

Ken H. Takayama
Director

Charlotte A. Carter-Yamauchi
First Assistant

Research (808) 587-0666
Revisor (808) 587-0670
Fax (808) 587-0681



LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU
State of Hawaii
State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street, Room 446
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Written Testimony

HB2411

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Testimony by the Legislative Reference Bureau
Ken H. Takayama, Director

Presented to the House Committee on Agriculture and
Committee on Economic Revitalization, Business, & Military Affairs

Friday, January 29, 2010, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 312

Chairs Tsuji and McKelvey and Members of the Committees:

Good Morning Chairs Tsuji and McKelvey and members of the Committees on Agriculture and Economic Revitalization, Business, & Military Affairs.

I am Ken H. Takayama, Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 2411. The Bureau takes no position either for or against this measure, but has the following observations and concerns:

1. If the Legislature wants us to conduct this study, we will do the best we can with the resources that we have.
2. Section 2(a) of the bill directs the Bureau to conduct an economic analysis of the impacts on businesses and communities stemming from the reduction in services provided by the Department of Agriculture's plant quarantine and commodities branches and lists 8 particular aspects.
3. The Bureau does not have economists on staff and lacks the technical expertise to conduct any sort of formal economic analysis.
4. If this measure passes, we will do the best we can to obtain data and information from agencies and organizations identified in section 2(b) of the bill, and other relevant sources.
5. As is normally the case with studies by the Bureau, our study would reflect the efforts of generalists, rather than experts or specialists.

6. For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request that the Committees amend section 2 of the bill to more closely align the parameters of the intended study with the abilities of the Bureau.
7. Suggested language is submitted for the Committees' consideration in the form of a proposed H.D. 1.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify.

Arlina Agbayani

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, January 28, 2010 4:02 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: mnakahata@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB2411 on 1/29/2010 9:00:00 AM
Attachments: HB2411 LRB rpt on hdoa layoff agr.pdf

Testimony for AGR 1/29/2010 9:00:00 AM HB2411

Conference room: 312
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Mae Nakahata for Luella Costales
Organization: HFBF
Address:
Phone: 808 2819716
E-mail: mnakahata@gmail.com
Submitted on: 1/28/2010

Comments:
Testifier will be Luella Costales



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

Fax: (808) 848-1921; e-mail: info@hfbf.org

TESTIMONY

HB 2411: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation on behalf of our farmer and ranch families and organizations support HB2411, directing the LRB to analyze and report on economic impacts of reductions in services by PQ and Commodities Branches of the Hawaii Department of Agriculture.

Hawaii has been severely impacted by the reduction in services by PQ and Commodities. Farmers and ranchers along with some in the business community have experienced the impacts. However, like in many cases, the majority of people in the State are oblivious to what has happened. The reduction in inspections resulting in an astronomical drop of intercepts at the ports has increased our risk of a major pest invasion detrimental to Hawaii's agriculture and/or environment. Many hearings have been held on this matter throughout the State. While some numbers were presented, many of the data was subjective so an objective analysis will be valuable.

At the same time HFBBF sees a value in requiring the LRB to advance beyond an analysis to identifying mitigative actions to minimize impacts. These could include a more aggressive position in seeking of Federal and County collaboration, private-public partnerships, reorganizing of agencies to ensure core functions are given priority and other fee for service opportunities.

There are numerous bills already being considered this year to mitigate these impacts. However, there continues to be some in the community that either demand the same level of services or seek legal remedy to bypass inspections. Even as our economic challenges are great, it is important that we not lose sight of our core goal to protect Hawaii's food and energy security along with environment. The Hawaii's Biosecurity Plan passed in 2008 provides a roadmap of critical functions. Throughout the analysis, this document should serve as a guide to LRB in conducting their work.

HFBBF strongly supports this effort but urges an amendment to identify implementation actions in 2011 as part of the overall study. If there are any questions, please contact Luella Costales at 848 2074. Thank you.

