

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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Deputy to the Chairperson

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2009
10:00 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 312**

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 121, SD1
REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE
AND HUMAN RESOURCES, IN COOPERATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, AND THE HAWAII FARM BUREAU
FEDERATION, TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP OF STAKEHOLDERS TO CONSIDER
THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM IN HAWAII'S
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 121, S.D. 1. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) supports this resolution and will work in cooperation with the University of Hawaii, CTAHR, the Department of Education and the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation to convene a working group to consider the feasibility of establishing a farm to school program in Hawaii's public schools.

The HDOA appreciates the committee's efforts to support programs that give students the choice to eat healthier, more nutritious local produce, connects schools with local farms, teaches students about food cultivation, and substantially expands the market for local farmers.

The HDOA is working toward increasing food self-sufficiency in Hawai'i, raising production and demand of locally grown foods and decreasing our dependence on imported foods. The Department has already been convening discussions with public and private institutions, and industry stakeholders, to increase the purchase of fruits, vegetables and meat from local producers. The findings and recommendations from the working group will complement and enhance our efforts.

Date: 04/17/2009

Committee: House Agriculture

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: SCR 121,SD1(SSCR1156) REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES, IN COOPERATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, AND THE HAWAII FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP OF STAKEHOLDERS TO CONSIDER THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM IN HAWAII'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Purpose of Resolution: Working Group; Farm to School; College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources

Department's Position: The Department of Education supports SCR 121, SD1. If this resolution is adopted, the Department of Education (DOE) will, as requested in the resolution, participate in a working group convened by the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources to consider the feasibility of establishing a farm to school program in Hawaii's public schools.

The DOE has been working with the Department of Agriculture and the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation on identifying and then increasing the quantity of local produce purchased by the DOE.



Hawaii Farm Bureau
F E D E R A T I O N

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SCR 121 SD1: REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES, IN COOPERATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, AND THE HAWAII FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP OF STAKEHOLDERS TO CONSIDER THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM IN HAWAII'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation on behalf of its member farmers and ranchers is in **strong support of SCR 121** proposing a feasibility review for a Farm to School Program.

As referenced in the preamble, the Farm to School program is a well established National Program. In Hawaii Kokua Hawaii Foundation has piloted efforts in this area. It provides opportunities for our farmers and ranchers and will significantly add towards our self sufficiency.

We have also seen studies where students select salad and fruit bars as well as other healthy eating options when provided a choice. This is a good investment to minimizing healthcare costs in the future. Creating a linkage between farms and schools could bring about a greater appreciation of the source of food and foster a career choice in agriculture. The opportunities are boundless.

An important part to having a successful Farm to School Program is a State Procurement System that supports such an initiative. This year, there are two measures, HB988 and SB506 which address the shortfalls to encourage local purchases of agricultural products within the State system. We are optimistic of its' passage. We have been working with the Department of Agriculture, Department of Education and the State Procurement Office to ensure that the Procurement Policy is not an impediment for the purchase of local agricultural products. We urge that this group continue as the core group for this process to address this issue. During the discussions, shortfalls in the procurement system may be discovered. **Suggestions on amendments to the procurement policy to address such issues should also be included in the report.**

What is lacking at this time is a State Policy as a expression of commitment to this program, sending a message to all schools that opportunities to exploit farm to school programs should be exploited. Many states have policies, and examples are provided at the Farm to School website: <http://www.farmtoschool.org/policies.php>. We strongly support the development of a draft policy regarding a Farm to School Program in Hawaii be included in the Report to the Legislature.

We respectfully request your support in passage of this measure supporting the Farm to School. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.