

TESTIMONY
SCR37/SR21

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

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WATER, LAND, AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2009
2:45 P.M.
ROOM 229**

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 37
SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 21
REQUESTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PLAN FOR A STATE ORGANIC
PROGRAM TO UNIFY THE STATE'S ORGANIC CERTIFICATION PRACTICES AND
PROGRAMS**

Chairperson Hee and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 37 and Senate Resolution No. 21 relating to the establishment of a plan for a State Organic Program intended to unify the State's organic practices and programs.

While there is merit in undertaking the development of a plan for a State Organic Program, it does create an unfunded mandate for the department and is better deferred to a time when sufficient resources are available to undertake this potentially costly and time-consuming effort.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2009 7:05 PM
To: WTLTestimony
Cc: tracey@kauaioutcallmassage.com
Subject: Testimony for SCR37 on 4/1/2009 2:45:00 PM

Testimony for WTL 4/1/2009 2:45:00 PM SCR37

Conference room: 229
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Tracey Schavone
Organization: Individual
Address: POBox 676 Anahola, HI
Phone: 808-822-4465
E-mail: tracey@kauaioutcallmassage.com
Submitted on: 3/30/2009

Comments:

From: Louisa Wooton [kunana@juno.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2009 5:17 AM
To: WTLTestimony
Subject: Testimony for RE: SCR # 37 and SCR #21 DOES NOT SUPPORT

March 30, 2009

Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs

Senator Clayton, Hee, Chair
Senator Jill Tokuda, Vice Chair

Wednesday April 1, 2009, 2:45 pm, Room 229
RE: SCR # 37 and SCR 21

To the Committee:

In regards to these two bills on organic farming, it is important that you read them thoroughly. There are reasons not to establish certification through the State Of Hawaii Department of Agriculture. **There are several erroneous propositions in the wording of HCR #21 and #37. Before approving these bills, I urge that you carefully consider the following information:**

The Hawaii Organic Farmers Association (**HOFA**) represents over 400 members including 143 certified organic farmers in the state of Hawaii. HOFA is the state of Hawaii's only third party certifying agency accredited by the USDA National Organic Program, and our certified farmers represent about 80% of the certified farms in the state of Hawaii.

There are other three certifying agencies that provide certification services to a few producers in Hawaii, in addition to HOFA. **Each agency is required by the USDA's National Organic Program to follow the same Rule, CFR 7- 205. These agencies are audited by the Federal Government which assures that they are all interpreting the Rule properly when certifying the operations that apply to their organizations.**

The Federal Rule does provide an exemption for small producers, who make less than \$5000 in gross annual organic sales, to declare and sell their produce as organic without certification requirements. **These farms must still be registered with an accredited certifier and are required to sign an affidavit that they will adhere to the RULE.**

While several other states do conduct organic certification programs through their departments of agriculture, several (including New Jersey) are considering abandoning this route, and others (including Utah) have shut down their program in this time of fiscal austerity. Participation in the certification programs of other states (such as Idaho, Oklahoma and New Jersey) requires payment of a fee to the participating state. **This increases the cost of organic certification.**

In no case would it be lawful to provide local guidelines for, or interpretation of, the National Organic Program (NOP) rule: this responsibility rests entirely with the NOP.

As a member of HOFA for many years, I take exception to the wording of these bills and the feel that some of the information is misleading. I DO NO SUPPORT these bills.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely yours,

Louisa Wooton
Kauai Kunana Farm
4552 Kapuna Road
Kilauea, Kaua'i Hawai'i 96754

From: Michael & Patti [wisevalentine@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2009 8:04 AM
To: WTLTestimony
Subject: HCR 21 and 37

To the Honorable Legislators of Hawai'i,

I am an individual resident of Kaua'i and I do not support having the State Dept of Agriculture or any other entity becoming an organic certifier for the state of Hawai'i. We already have a third party certifier, Hawai'i Organic Farmers Association (HOFA), which is and has been following the NOP rules and guidelines. They have an excellent inspection and certification program in place and are actively carrying forth the national rules for organic farming, as they have done for years.

If there are funds being discussed for such an office, I suggest the money be funneled to support HOFA in their education and certification programs, rather than starting a whole new office.

Thank you,

Patti Valentine
PO Box 194
Kapa'a, HI 96746

Hawaii Farmers Union

www.hawaiifarmersunion.org

Eden M. Peart

P.O. Box 1863

Honokaa, HI. 96727

Wednesday, April 1, 2009 2:45 p.m.
Conference Room 229
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

THE SENATE
THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2009
COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AGRICULTURE, AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Vice Chair
Committee Members:
Senator Robert Bunda
Senator Carol Fukunaga
Senator Russell S. Kokubun
Senator Dwight Y. Takamine
Senator Fred Hemmings

TESTIMONY RE: SCR 37, SR 21, ~~SCR 38, SR 22, HB 1436, HD1, SD1~~

Aloha Senators,

Hawaii Farmers Union is the newest subdivision of the National Farmers Union. Established in 1902, NFU is the oldest general farming organization in the United States, representing nearly 300,000 family farmers, ranchers and fishers. Since our Charter meeting in November 2008, we have approximately 105 signed members on 4 islands with membership growing weekly.

We really look forward to working with legislators to create legislation that addresses our vision for a thriving agriculturally-based economy in Hawaii. Along with the strength and relevance of National Farmers Union grassroots driven policy, and authoritative role in federal policy, we anticipate utilizing the excellent models currently flowering such as Washington State's Local Farms-Healthy Kids Act which was signed into law in 2008. This act created a Farm-To-School program whose purpose is to help schools purchase local farm products. It is complementary to other programs which were designed to increase access to Washington-grown foods for vulnerable populations and encourage markets for farms in the state.

Incorporating these best ideas and practices with Hawaii Farmers Union members and affiliates' initiatives will result in a generative and economically resilient framework for establishing and nurturing the Hawaii-grown model of sustainability that is already emerging.

HFU listening and visioning sessions are planned for late spring 2009. We welcome the participation of Hawaii state and country lawmakers! At the federal level many congress members are NFU members, for example Representative Collin Peterson, Chair of the House Agriculture Committee. HFU extends a personal invitation to each of you to join us.

Concerning the specific legislation before you, HFU defers to the testimony of HOFA, with the additional suggested amendment of including Hawaii's newest (and USA's oldest!) general farming organization – Hawaii Farmers Union as a stakeholder in all pertinent agriculture-related policy and legislation.

Many thanks for your work.

Me ke aloha,

Eden M. Peart
Hawaii Farmers Union

TESTIMONY
SCR37/SR21
(END)