HAWAII PAPAYA INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 6959 / 190 KAMEHAMEHA AVENUE ROOM 1
HILO HI 96720
PH. NO. 808.969-1160 FAX NO. 808.969-1781 e-mail: papayas@aloha.net

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON AGRICULTURE
AND
ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION, BUSINESS, AND MILITARY
AFFAIRS

HOUSE BILL 2411
RELATING TO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

PRESENTED TO THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE
STATE OF HAWAII

JANUARY 2010

Dear Chairman Tsuji, Chairman McKelvey & Members of the Committees:

STRONG SUPPORT.

My name is Loren Mochida, General Manager of THP in Keaau, Hawaii. THP is a processor and exporter of Hawaiian Premium papayas to CONUS and Japan and represents over 50 papaya growers. I am also a Director on the Hawaii Papaya Industry Association (HPIA) Board.

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) worked with the papaya exporters to Japan and created an Identity Preservation Protocol (IPP) in 2001, to guarantee that the exported papayas were non-transgenic. With this certification from HDOA this allows all papayas into the Japan market to be distributed as soon as it arrives. These inspections are done by Agriculture Commodities Marketing Specialists (ACMS) in HDOA and they issue the IPP certification letter for all Japan shipments.

HAWAII PAPAYA INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 6959 / 190 KAMEHAMEHA AVENUE ROOM 1
HILO HI 96720
PH. NO. 808.969-1160 FAX NO. 808.969-1781 e-mail: papayas@aloha.net

It will be awhile before the industry will be able to ship the transgenic papayas to Japan. So the IPP certificates produced by the HDOA Inspectors are very important to reduce delays of our present papaya shipment. HDOA laid off two (2) full time ACMS in Hilo. Since then the Hilo office was left with only one part time ACMS and no coverage if this person is sick or on vacation.

The absence of this person will create a hardship on the Japan Exporters in that the HDOA will have to send an untrained inspector from Oahu for the certification. These inspectors will have to commute when the part time ACMS is not available. So to send inspectors from another island to Hilo will be paid by the exporters. The cost of the ACMS time and airfare will definitely add more expense to the exporters in Hilo.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 2411.



Diamond Head Papaya Co., Ltd.

16-309-A Old Volcano Road · Keaau, Hawaii 96749
Telephone: (808) 966-7406 · Fax: (808) 966-6464

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON AGRICULTURE
RELATING TO HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

PRESENTED TO THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE
STATE OF HAWAII

HEARING HB2411
FRIDAY, JANUARY 29, 2010
9:00 A.M.

Representative Clift Tsuji, Chair
Representative Jessica Wooley, Vice Chair
Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to send my testimony but I regret that I will not be able to attend this hearing in person.

At the end of December 31, 2009, Hawaii State Department of Agriculture (HDOA) laid off 2 full time Agricultural Commodities Marketing Specialists (ACMS) in Hilo. Since then we have been left with one part time ACMS. We are concerned that should this part time ACMS is unable to work for one reason or another we won't be able to get an IPP Certificate from HDOA.

I personally spoke with Jeri Kahana, Program Manager for Commodities Branch, DOA Quality Assurance Division on Thursday, January 14, 2010. According to Ms. Kahana, HDOA tried to hire an ACMS who resides in Hilo for an "On call" position. In August 2009 HDOA asked for approval from the Governor to allow an "On call" person to service our needs here in Hilo, to date she has not given her approval.

Since no approval was given, HDOA is planning to train one of their ACMS in Honolulu to cover the part time ACMS in Hilo in case he is not able to report to work. This ACMS in Honolulu will have to commute whenever the part time ACMS is not available. The cost of the ACMS time and airfare will be at our company expense.

Presently we have 2 former qualified ACMS's that have retired due to the cut back. Using one of them whenever we need their services will eliminate the added expense of airfare back and forth from Honolulu to Hilo. Their services are paid 100% by the user.

