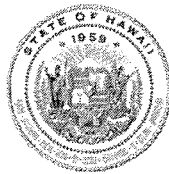


**LINDA LINGLE**  
Governor



**SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DUANE 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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2009  
10:00 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 312**

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 38, S.D. 1  
URGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PLAN FOR INCREASING AID AND ASSISTANCE TO  
ORGANIC FARMERS**

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 38, S.D. 1. This resolution urges the development of a plan for increasing aid and assistance to organic farmers.

The HDOA is currently active in supporting organic farming. HDOA is administering three federal grants relating to organic farming: (1) National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program; (2) National Organic Program; and (3) Federal State Marketing Improvement Program for organic seed marketing/production. The state Matching Marketing Funds Program currently supports projects for distribution improvement, accreditation and website design that benefit the organic industry. In May 2009, HDOA will administer the federal Organic Production Survey.

The HDOA acknowledges that this measure has merit; however, it would not be prudent to pursue enactment of a new initiative at this time. This would only serve to divert already limited state resources from HDOA's on-going efforts to support all farming including organic farming.

Hawaii  
Cooperative  
of Organic Farmers



P.O. Box 728  
Waialua, HI 96791  
Tel: (808) 637-4555

April 1, 2009

Testimony in Support of SR 22 & SCR 38

To Develop a Plan for Increasing Aid to Organic Farmers

Aloha Chair Hee and Members of the Senate Ag Committee,

I am President of the Hawaii Co-op of Organic Farmers (HICOF) and an organic farmer on the North Shore. I am happy to submit testimony in support of Resolutions SR 22 and SCR 38 as they will help focus attention and resources on our much neglected organic farming community. All too often in the past, Federal and State dollars are spent by our local agencies, associations and researchers to develop solutions to agricultural problems that exclude organic farming. By example: the solution to Papaya Ringspot Virus (PRV) was the development of genetically engineered species; the solution to control of the Banana Bunchy Top Virus (BBTV) requires the use of "Roundup"; and the solution to post-harvest treatment of fruit for export is Irradiation – none of which are permissible for organic farmers. I also want to inform you that there are signs of change: that in 2007 our Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDoA) collaborated with HICOF to develop the Hawaii Organic Seed Program (HOSP) which undertook the development of the first commercial organic seed production process in the State; that the UH College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) has expanded its organic and sustainable research program; and that the recently completed Hawaii Area Wide Fruit Fly control program (HAW-FLY) is a 100% organic solution.

Much can be done to benefit all farmers by using organic solutions and there are huge opportunities built into the 2008 Farm Bill specifically set aside for organic farming issues. These Resolutions will institutionalize a process that could focus our collective knowledge on solutions-oriented concepts that include all of the State's farmers even in a resource-poor environment. Mahalo.

Sincerely,

Al Santoro  
President, HICOF

Hawaii  
Cooperative  
of Organic Farmers



P.O. Box 728  
Waialua, HI 96791  
Tel: (808) 637-4555

April 16, 2009

Testimony in Support of SCR37 & SCR38

To Develop a Plan for a State Organic Program (SOP);  
To Develop a Plan for Increasing Aid to Organic Farmers

Aloha Chair Tsuji and Members of the House Agriculture Committee,

I am President of the Hawaii Co-op of Organic Farmers (HICOF) and an organic farmer on the North Shore. I am happy to renew and amplify my testimony in support of SCR 37 & SCR 38. So as to be brief, I have attached my previous testimony to Senator Hee's committee which passed both Resolutions unanimously. Both of these Resolutions call for development of a Plan; one to assess how to better administer the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) locally and one on how to better include organic farm issues as part of our overall agricultural planning. Since all of us agree that our agricultural system does not produce enough; and we agree that when we import fresh produce, especially organic, we import invasive species; it is clear we need to develop better strategies. Both of these Resolutions will break the logjam of status quo and lead to significant change and improvement.

SCR 37 calls for a Plan to move administration of the USDA NOP from National to Local authority. At least 15 other organic producing states have already done so. This will give us the opportunity to develop a Plan that will improve the processes, the interpretation and the enforcement of the NOP without undo bureaucracy or costs to farmers and increase our organic production through advocacy.

SCR 38 also calls for a Plan for inclusion of organic farming in our solutions and visions for agriculture. It is well known that organic has usually been excluded in the past and never will be considered unless we introduce change to the status quo.

These are both good solutions-oriented Resolutions that specifically address shortfalls in organic agriculture. Even in periods of limited resources it is still good government to continue to do good planning. Mahalo.

Sincerely,

Al Santoro  
President, HICOF



# HAWAII ORGANIC FARMERS ASSOCIATION

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April 16, 2009

Committee on Agriculture  
Representative Clift Tsuji, Chair  
Representative Jessica Wooley, Vice Chair

Friday April 17, 2009, 10:00 am, Room 312  
RE: SCR # 38 SD1

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.

The Board of Directors of this farmer organization **supports SCR 38**, which urges the development of a plan for increasing aid and assistance to organic farmers. **We do request that the resolution be amended to include our organization, the Hawaii Organic Farmers Association (HOFA) and the Hawaii Farmers Union in the development of the plan.**

The Hawaii Organic Farmers Association has been working closely with several UH CTAHR researchers and specialists, who have been instrumental in providing educational programming to organic farmers and those conventional farmers who are transitioning to more sustainable methods in recent years. The producers continue to request that additional research, training and outreach be made available to those who are farming organically. UH CTAHR is instrumental in helping farmers support environmental stewardship and reduce the risk of invasive species entering the state by increasing the production of locally grown product for the market.

We also work closely with the SOH Department of Agriculture (DOA), which has recently provided funding to HOFA for the development of a website with an online searchable database to connect the producers with buyers, chefs and vendors. The DOA has also recently funded our request for financial assistance with the organic reaccreditation review, scheduled for November 2009.

We appreciate the efforts of these organizations to support organic farming, and look forward to continuing the work. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony.

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Quality Control Officer

Sarah Townsend  
Certification Coordinator

Hi'iaka Kahalewai  
Office Administrator

Hawaii Organic Farmers Association

*Our mission is to protect the life of the land and the health of our communities through education about organic land care practices. Developing and strengthening certified organic farms enhances Hawaii's many fragile ecosystems and provides a base for a local sustainable economy.*



# HAWAII ORGANIC FARMERS ASSOCIATION

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### Hawaii Organic Farmers Association

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