

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512

SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DUANE K. OKAMOTO
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2009
9:00 A.M.
ROOM 312**

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 222
HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 191
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO IDENTIFY PRIORITIES
FOR STATE-OWNED IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL LANDS TO MAXIMIZE THE USE
OF SUCH LANDS FOR CRITICALLY-NEEDED AGRICULTURAL AND DAIRY
PRODUCTION**

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution No. 222 and House Resolution No. 191. We believe that state-owned Important Agricultural Lands (IAL) should reflect the same Constitutional mandate regarding private IAL, i.e. that the State shall "...promote diversified agriculture, increase agricultural self-sufficiency". We do not believe that it is the intent of the Constitution to provide a higher priority to one form of agriculture over another. Rather, it will be the policy of the Department of Agriculture that leases of State-owned IAL will be based solely on the qualifications and experience of the applicant lessee.

April 7, 2009

To: Representative Clift Tsuji, Chairman - Committee on Agriculture

Re: House Concurrent Resolution 222: Conference Room 312

Hearing Date & Time: Wednesday, April 8, 2009 at 9:00am

Dear Representative Tsuji and Members of the Committee,

My name is Clayton Lee and I apologize that I am not able to testify in person.

For the last 13 years I have been the Feed and Sales Consultant for Land O' Lakes Purina Feed here in Hawaii and have been working with most major poultry and livestock producers here. In the past, I have also been directly involved in agriculture through management duties as Herd Health Supervisor for Foremost-McKesson, Foremost Farms, Waimanalo Dairy, and was the Dairy Superintendant for Meadow Gold Dairies. I have seen the decline of available pasture lands and local dairies in recent years and request that the Department of Agriculture identify priorities for State-owned important agricultural lands to maximize the use of such lands for critically-needed agriculture and dairy production. I am writing to testify in favor of HCR 222.

I am a firm believer that the development and growth of Hawaii agriculture is a huge part of our State's history, culture, economy and way of life and have had family members involved directly with both the sugar and pineapple industries of the past.

Currently, Hawaii is so dependant on imported food that any disruptions to our food supply be it natural or man-made can be devastating. We should provide standards and criteria to conserve, protect and assure availability of our agricultural lands so we are able to use these lands to increase agricultural self-sufficiency and provide our own locally-grown food supply sources.

Respectfully submitted,

Clayton Lee

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Rep. Clift Tsuji, Chair

Rep. Jessica Wooley, Vice Chair

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Dear Representative Tsuji,

I'm testifying on behalf of the Wahiawa Community and Business Association in full support of HCR 222.

The latest U.S. Department of Agriculture farm census states that we have lost 180,000 acres of farm production between 2002 and 2007. Those are staggering numbers for a 5-year period. When you add the 1,500 acres of prime farmland in Ewa destined for housing it would indicate that agriculture is on a steep and slippery sloop to non-existence.

The state can and should provide leadership in reversing this downward trend by first adopting this resolution. Provide opportunities for agricultural entrepreneurs to optimize production on these state-owned lands so it can contribute towards Hawaii's food self-reliance. We especially need lands for critical food groups such as dairy production. You might say that they are on the endangered species list. Locally produced milk can fill and niche in the marketplace.

Agriculture plays a critical role in our economy and it is strongly linked to our number one visitor industry. Let's not lose sight of the big picture in these difficult economic times and cause irreversible damage to our economic foundation. It may not be obvious to some but without agriculture, Hawaii will lose its ability for sustained economic growth in the generations to come.

Support HRC 222 and encourage large private landowners to do the same by committing their agricultural lands in perpetuity.

Respectfully,

Daniel S. Nakasone

1st VP, Wahiawa Community and Business Association

wooley1-Christopher

From: Monique Vander Stroom [mvfarms4dairy@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 07, 2009 5:45 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Subject: Testimony of Monique VanderStroom of MV farm Inc.

LATE
Testimony

Testimony of Monique VanderStroom
of MV farms Inc.
before the Committee on Agriculture

Wednesday 04/08/2009

9:00AM

HCR 222

Thank you for hearing my testimony on HCR 222 HR191. I am in full support of this resolution. I believe that State owned Important Ag Lands, as scarce as they are, it may be necessary to make some priorities in the Agriculture industry as to the use of such lands.