Diamond Head Papaya Co., Ltd. have requested that HDOA help and support the Hawaii Papaya Industry by continuing the Identity Preservation Protocol (IPP) to guarantee that the Hawaiian Papaya can be exported to Japan. The Hawaii papaya industry needs and ACMS to issue IPP Certificates for all of our Japan shipments.

In order to continue shipments to Japan, we need an IPP Certificate from the Hawaii State Department of Agriculture. However, if the Governor is not willing to give her approval to hire and "On call" ACMS in Hilo, this will jeopardize our continued business in Japan. We need to be consistent with our shipment, any delays will cause the wholesalers to choose other fruits in place of papayas from Hawaii.

Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to voice our concerns.

Koji Okamura, Manager
DIAMOND HEAD PAPAYA CO., LTD.

Arlina Agbayani

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, January 28, 2010 9:28 AM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: stangonan@tnc.org
Subject: Testimony for HB2411 on 1/29/2010 9:00:00 AM
Attachments: HB2411 & 2412 TNC Testimony 01 29 10.pdf

Testimony for AGR 1/29/2010 9:00:00 AM HB2411

Conference room: 312
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Mark Fox
Organization: The Nature Conservancy
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: stangonan@tnc.org
Submitted on: 1/28/2010

Comments:

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting H.B. 2411 and H.B. 2412 Relating to the Department of Agriculture
House Committee on Agriculture
Friday, January 29, 2010, 9:00am, Rm. 312

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a private non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of Hawaii's native plants, animals, and ecosystems. The Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of natural lands for native species in Hawai'i. Today, we actively manage more than 32,000 acres in 11 nature preserves on O'ahu, Maui, Hawai'i, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and Kaua'i. We also work closely with government agencies, private parties and communities on cooperative land and marine management projects.

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i supports H.B. 2411 and H.B. 2412 Relating to the Department of Agriculture and the directive to the Legislative Reference Bureau to assess the economic and environmental impacts of cuts to the Department of Agriculture's Plant Quarantine and Commodities Branches.

Invasive insects, diseases, snakes, weeds, and other pests are one of the greatest threats to Hawaii's economy, natural environment, and the health and lifestyle of its people.

The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) is responsible for the inspection of arriving cargo and interisland cargo shipments to protect the state from introduction of unwanted plant and animal pests and diseases. The Department developed a multi-faceted Biosecurity Plan to enhance its efforts with more inspectors, more efficient and effective inspection services, joint state-federal inspection facilities, and agreements with importers and producers for improved sanitary protocols before items are shipped to Hawai'i. Past financial and personnel support provided by the Legislature has been essential to implementing this plan.

Unfortunately, the current budget conditions in the State have caused drastic—and potentially catastrophic—reductions in the Department's capability to inspect incoming cargo:

- 28 of 50 general funded inspectors have been laid off across the State;
- At Honolulu International Airport (HNL), there are now only 6 inspectors where there used to be 19; and
- Insect interceptions by inspectors at HNL have dropped from about 150 per month down to about 10 per month.

The Department's inspection capacity has dropped so far below anything that can reasonably be expected to be effective that there is a good chance that we won't know what new pest has arrived in Hawai'i until there is an outbreak of some kind. This could include a human disease outbreak.

In addition to reviewing the cuts to the Plant Quarantine and Commodities Branches, we also recommend that the Committee add the Department's Plant Pest Control Branch to this review as it is responsible for taking action when pests get through the prevention systems of the Plant Quarantine Branch.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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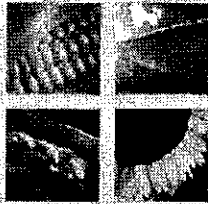
Arlina Agbayani

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2010 9:22 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: admin@hciaonline.com
Subject: Testimony for HB2411 on 1/29/2010 9:00:00 AM
Attachments: HB2411_HB2412_DepartmentofAgriculture_HseAGR.pdf

