

LINDA LINGLE  
Governor



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Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON  
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
AND

WATER, LAND & OCEAN RESOURCES

Thursday, January 28, 2010

9:05 a.m.

Room 325

Bill No. 2365

Support Y  N

Date 1/27

Time 1657

Cat AF  AS  AX  B

Type 1  2  WI

HOUSE BILL NO. 2365  
RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE

Chairpersons Morita and Ito, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 2365. The Department of Agriculture strongly opposes this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds for the establishment of an emergency environmental workforce for short-term employment for individuals who have lost their jobs because of Hawaii's recent economic downturn. The individuals shall be employed as three-month contract employees through the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii to work on containment and control of the nettle caterpillar, coqui frog and fire ant, and the eradication of miconia and other invasive plants. The Department of Agriculture deeply regrets the lay-off of employees in response to the downturn of the state's economy. However, this measure will not materially reduce the statewide threat posed by the listed invasive species, and would, therefore, not be a wise use of dwindling state resources.



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

2343 Rose Street, Honolulu, HI 96819  
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Neighbor Islands: 1-800-482-1272  
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Bill No. 2365

Support Y  N

Date 1/27

Time 1926

Cat AF AS AX

TESTIMONY

HB 2365 RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE  WI

Chair Morita, Chair Ito and Members of the Committees:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation on behalf of our member farmers, ranchers and organizations opposes HB2365 as written. This measure seeks to appropriate \$3 million dollars to create an Emergency Environmental Workforce to eradicate introduced invasive species. We believe that IF AVAILABLE, General Funds should be used to restore critical core functions within HDOA-PQ Branch.

Our farmers and ranchers, along with the community, have been seriously affected by the budget cuts and resultant loss of personnel in HDOA.

The proposed measure seeks to address control of the spread of introduced invasive species. We sympathize and understand that this is necessary. However, our concern lies in priorities. There are measures being introduced this session, with the support of our farmers and ranchers to establish special funds for certification inspections to reduce dependence on General Funds. This means additional costs to farmers and ranchers, many who are already being challenged with containing production costs. But we feel it is something we must do so agriculture can continue in Hawaii. At the same time, the cuts have reduced inspection at the ports so interceptions of goods containing invasive species has astronomically dropped. This means the risk of introduction of new invasive species has astronomically increased ...and history tells us that some of these species can cause significant damage on a very short term. Disappearance of Erythrina spp trees in parking lots after the appearance of the Gall Wasp is loud testament to this along with the costs to replace the trees.

In making this decision, a balancing of the needs of HDOA PQ Branch to assure food security along with environmental protection with the proposed project must be done. We believe the functions of the PQ Branch are critical core functions to Hawaii at this time, while the activities proposed in this bill could be done through non-government means.

HFBBF is very concerned about invasive species as are the authors of this measure. During this time of economic difficulties, it is important that the critical functions are identified and protected.

We respectfully ask that IF these General Funds are available, they should be allocated to restoring functions within the HDOA-PQ Branch rather than starting a new program.

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

Good Shepherd Foundation  
P.O. Box 1880, Pahoa, Hawaii 96778  
808-935-5563

Testimony on HB 2365  
RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKFORCE.

January 28, 2010

OPPOSE this bill.

This bill is misnamed. It is NOT an environmental emergency but a income emergency for these laid off workers. It is an **Environmental Workers Bailout**. This is something that volunteers do. We do not need to use limited resources to pay people to do this, including administrative costs that do nothing but pay bureaucrats.

There are other workers in other jobs that lost employment, including education, county services, and more.

We can survive as a community with current invasive species control by the HDOA until the economy grows again. Use the money to reinstate other needed jobs. Endless weeding of invasive species is not a productive use of scarce resources.

Put limited funds into social services, needed infrastructure, and other functions that are being neglected and which also have seen lay-offs.

Sincerely,

Sydney Ross Singer  
Director

Bill No. 2365

Support Y  N

Date 1/28

Time 558

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## Cyndi Apana

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 28, 2010 7:55 AM  
**To:** EEPtestimony  
**Cc:** somagrismajjer@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for HB2365 on 1/28/2010 9:05:00 AM

Testimony for EEP/WLO 1/28/2010 9:05:00 AM HB2365

Conference room: 325  
Testifier position: oppose  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Soma Grismaijer  
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Submitted on: 1/28/2010

### Comments:

The State is furloughing workers in numerous fields that serve the public. This bill is a special gift to certain individuals in the invasive species community which &quot;partner&quot; with the government in various Invasive Species Committees. There should be volunteers recruited for environmental weeding, especially during tough financial times. What a waste of \$3,000,000, which, in the end, will be a complete waste since the weeding is endless. In addition, this could be illegal, since there should be competitive bidding for these environmental services if they are truly needed. This bill gives the money to the UH for their distribution of it to specific &quot;partner&quot; individuals, which goes against competitive bidding laws.