



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

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February 18, 2010

TESTIMONY

before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

HB 2644 HD1 Relating to Solid Waste

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF), the largest statewide non-profit general agriculture organization, representing approximately 1,600 farm and ranch family members, appreciates the opportunity to present comments on this bill.

We need your help. Although this bill does not target agriculture, it provides an opportunity to address a long-standing problem for farmers and ranchers.

We are asking that the bill be amended to insert an exemption from the existing surcharge for certain agricultural wastes that require landfill disposal to prevent the spread of disease. This would only exempt a very small portion of agricultural wastes while providing a public health benefit.

We need the exemption because a farmer who loses his animals due to:

1. Natural disasters (like hurricanes) that kill entire flocks or herds or
2. Disease outbreaks (like salmonella) that necessitate destruction of animals already suffers huge losses and should not be saddled with further costs for animal disposal. Regulatory mandates and best management practices prevent burial of the animals on the farm.

In addition to these situations, our fledgling home-grown grass-fed cattle industry is being crippled by disposal costs for certain portions of animals that cannot be used because of regulatory or market constraints. These costs are so exorbitant that processing facilities won't even accept animals over 30 months old.

Everyone supports the concept of locally grown food. Our dependency on mainland and foreign food not only hurts our local economy but could prove disastrous if the islands are cut off from food shipments for even as little as one

week. Hawaii's farmers and ranchers are trying to ensure local food availability and security despite the higher costs of production here.

The State too, is trying to encourage more cattle processing in Hawaii in an attempt to improve Hawaii's biosecurity. Amending this bill to help our beef, pork, chicken, and egg producers will give local farmers the opportunity to provide the islands with at least some of its food needs. Solid waste surcharges should not be assessed on livestock carcasses and associated parts that cannot be disposed of through other means.

For this reason, we respectfully request the following amendment to Chapter 342G-62 (a). On page 2 of the bill, after line 20, add:

This surcharge shall not apply to disposal of livestock carcasses, or associated parts.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit comments in support of local food production for Hawaii.

**West County Farm Bureau
94-403 Ukee Street
Waipahu, Hawaii 96797**

February 18, 2010

TESTIMONY
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Marcus Oshiro, Chair
Rep. Marilyn Lee, Vice Chair

HB 2644 HD1 Relating to Solid Waste

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and Members of the Committee:

West County Farm Bureau represents farmers and ranchers from the Waianae Coast, Central Oahu and the North Shore of Oahu. Many of our members raise cattle, chickens and hogs. We share the concerns for the future of livestock production in our State and County expressed in the testimony by the Hawaii Farm Bureau. According to USDA NASS, livestock production in Hawaii from 1996 – 2009 has declined significantly:

Cattle -13%
Dairy -82%
Pigs -56%
Chickens - 57%

According to the Cooperative Extension Service, the decline was due to higher price of feed on the islands, agricultural lands being converted to urban use, and price competition from the US mainland.

Our farmers are encouraged by the extension service and veterinarians to dispose of our animal carcasses by taking them to the landfill, rather than burying them on the farm to prevent the spread of disease from dead and sick animals to healthy animals. This management practice is part of the Hawaii Emergency Response Plan to Avian Influenza Pandemic and other quality assurance plans for food safety.

Another challenge is the limited size of our farm lots (2-5 acres) to compost the mortality. During both Hurricane Iwa and Hurricane Iniki, thousands of animals were killed along the Waianae Coast. Our farmers were unable to bury those animals on their farms and transported the carcasses to the landfill once the roads were cleared.

We recognize that the current fiscal situation may require the proposed fee to support efforts that provide the public with necessary services. We would appreciate your support to sustain our very fragile livestock industry from further decline. Our dependency on mainland and imported food

hurts our economy and could prove disastrous if food shipments were disrupted for even as little as one week. We agree with the proposed amendment to HB 2644 HD1 by the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation to exempt existing surcharge application to the disposal of animal carcasses. For these reasons, we respectfully request the following amendment (**in bold**) to Chapter 342G-62 (a). On page 2 of the bill, after line 20, add:

This surcharge shall not apply to disposal of animal carcasses, or associated parts.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit comments in support of agriculture in Hawaii.

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2010 5:36 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: gottlieb@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Testimony for HB2644 on 2/18/2010 4:00:00 PM

Testimony for FIN 2/18/2010 4:00:00 PM HB2644

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Alan Gottlieb
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Submitted on: 2/18/2010

Comments:

Support with Amendments. We support the Farm Bureau's added language, to help the livestock industry.

We respectfully request the following amendment to Chapter 342G-62 (a). On page 2 of the bill, after line 20, add:

This surcharge shall not apply to disposal of livestock carcasses, or associated parts.