

TESTIMONY
SB495
LATE

LATE TESTIMONY

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DUANE K. 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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WATER, LAND, AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2009
3:30 P.M.
ROOM 229

SENATE BILL NO. 495 RELATING TO CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FOR THE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF IRRIGATION SYSTEMS WITHIN THE STATE

Chairperson Hee and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill No. 495. This bill makes an appropriation to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) for positions and the Agricultural Water Use and Development Plan. The department appreciates the recognition of the importance of water systems conveyed by this bill and offers the following comments.

The DOA does not own, operate, or maintain the West Maui or Kau irrigation systems. We do not operate or maintain the West Kauai or East Kauai irrigation systems. Hiring state personnel and obtaining funds to operate and maintain these systems may be problematic given the difficult economic condition of the state. Further, the Upcountry Maui irrigation system is anticipated to be operated and maintained by the Maui County Department of Water Supply through an agreement with the DOA. Lastly, funds for irrigation system personnel salaries are primarily paid through the irrigation system revolving fund, which collects fees from irrigation users. This fund also receives a general fund supplement to promote affordable irrigation water delivery rates and encourage farming. For management and efficiency reasons, if improved economic

TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
SENATE BILL NO. 495
PAGE 2

conditions in the future allow for additional irrigation personnel and funds to be added, they should go through the revolving fund.

We suggest the following revisions regarding the irrigation repair and maintenance special fund: 1) revise the name of the "irrigation repair and maintenance special fund" to the "agricultural infrastructure improvement special fund" to allow agricultural land improvement projects access to this Act; 2) revise §167-24(b), HRS, to read: "Moneys in the ~~[irrigation repair and maintenance special fund]~~ agricultural infrastructure improvement special fund shall be used to fund ~~[repair and maintenance of the following irrigation systems:]~~ improvements for the following agricultural projects; 3) add a paragraph to §167-24 (b): "(18) Studies for agricultural water and land planning"; and 4) revise the wording where appropriate in this bill to reflect the revised name of the special fund.

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



LATE TESTIMONY

ALFREDO A. LEE
Executive Director

STATE OF HAWAII
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
235 S. Beretania Street, Room 205
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 586-0186 Fax: (808) 586-0189

**TESTIMONY OF ALFREDO LEE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2009
3:30 PM
ROOM 229**

**SENATE BILL NO. 495
RELATING TO CAPITOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FOR THE REPAIR AND
MAINTENANCE OF IRRIGATION SYSTEMS WITHIN THE STATE**

Chairperson Hee and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 495. The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) appreciates the intent of this measure but has concerns about the ability of the state to fund the repairs given the current economic conditions.

Since the year 2000, the ADC has been responsible for managing the West Kauai irrigation system, and over the past several years has spent funds to assist with routine maintenance of the East Kauai irrigation system. In addition, we are currently working with the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources to complete the transfer of irrigation water sources in the Kau district of the County of Hawaii, in order to provide local farmers with affordable water.

We are therefore aware that major repairs are badly needed for these systems.

Our best estimate at this time is that it would require \$1.5 million.

Completion of major repairs for East Kauai, West Kauai, and Kau would allow these systems to optimize their potential to irrigate tens of thousands of acres of prime agricultural land.

Council Chair
Danny A. Mateo

Vice-Chair
Michael J. Molina

Council Members
Gladys C. Baisa
Jo Anne Johnson
Sol P. Kaho'ohalahala
Bill Kauakea Medeiros
Wayne K. Nishiki
Joseph Pontanilla
Michael P. Victorino



Director of Council Services
Ken Fukuoka

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov/council

LATE TESTIMONY

February 17, 2009

TO: Honorable Clayton Hee, Chair
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Danny A. Mateo
Council Chair

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF FEBRUARY 18, 2009; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 495,
RELATING TO CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FOR THE REPAIR AND
MAINTENANCE OF IRRIGATION SYSTEMS WITHIN THE STATE**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds for capital improvement projects to repair and maintain irrigation systems within the State. This measure would also appropriate funds for development of the Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Water Use and Development Plan.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I support this measure for the following reasons:

1. Reliable irrigation is vital to the sustainability of agricultural crops in the County of Maui.
2. Improvements and repairs to aging irrigation systems in Upcountry and West Maui will ensure the long-term viability of farming communities in those areas.
3. The Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Water Use and Development Plan is a fundamental resource for the County to consider as the Council prepares to deliberate on the County Water Use and Development Plan later this year.

