

TESTIMONY
SCR38/SR22
LATE



HAWAII ORGANIC FARMERS ASSOCIATION

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March 30, 2009

LATE

2009 Board of Directors

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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 # 38

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.

Certification Committee

Louisa Wooton - chair

Alfred Wylie

Terri Langley

Kelly Lange

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.**

Board of Trustees

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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.

Administrators

Deborah J. Ward
Quality Control Officer

Sarah Townsend
Certification Coordinator

Hi'iaka Kahalewai
Office Administrator

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.

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.

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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: Proposed amendments to SCR # 38

Amend to include our organization, the Hawaii Organic Farmers Association (HOFA) and the Hawaii Farmers Union in the development of the plan.

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.

LATE

March 31, 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: **Support SCR # 38 with the following amendments**

I **support 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 (HFU) in the development of the plan.**

I am a farmer and a member of the Hawaii Organic Farmers Association (HOFA). 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 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.

HOFA also works closely with the State of Hawaii 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 a request for financial assistance with the organic reaccreditation review, scheduled for November 2009.

I 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.

Sincerely,

Deborah Ward
Laiku Organic Produce, POB 918 Kurtistown HI 96760

LAF

March 31, 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: **Support SCR # 38 with the following amendments**

Proposed amendment: **amend to include the Hawaii Organic Farmers Association (HOFA) and the Hawaii Farmers Union (HFU) in the development of the plan.**

Deborah Ward

Laiku Organic Produce, POB 918 Kurtistown HI 96760

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2009 8:38 PM
To: WTLTestimony
Cc: andrea@malamakauai.org
Subject: Testimony for SCR38 on 4/1/2009 2:45:00 PM

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Testimony for WTL 4/1/2009 2:45:00 PM SCR38

Conference room: 229
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Andrea Brower and Keone Kealoha
Organization: Malama Kaua'i
Address: 4900 Kuawa Road Kilauea HI 96754
Phone: 808-828-0685
E-mail: andrea@malamakauai.org
Submitted on: 3/31/2009

Comments:

Hawaii
Cooperative
of Organic Farmers



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P.O. Box 728
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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 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



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RE: SCR38/SR22 URGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PLAN FOR INCREASING AID AND ASSISTANCE TO ORGANIC FARMERS.

Chair Hee and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation on behalf of our commercial farm and ranch families and organizations understands the intent but is in opposition to SCR38/SR22 as written.

Agriculture to provide for Hawaii is at risk. HFBF agrees that there is a demand for organic agriculture products and would like to see the expansion of that sector of our industry. At the same time it cannot be the sole focus of the Department of Agriculture. The rest of the industry is at serious risk. We have lost all of our large dairy operations and we now can count our poultry farms on one hand. Our livestock industry, even as it expands to range-fed beef is at risk. Depending on the range means increased dependence on Mother Nature. If rains stop coming, forage availability will drop and what will happen to the cattle. Effective means of having access to irrigated pastures or other affordable feed will be critical to survival of the industry.

The vegetable and fruit industry, (including organic) faces challenges in food safety. Federal guidelines are being drafted and there is a probability that instead of being voluntary they will be mandatory. We have heard comments among our farmers of how this will "kill the small farmer". We believe many of the practices are sound practices that make sense. Those that don't should be discussed with the Department of Health and Department of Agriculture as these rules get implemented. Bottom line, those of us involved in food production will be responsible for its' safety. Resources must be focused on getting our farmers and ranchers ready for this inevitability.

For the nursery, flower and landscape industry, foreign competition is nipping at their heels. Just as the other sectors, control of costs, increased productivity and identification of niche markets are important.

The larger companies, whether they be our remaining, sugarcane company, coffee, macadamia nuts or thegrowing seed companies will face challenges of productivity and availability of skilled labor.

During times of scarce resources it is critical to identify elements that will bring about the most benefit to the most people with minimum cost. And in the process, the people of Hawaii must understand that they are a critical component in nurturing the industry. Initiatives such as a required agricultural discount for electricity used by agricultural produces would have had wide spread benefit for producers and consumers. While we were not able to pass this measure this year, we must find ways to



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accomplish such initiatives so the costs of our producers can be contained. At the end of the day, without profits, there will be no agriculture.

The current measure proposes to focus the efforts of the Department of Agriculture on organic agricultural production. What about the rest of the industry that provides for the majority of people as well as brings export dollars into the islands. As we talk about self sufficiency, locally grown, we must not forget that to drive Hawaii's economy an export component ...industries that bring money from outside Hawaii into the State is important. A balance of the needs of various sectors must be achieved.

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture and Hawaii Farm Bureau have taken efforts to advance the needs of commercial organic production. It must be clarified that it is not the role of the Farm Bureau, nor the Department of Agriculture to promote lifestyle farming. We believe, there are efforts in place at this time to address commercial organic farming and therefore, respectfully request that this measure be held.

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

TESTIMONY
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(END)