

**HB 2775,
HD2, SD1
Testimony**



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
on
March 24, 2010 at 9:30am
by
James R. Gaines
Vice President for Research, University of Hawai'i

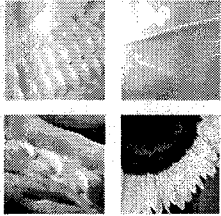
HB 2775 HD2 SD1 – Relating to Agriculture

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Tsutsui and Members of the Committee:

HB 2775 HD2 SD1 establishes fees for the processing of permits and other requests for the importation or possession of incoming plants, animals, and microorganisms into the State. The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports the intent of the bill and understands the department's need for additional revenue. UH is willing to pay a reasonable fee only if it leads to faster processing and issuance of importation permits.

The UH believes that increasing revenue is only one way to address budget shortfalls while maintaining an acceptable level of service. The University urges the Department of Agriculture to explore updating administrative rules and increasing the efficiency of the permitting process in order to reduce costs and improve service to the user community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Hawaii Crop Improvement Association

Growing the Future of Worldwide Agriculture in Hawaii

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Testimony By: Alicia Maluafiti
HB 2775 HD2, SD1, Relating to Agriculture
The Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday, March 24, 2010
Room 211, 9:30 am

Position: Support

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Tsutusi 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.

HCIA fully recognizes the dire straits of the economic crisis and its impact on the Hawaii Department of Agriculture. We continue to support a number of bills before the legislature that attempt to minimize the unintended consequences of the furloughs and reduction in force on the agricultural industry, including the seed companies. We further understand the need of the DOA to increase – at least temporarily – their fees to ensure that that they are able to effectively achieve their mission.

Therefore, we support the bill as amended.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment.

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
(Provided by Mark Fox, Director of External Affairs)
Supporting H.B. 2775 SD1 Relating to Agriculture
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
Wednesday, March 24, 2010, 9:30am, Rm. 211

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. 2775 SD1 Relating to Agriculture, and the establishment of a reasonable fee structure for issuing permits for imports of plants, animals and microorganisms to help support improved inspection capacity and services at the Department of Agriculture (HDOA).

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 HDOA is responsible for the inspection and permitting of arriving cargo and interisland cargo shipments to protect the state from 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 and between the islands. 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 review permit applications and to inspect cargo entering and moving between the islands:

- 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 and permitting 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 and been distributed across the islands until there is an outbreak of some kind.

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