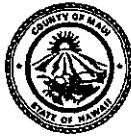
For the foregoing reasons, I support this measure.

ocs:proj:legis:09legis:09testimony: sb495_paf09-046_kcw

Council Chair
Danny A. Mateo

Vice-Chair
Michael J. Molina

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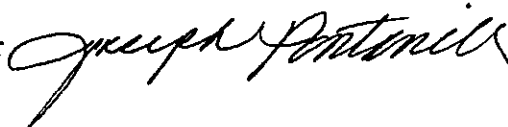
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LATE TESTIMONY

February 17, 2009

TO: Honorable Clayton Hee, Chair
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Joseph Pontanilla, Council Member 

DATE: Wednesday February 18, 2009

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF SB 495 RELATING TO CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
PROJECTS FOR THE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF
IRRIGATION SYSTEMS WITHIN THE STATE**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure. The purpose of this act is to appropriate funds for capital improvement projects for irrigation systems throughout the State. I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I support SB 495 for the following reasons:

1. To insure that the irrigation systems in West Maui, Upcountry Maui and on Molokai are improved and receive steady and dependable supply of water.
2. Lingering drought and near-drought conditions continue to affect the entirety of Maui County's agricultural trade as well as cause risk to Maui County's green environment and native species. Funds provided by this legislation will enhance irrigation system capability and forward effort in address of these concerns.

I urge your support of this measure.

LATE TESTIMONY

Walter Andrade
Ka'u Andrade Contracting
PO Box 74
Na'alehu HI 96772
Tel:(808) 929 -7106

February 17, 2009


RE: Senate Bill 495

Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs
Position: Support

Aloha Chairman Hee and Honorable Committee Members:

As a cattle rancher in Ka'u, the livelihood of my family is directly affected by the limited supply of agricultural water in Ka'u. Our agricultural and ranch lands would be much more productive if agricultural water were available. Please support the farmers and ranchers of Ka'u and help to make agricultural opportunities for our children and grandchildren by voting for Senate Bill 495.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Walter Andrade".

Walter Andrade

LATE TESTIMONY

Ka'u Farm Bureau
PO Box 1109
Naalehu, Hawai'i
96772
808-929-9550

February 17, 2009

RE: SB 495; Testimony in Support

Dear Chairman Hee and esteemed Senators,

The Ka'u Farm Bureau represents 35 farm families and offers this testimony in strong support of SB 495.

More than ten years after the collapse of the sugar industry, the economic vacuum left in its wake has yet to be filled in the rural communities of Ka'u.

With its abundance of agricultural lands, Ka'u is ideally suited for agricultural projects that will foster sustainability, food security, disaster preparedness and drought resistance. Investment in irrigation infrastructure projects will stimulate job creation and support job retention by creating an environment in which agriculture can thrive.

More than two years ago, working with the ADC, a group of energetic farmers, ranchers, landowners and other stakeholders have formed an agricultural water co-operative designed to advance the planning, permitting, investment and infrastructure associated with irrigation systems necessary to support agriculture in Ka'u. Since that time, much progress has been made in terms of planning and permitting. It is exactly this type of public and private partnership that has made this effort a success to date.

Investing in irrigation in Ka'u is an investment in agriculture and makes sense on many levels. It will assist with the transition from a plantation-based economy to a diversified agricultural model. In addition to offering new opportunities and a significant leverage on the investment, it promotes the perpetuation of a traditional lifestyle and social sustainability by offering options for people to work close to where they live. This will serve to help keep families together. Less travel means more family time, improved quality of life and less strain on public infrastructure, including roadways and law enforcement. Additionally, the workforce receives more value for their labor; keeping more of what they earn by spending less money on fuel and travel related expenses.

Please join me and the Ka'u Farm Bureau by offering your support of this critical measure.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

I remain sincerely,



Chris Manfredi
President

LATE TESTIMONY

From: Sabina F Swift [sabina@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2009 3:17 PM
To: WTLTestimony
Subject: Kau Ag WAter Project Testimony
Attachments: Card for Sabina F Swift <sabina@hawaii.edu>.vcf

February 17, 2009

RE: SB 495; Testimony in Support

Honorable Chairman Hee and Senators,

I am an Extension Specialist at the UH College of Topical Agriculture and Human Resources working with underserved Filipino and other coffee growers in Pahala, Ka'u District. I know the struggling stories of these folks making a living growing coffee.