Testimony for AGR 1/29/2010 9:00:00 AM HB2411 /

Conference room: 312
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Alicia Maluafiti
Organization: Hawaii Crop Improvement Association
Address: 91-1012 Kahi'uka Street Ewa Beach, HI 96706
Phone: (808) 224-3648
E-mail: admin@hciaonline.com
Submitted on: 1/27/2010

Comments:



Hawaii Crop Improvement Association

Growing the Future of Worldwide Agriculture in Hawaii

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Testimony By: Alicia Maluafiti

HB 2411 and HB 2412, Relating to the Department of Agriculture

The House Committee on Agriculture

Friday, January 29, 2010

Room 312, 9:00 am

Position: Support

Aloha Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Wooley and members of the Committee:

My name is Alicia Maluafiti, Executive Director of the Hawaii Crop Improvement Association. HCIA is a nonprofit trade association representing the agricultural seed industry in Hawaii. Now the state's largest agricultural commodity, the seed industry contributes to the economic health and diversity of the islands by providing high quality jobs in rural communities, keeping important agricultural lands in agricultural use, and serving as responsible stewards of Hawaii's natural resources.

As we testified during the fall informational briefings, HCIA remains deeply concerned about the cuts made to the inspectors of the Dept. of Agriculture and its inevitable negative impact on Hawaii import and export markets as well as the unintended consequences on the viability of the agricultural industry. Cutting inspectors – and thereby slowing the inspection process – will slow down the ability of the seed industry to operate efficiently in this state. The additional costs and loss of production time make it difficult to justify that Hawaii is a business friendly location – especially when the biotech industry is being wooed by locales such as Puerto Rico.

HB2411 provides the legislature with an opportunity to better understand the **economic and environmental impact** these layoffs may have on businesses and communities above and beyond the seed industry as a result of the reduction in services at the Dept. of Agriculture.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment.

91-1012 Kahi uka Street
Ewa Beach, HI 96706
Tel: (808) 224-3648
director@hciaonline.com
www.hciaonline.com

Arlina Agbayani

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2010 1:41 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: christym@rocketmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB2411 on 1/29/2010 9:00:00 AM
Attachments: HB 2411 012910.doc

Testimony for AGR 1/29/2010 9:00:00 AM HB2411

Conference room: 312
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Christy A. Martin
Organization: CGAPS
Address:
Phone: 8087220995
E-mail: christym@rocketmail.com
Submitted on: 1/27/2010

Comments:
committee requests 5 copies



The House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
Friday, January 29, 2009
9:00 a.m., Conference Room 312
State Capitol

Aloha Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Wooley and Committee Members,
The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) **supports HB 2411,**
Relating to the Department of Agriculture.

CGAPS is concerned about staffing shortages at the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA), particularly in the department's Plant Quarantine (PQ) branch. PQ staff are responsible for protecting Hawai'i from invasive pests by inspecting arriving domestic and interisland agriculture products and other high-risk cargo. In addition, the recent loss of the canine program to inspect for brown tree snakes, Hawai'i is at an all-time high level of risk. PQ staff also inspect and certify agriculture products for export, ensuring a healthy agriculture industry.

CGAPS is also concerned about shortages affecting the department's Plant Pest Control branch (PPC), including their biocontrol program and work controlling existing pests such as little fire ants, varroa mites and noxious weeds.

With adequate funding, PQ might be able to detect the next brown tree snake when it arrives, and might be able to prevent another strain of 'ōhi'a rust from entering the state and decimating 'ōhi'a forests. With adequate funding, PPC might be able to work on the biocontrol EA for strawberry guava. Instead, strawberry guava is left to spread, resulting in a nearly 30% loss of water from our soils, streams, and groundwater systems in areas where strawberry guava has invaded native forests.

The loss of ability to prevent, detect and control invasive species has a high and permanent cost, and we must do everything possible to assist those that do this work. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Christy Martin
CGAPS PIO