



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

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TESTIMONY

HB 2948 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation on behalf of our farmer and ranch families and organizations support HB 2948 establishing requirements associated with interisland transportation to reduce risks of invasive species movement.

As the State faces unprecedented financial challenges it is critical that agencies operate in the most efficient manner. This means the public, businesses and agencies must form a collaborative partnership to result in maximum productivity within the system. This bill seeks to provide the mechanism to achieve such results. Risk assessments by HDOA have identified maximum risk commodities. At the same time, global trade had resulted in non-traditional movement of pests. This knowledge can be used to improve the efficiency of inspections if advanced knowledge of product movement is identified. We support this bill's intent to achieve this goal.

HFBF strongly requests your support of this measure along with timely implementation to improve inspection efficiencies and result in greater protection from invasive species. If there are any questions, please contact Luella Costales at 848 2074. Thank you

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting H.B. 2948 Relating to Agriculture
House Committee on Agriculture
Wednesday, February 3, 2010, 8:30am, Rm. 312**

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a private non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of Hawai'i'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. 2948 Relating to Agriculture, particularly the enhancements to HRS Section 150A-5 regarding written notification to the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) of the contents and origin of arriving cargo. Knowing in advance what is arriving at our sea and air ports is a critical component of the HDOA's ability to efficiently deploy its limited resources, protect the state from pest and disease introductions, and expedite the movement of cargo for the benefit of businesses and residents.

Invasive insects, diseases, snakes, weeds, and other pests are one of the greatest threats to Hawai'i'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. Knowing what is coming before it arrives is critical to make the best use of the resources the HDOA still has.

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