I believe All forms of agriculture are important to the State of Hawaii, to increase our self-sufficiency. I also think we should assist and give some priority to Any form of critically needed agriculture that is in jeopardy of vanishing.

I was the manager of the largest Dairy in the State of Hawaii, and the last dairy to close down on Oahu. We did our best to survive, but we fell to the mercy of the high cost of importing feed from the mainland. I believe that if dairy's on Oahu could have transitioned to pasture based operations, we would have survived and continued to provide Oahu with Island Fresh Milk. However, long term leases from private landowners are few and far between. The purchase of land makes less sense due to the high cost of the infrastructure of a Dairy.

I feel the people of Hawaii should have access to all fresh foods that we are capable of producing in Hawaii, including beef, pork, poultry, eggs, dairy, vegetables, fruit, fish and many others.

HO'OLUANA NURSERY
41-879 MAHAILUA STREET - WAIMANALO - HI - 96795
FAX: 808-259-7656 - PHONE: 808-259-6933

LATE
Testimony

SENT VIA EMAIL TO: AGRtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov

STATE OF HAWAII
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
25TH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION 2009

DATE: 04-06-09

RE: H.C.R. #222: TESTIMONY

Dear Honorable Representatives:

I am a local farmer located in Waimanalo and ask for your support on the House Resolution #222 in order to renew the Oahu dairy industry that has been sorely missed since the closing of all of the fresh milk producers here on Oahu.

In order for the dairy industry to survive and thrive here on the islands, the producers are in need of quality pasture land located outside of an urban development area. Feed prices and ocean freight costs are very cost restrictive for dairies and large expanses of land are not readily available in order for dairies to save some costs by pasturing young heifers and milkers. In addition, urban encroachment has made it most difficult on dairies as they must constantly battle with adjoining homeowners over the odor that emits from the composting manure pits and recycling renumerated soil that is a normal part of any successful dairy operation. We should be praising our dairymen for taking such "green" environmental action by recycling their waste and renumerating soil but instead residents who have chosen to purchase land next door to dairies already in production have systematically run the dairies off their properties with their complaints and finger pointing.

By having large land parcels designated for agricultural enterprises like dairy farms, beef operations, piggeries and poultry farms, Oahu can once again strive as a self-sufficient island state and provide for our kama'aina fresh milk, beef, pork & poultry and not be tied to the high market prices and dangerous contaminants that our mainland counterparts face each day. Our island has suffered without fresh island milk and it takes its greatest toll on our keiki. In order for mainland milk to retain its freshness, it must be pasteurized a number of times thus draining out all of the natural vitamins -- their solution to this "watered down" milk is to add artificial vitamins and minerals. Does this sound like a reasonable answer? When our island was producing fresh milk, the first sector to receive it at all times was the public school contracts -- the freshest of milk went directly to our keiki -- that's how it should be.

Please allow our island to once again to receive the bountiful blessings of good, nutritious, fresh milk by allotting our dairy industry the land they need in order to be successful in their operations. It will alleviate the urban encroachment problem, make our island self sustainable and provide for our residents high quality fresh milk.

This is of critical importance and I ask for your special attention and support of this resolution. Thank you for your time and service to the community.

Aloha,



Valerie Shaffer de Ramirez
Owner - Ho'oluana Nursery

LATE
Testimony

April 8, 2009

To: Committee on Agriculture
From: Arnold Koss
Subject: HCR 222

Dear Committee on Agriculture Representatives,

I strongly support the Department of Agriculture House resolution "to identify priorities for state-owned important agricultural lands to maximize the use of such lands for critically-needed agricultural and dairy production."

Hawaii is in danger of losing the necessary agriculture lands to support a viable and sustainable agricultural industry. A loss of the remaining agriculture lands suitable for dairy farming would be catastrophic for Oahu and all of Hawaii.

