PUBLIC
AND PRIVATE ENTITIES TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO OPTIMIZE THE USE OF THE KAMUELA
VACUUM COOLING PLANT**

Chairperson Hee and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Concurrent Resolution No. 113. The purpose of this resolution is to have the Department of Agriculture develop a plan to optimize the use of the Kamuela vacuum cooling plant. The department recognizes the importance of the facility to the Waimea farming community, however, we cannot support this resolution as it establishes an unfunded mandate for the department.

Funding for a plan that includes "an evaluation of the costs to operate, repair and upgrade" the plant is generally obtained via CIP bonds or general funds as such a plan will require an engineering evaluation and study to make the plan meaningful. The department does not have the resources, either financial or personnel, to pursue this plan as an unfunded mandate. CIP or general funds to hire an independent consultant would need to be appropriated to complete this request and that is not advisable given the current economic climate. In addition, DOA staff in Kamuela are focusing on the completion of pipeline improvements to the Lalamilo farm lots which were funded through a prior \$4.85 million legislature appropriation. We anticipate the improvements will take twelve months to complete.

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