The weather in Pahala is so appropriate for agriculture, and the reason coffee grown there is the new emerging specialty coffee known nationally and internationally. However, I heard from Kau growers about drought, and lack of rain, when they need it to get the expensive fertilizers utilized by the coffee plants. How can they solve this lack of rain, maintain production, maintain the quality of coffee? They told me of an irrigation infrastructure, not functional currently, remnants of the sugar plantation era that could be repaired and made functional. They even encouraged me to write federal grants to get this irrigation system to work! This will require huge amount of money, but a very important human, business, labor investment the state can do. With this investment is a vision of a happy farming community growing coffee, vegetables, flowers, fruit trees - a viable, self sustaining rural community, a paradigm community for the Hawaiian islands, made possible with a functional Ka'u Irrigation project.

The many underserved farmers I work with, some of them only speak their own language, will be pleased to know I am supporting passage of this bill. As a farmer advocate, I support this bill 100%. I hope you too support the bill.

Thank you for reading this comment.

Aloha,

Sabina Fajardo Swift, PhD/signed
Extension Specialist and
Farmer Advocate

Sabina F. Swift, PhD
Associate Extension Specialist
Outreach Program for Immigrant Farmers of Hawaii
PEPS/CTAHR/UH

<http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/peps/>

"The capacity to learn is not necessarily dictated by literacy."



**East Kauai
Water Users' Cooperative**

4334 Rice Street, Suite 202
Lihue, Kauai Hawaii 96766
Phone: 808-246-6962
Fax: 808-245-3277

LATE TESTIMONY

TO: Senator Clayton Hee
Chairperson
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs

February 16, 2009

RE: **Testimony on SB 495 – Wednesday 2/18/08, 3:30 PM, Room 229**

Chairperson Hee and Members of Committee:

My name is Jerry Ornellas. I am the president of the East Kauai Water Users' Cooperative.

The East Kauai Water Users' Cooperative supports SB 495, though we are certainly aware that in this time of economic crisis funding will be a challenge.

The present degradation of the State's water systems are the results of decades of deferred maintenance and failure to make capital improvements. A short-term savings now may result in great cost in the future.

I respectfully ask that you pass this bill.

East Kauai Water Users' Cooperative

Jerry Ornellas, President

LATE TESTIMONY

Testimony in Favor of SB 495

Jeff McCall [jeffreymccall@hawaiiantel.net]

Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2009 9:12 PM

To: WTLTestimony

Jeffrey W. McCall
McCall Flower Farm, Inc
P.O. Box 837
Pahala, HI 96777

February 17, 2009

Dear sirs,

I am offering this testimony in favor of SB 495, supporting funding for the repair and maintenance of irrigation systems in Ka'u. Farmers and ranchers in Ka'u have been working for years to maintain irrigation systems developed by the sugar plantations in the years past. Support for irrigation systems will mean support for agriculture and the expansion of farming opportunities.

We have been farming in Wood Valley for 16 years, but have seen expansion constrained by the lack of available water. We have invested much time and effort in the formation of the Ka'u Agricultural Water Cooperative District, giving us a structure to secure the water sources for agriculture, allowing new farmers and ranchers to support their families and provide additional employment opportunities for the people of Ka'u.

Kauai County Farm Bureau

Affiliated with Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation

P.O. Box 3895 • Lihue HI 96766-6895

808-332-8189 (phone/fax) 808-652-3217 (cell)

kcfb@hawaiiantel.net

The Voice of Kauai's Agriculture



LATE TESTIMONY

February 18, 2009

ATTN: Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs
Sen. Clayton Hee, Chair and Sen. Jill Tokuda, Vice-Chair

RE: SB 495: RELATING TO CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE
OF IRRIGATION SYSTEMS WITHIN THE STATE

HEARING DATE: Wednesday, February 18, 2009; 3:30PM, Room 229

Aloha Chair Hee and members of the committee:

Kauai County Farm Bureau on behalf of its member farmers and ranchers is in **strong support of SB 495**, providing CIP funding for Irrigation Systems across the State.

This Bill will provide the funding to repair, rehabilitate, and improve existing irrigation systems. This is vital to the sustainability of agriculture on Kauai and across the state. The Agricultural industry's most important ingredient is reliable and affordable water. Without water, there is no agriculture.

Many of the irrigation systems currently in use on Kauai are inherited from the plantation days are now old or in need of repair. While these irrigation systems appears invisible to most community members outside of agriculture, they are vital to not only our farmers but also to the community as a whole. Our own direct experiences on Kauai demonstrate the importance of looking ahead and keeping up with infrastructure maintenance to prevent urgent situations before they have the opportunity to arise.

Besides maintaining the current systems, providing for improvement of irrigation systems is necessary to support a sustainable future for agriculture. Expanding production of local farms, increasing our food security in Hawaii and promoting new opportunities for the agriculture industry to innovate and grow, all depend upon having reliable and affordable access to this basic resource of water.