We have become increasingly vulnerable and dependent on mainland suppliers to deliver dairy products, a primary source of protein for Hawaii's population. On Oahu, with a population approaching one million people, we have not one dairy farm left. There are many reasons for this but most notable is an absence of available and affordable farm land to graze the cows and grow the necessary grasses, cover crops and grains to reduce feed costs.

We are in a critical moment where poor, shortsighted decision-making could undermine any chance for hardworking farmers to succeed in Hawaii. Failure to protect and make use of these lands on Oahu dramatically compromises our ability to become more food self sufficient and food secure. Our dependence on the mainland for the most basic food stuffs, such as milk, has the making of an inevitable crisis sooner or later.

It is imperative the Committee on Agricultural protect these vital agricultural lands on Oahu and help lead the way to an agricultural future that by word and deed supports the short and long term viability of Hawaii's agriculture infrastructure.

Please lead the way and support HCR 222.

Sincerely,

Arnold Koss

wooley1-Christopher

From: edboald@netzero.com
Sent: Tuesday, April 07, 2009 8:03 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Subject: HCR 222 - AGR
Attachments: letter.txt

LATE
Testimony

August 7, 2009

To: Committee on Agriculture
Rep. Cliff Tsuji

Hearing Notice: Wednesday, April 8, 2009
9 Am
Conference Room 312

Honorable Chairman Tsuji,

With only 2 dairies left in the state, it is imperative that your committee address the need for important Ag lands to be identified and prioritized. Assuring lands for Agriculture Production and food sustainability for our future generations is mandated by our state leaders. We fully support this resolution.

Ed Boteilho
Fresh Milk Industry
Cloverleaf Dairy Hawaii

wooley1-Christopher

From: Monique Vander Stroom [mvfarms4dairy@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 07, 2009 9:58 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Subject: HCR 222 Testimony

LATE
Testimony

--- On Wed, 4/8/09, donnacosta@aol.com <donnacosta@aol.com> wrote:

From: donnacosta@aol.com <donnacosta@aol.com>
Subject: Heres Wayne's testimony
To: mvfarms4dairy@yahoo.com
Date: Wednesday, April 8, 2009, 12:49 AM

Testimony of Wayne E. Costa,
Retired Owner, Wayne 's Dairy
Wednesday April 8, 2009

RE: HCR 222 & RE: HR 191

Committee on Agriculture
Rep. Clift Tsuji, Chair
Rep. Jessica Wooley, Vice Chair

Dear Committee Members:

As a lifelong farmer, and resident of the State of Hawaii I respectfully offer in testimony my position on these resolutions. Over the course of my 40 plus years as a dairy farmer I have seen the demise of many agricultural enterprises, from small family farms to large commercial entities such as the sugar and pineapple industry. Sadly, we have not done enough here in Hawaii , particularly on Oahu to promote agriculture. With the country beginning to see the importance of "going20green," this seems to me to be our opportunity to do something here not only to promote agriculture but our Island State .

Self sustainability should not be just a "pop phrase," it should be what all those connected to agriculture see as the future success and well being of our people. We have some of the most fertile lands sitting idle in central Oahu .

All over the mainland specialty farms, organic and natural produce, fresh dairy products and livestock are being supported; we must keep up with the times. It is vitally important that we keep some of our lands in green space.

We need to be able to offer our people the best and freshest farm products, and it has been proven that with the support of the DOA that can and does happen. However, it needs to be maximized. We need to have those lands suitable for agriculture made available to those who want to do it.

Many young entrepreneurs desire to get into farming but cannot see it as a viable future with the huge investment in land. For this reason, I make a plea to those of you who have it within your control to think of this land as not just farm land but a legacy to pass on to future generations. Our youngsters who choose not to go on to college need more than just tourism, construction or service industry jobs. For years the plantations, ranches, dairy farms and other agriculture industries provided those who chose that path good lives for themselves and their families.

Eco-tourism could be another way to have our tourists, and our residents see and enjoy the beauty of our land, and our people. At the same time we provide ourselves with a better quality of agricultural products and possibly insure our people of a constant food source in the event of some unforeseen calamity that may isolate us temporarily from our mainland suppliers. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of this matter.

Yours truly,

Wayne E. Costa

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