



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

2343 Rose Street, Honolulu, HI 96819
PH: (808)848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921

LATE
Testimony

TESTIMONY

RE: SCR37 REQUESTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PLAN FOR A STATE ORGANIC PROGRAM

Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation is the largest general agriculture organization in the State with over 1600 commercial farm, ranch families and organizations **"we do not support passing this resolution"**.

We are in critical economic times; our State agencies are facing huge cutbacks as are private organizations; adopting an unfunded mandate to produce a plan of this magnitude will take time & money that none of us have. Please do not strain our resources anymore at this time.

Although the resolution is correct on some issues, it is incorrect in others.

- Agriculture as whole is threatened in this State! Organic producers face no greater dilemma than any other agricultural producers. We do agree that a greater understanding of what organic truly means would be of benefit to the consumers.
- We need to quit dividing agriculture, it is not one against another, **WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER**. Every farmer deserves to choose his/her own methods and tools, let's quit adopting divisive policies. Long term goals should be to adopt inclusive policies that recognize & benefit all types of agriculture!
- According to the USDA National Organic Program there is only one accredited certified agent in the State of Hawaii, the Hawaii Organic Farmers Association, also known as HOFA. They have established fees and a program for certification and collect and publish an annual list of certified operations; available on the internet.
- The fifteen other States that have organic certification programs largely are located in States that have larger producers who export organically certified products; they then collect additional fee's to help support the program, as well as being funded through their own State. Is the State ready to fund a program like the one proposed in the resolution?
- Many feel the Hawaii Dept. of Agriculture has been under funded; to add additional burdens on this State agency and farmers in these economic times seems unwise.
- The National Agricultural Statistics Service collects data on farms of all sizes; they are federally funded from the USDA. The USDA – Agricultural Marketing Service division implements the USDA Organic program therefore it would seem logical that they collect data on this program.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this measure.