Besides a need, this is also an opportunity to invest in the future of agriculture in Hawaii, and in a sustainable future for our State. While resources are tight in this economy, certain investments are so vital to the well being of farmers and the industry, that we ask that this be taken into consideration, and support SB495.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Roy Oyama, President

On behalf of the Kauai County Farm Bureau board

Personal contacts: 808-332-9426 oyama_farm@yahoo.com

LATE TESTIMONY

Edmund C. Olson Trust No. II

Hilo, Puna, and Ka`u Properties

John C. Cross
Land Manager

P.O. Box 280
Pahala, Hawaii 96777-0280

Pahala: TEL: (808) 928-0500
FAX: (808) 928-0500
Puueo: TEL: (808) 934-9292
FAX: (808) 934-9511

EMAIL: jccross@hawaiiantel.net
CELLULAR: (808) 987-4229

February 18, 2009

RE: SB 495; Testimony in Support

Dear Chairman Hee and committee members

The Edmund C. Olson Trust owns significant acreage in the Ka`u region of the Big Island. We have acquired some of the former sugarcane lands from C. Brewer & Company Ltd. prior to its dissolution.

The Trust operates 500 acres of macadamia nuts, 25 acres of coffee, and leases land to many independent coffee farmers and ranchers. SB 495 would help significantly to expand the opportunity for more farms and new agricultural endeavors in the region. We need the old water systems from the plantation days to be brought back into operational and functional use. The irrigation water from these systems could open acreage to a vast variety of diversified crops.

More water means more farms means more farmers and employees.

I hope you and your colleagues will support this bill.

Aloha,

John C. Cross

LATE TESTIMONY

Kuahiwi Contractors, Inc./Kuahiwi Ranch

February 17, 2009

RE: Support SB495
Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs

Aloha Senators,

Agricultural water is key to the health and vitality of agriculture. As we foresee the decline in availability of fossil fuels, the importance and relevance of agriculture, whether for food or energy, as the basis of our civilization, has never been more clear.

The availability of agricultural water in Ka'u has the potential to unlock the district's tremendous agricultural resources. At present the water resources of Ka'u are only available to those who have the resources and commitment to install water systems entirely at their own cost. Public investment in infrastructure would make water resources available to all with an interest in building a sustainable future by working and creating jobs in agriculture.

Please support SB495.

Michelle Galimba
Co-owner

PO Box 294, Naalehu HI 96772 Tel: (808) 929 7333 Fax (808) 929 7009

LATE TESTIMONY

18 February 2009

Honorable Clayton Hee, Chair
Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Vice Chair
And

Senators: Robert Bunda
Carol Fukunaga
Russell S. Kokubon
Dwight Y. Takamine
Fred Hemmings

RE: SB 495 RELATING TO CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FOR THE REPAIR
AND MAINTENANCE OF IRRIGATION SYSTEMS WITHIN THE STATE

Dear Honorable Chair and Senators:

As a member of the Kau Agricultural Water Cooperative District, comprised of ranchers, farmers, landowners and interested parties, have been working with the ADC on the irrigation systems in our district. We have had favorable support and assistance from ADC in the planning and permitting process.

Prior to the closure of the Ka'u sugar company in 1996, the water tunnels and irrigation systems were left to deteriorate and currently is in much needed repairs. Few of the tunnels and irrigation systems have been maintained by homesteaders, ranchers, and farmers in trying to conserve the most valuable source imperative for their purposes, water. Much of the repairs have been via their own expenses and manpower.

Your support and favorable consideration of SB 495 will bring much more progress in the agricultural endeavors, opportunities for the community while utilizing our most precious source, water.

Sincerely,

BrendaLynn Domondon
Moaula Water Association,
Member KAWCD
C/O P.O. Box 277
Pahala, HI 96777



**East Kauai
Water Users' Cooperative**

4334 Rice Street, Suite 202
Lihue, Kauai Hawaii 96766
Phone: 808-246-6962
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LATE TESTIMONY

TO: Senator Clayton Hee
Chairperson
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs

February 16, 2009

RE: **Testimony on SB 495 – Wednesday 2/18/08, 3:30 PM, Room 229**

Chairperson Hee and Members of Committee:

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The East Kauai Water Users' Cooperative supports SB 495, though we are certainly aware that in this time of economic crisis funding will be a challenge.

The present degradation of the State's water systems are the results of decades of deferred maintenance and failure to make capital improvements. A short-term savings now may result in great cost in the future.

I respectfully ask that you pass this bill.

East Kauai Water Users' Cooperative

Jerry Ornellas, President

TESTIMONY

SB495

LATE

(END)