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LATE
Testimony



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

Written Testimony

HCR183

**REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU TO CONVENE AN
AGRICULTURAL WORKING GROUP TO RECOMMEND STRUCTURAL CHANGES
TO MEET THE NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF HAWAII'S AGRICULTURAL
INDUSTRY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY.**

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

Presented to the House Committee on Agriculture

Friday, March 19, 2010, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 312

Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Wooley and Members of the Committee:

Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution 183, which establishes an Agricultural Working Group.

The Bureau takes **no position** either for or against the measure, but submits the following comments and concerns:

1. As always, if the Legislature wants us to do this study, we will do it to the best of our ability with the resources we have.
2. As presently drafted, the Resolution directs the Bureau to convene the working group and submit a report of the working group's findings, recommendations, and proposed legislation.
3. We respectfully request two amendments that we believe will clarify certain matters and allow the Legislature to get the best use out of the relative small staff resources available to assist the Legislature.
4. First, we request that the Department of Agriculture be designated as the agency to convene the task force and provide administrative support. While this would be a very unfamiliar role for the Bureau--a small agency with very limited administrative staff, it would be relatively normal for the Department of Agriculture which itself is run by a board. This would entail replacing references

to the Legislative Reference Bureau with the Department of Agriculture in the title of the measure and the first "Resolved" paragraph.

5. Second, we request that the fourth (second to the last) "Resolved" paragraph be amended to read as follows:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Agricultural Working Group is requested to submit a report of its recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2011; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference Bureau is requested to assist the working group in drafting the working group's recommendations and proposed legislation; and

6. The foregoing language (which is substantially identical to the language used for the Task Force on Reinventing Government) is intended to make clear that the working group is reporting directly to the Legislature--as it should be--instead of the Bureau reporting on the actions of the working group.

The Bureau is available to assist the Committee with any committee draft and committee report that may be required for this measure.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify.

**LATE
Testimony**

**Hawaii Farmers Union
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hawaiifarmersunion@gmail.com**

**Testimony on HR118/HCR183 REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE
BUREAU TO CONVENE AN
AGRICULTURAL WORKING GROUP TO RECOMMEND STRUCTURAL CHANGES
TO MEET THE NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF HAWAII'S
AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY.**

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Committee House Agriculture

Friday, March 19, 2010
10 a.m.

312 Conference Room

Street State Capitol
415 South Beretania

**In opposition
HR 118/HCR138**

Aloha Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Wooley and Agriculture Committee members,
The Hawaii Farmers Union, a chapter member of the National Farmers Union would like to testify in opposition to HR-118/HCR 138. In summary, we are opposed to the vision articulated in this bill that calls for the expansion of the subsidized GMO/seed biotechnology industry in the state. In turn, we stand with the increasing world scientific consensus (see citations below) which calls for the establishment of more decentralized, ecologically-, and community-based systems of agriculture. In the long-term decentralized and ecological models of agriculture based on small-scale farming and on the production of high-value health-foods will bring greater economic rewards to our rural communities and to the state, as compared to the current models of highly centralized, subsidized, corporate-based, energy intensive, models of agriculture supported by the chemical and biotechnology Seed industry.

The pivotal assertion of this bill, **“there is a need to review our present situation and consider dramatic and radical reforms in restructuring. . .”** is easy to agree with.

However, the many assumptions it makes lack corroboration, and are in fact contrary to the findings of the most conclusive and authoritative economic and agricultural analyses of recent years including by the World Bank and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization’s “International Assessment of Agricultural Science, Knowledge and technology for development (IAASTD,) and by the International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/WTO)’s “Organic Farming and Climate Change,” among others (see citations below).

Most glaring is this resolution’s emphasis and promotion of GMOs or crop biotechnology. Not only is such a notion refuted by the reports listed above, CTAHR’s own publication on the only GMO food crop brought into production in Hawaii, the “Rainbow” papaya, “Attitudes of Hawaii Consumers Toward Genetically Modified Fruit,” - demonstrates that were the fruit to be labeled as GMO, not only would the most lucrative export markets remain closed to it, but local consumers would largely reject it as well!

It isn’t surprising that last years’ HFB/Biotech Industry’s sponsored report on the economic value of Hawaii’s GMO seed industry is invoked in support of continued and expanded GMO seed production. An expensive example of PR and big budget corporate lobbying, it consists of statistical manipulation and nominal and unsupportable economic analysis. To clarify, policy makers and the media are currently claiming a purported value of the biotech seed industry of over \$170 million per year; however this dollar value was developed by the industry itself. As compared to all the other commodities listed in the DOA annual report summarizing the value of all ag industries, which are based on farm-gate sales, the seed produced by the biotech industry does not exchange hands, and thus there is no transaction of capital from the local sale of a commodity, to directly benefit our economy. Furthermore the biotech industry study on the value of the seed industry does not include the long-term social and environmental costs of the seed industry in the state, which relies on the high input of pesticides and high rates of chemical fertilizer applications. As the citations below indicate, based on an international scientific consensus, the socioeconomic impacts of any new technology should be seriously considered, prior to their promotion and expansion.

Rather than to base policy direction and decisions on such an industry-sponsored document, HFU urges the Legislature to request that the University of Hawaii, led by an independent researcher, such as Professor Maxine Burkett, Associate Professor of Law and Director of the SOEST Center for Island Climate Adaptation and Policy, and colleagues, develop a white paper to assess the current status of the diversified agriculture industry in the state, its economic and environmental sustainability, and prospects for the future in terms of economic development of agricultural and impoverished rural areas of the state, and articulation of the best agricultural strategies that should be developed and promoted to better deal with the impending effects of climate change, and increased energy costs, on our agricultural landscape (which includes human, water and land resources).

Perhaps the best counterpoint to HR118/HCR 138’s assertion that promoting GMO technology is a viable means to sustain Hawaii’s agricultural economy can be found in the National Farmers Union Policy, “Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) have created a series

of ethical, environmental, food safety, legal, market and structural issues that impact everyone in the food chain. Consumer and producer concerns need to be addressed.” (NFU 2009 Policy.) NFU policy goes on to address 19 other points related to farmer’s rights and liability, contamination, consumers’ right-to-know (labeling,) and concludes by recommending that an immediate moratorium on the release of GMO’s go into effect.

Concerns about GM crops, and the poor regulatory oversight, are reflected by the recent court rulings awarding millions of dollars in damages to rice farmers whose crops were contaminated by Bayer, and by last week’s GMO sugar beet ruling by a Federal judge who declared that, “...genetically engineered beets creates a likelihood that such genetically engineered seeds and plants will mix with, and thus, contaminate conventional sugar beets, Swiss Chard, or table beets. . . the Court is troubled by maintaining the status quo that consists of ninety-five percent of sugar beets being genetically engineered while APHIS conducts the environmental review that should have occurred before the sugar beets were deregulated.”

The fact that hundreds of American farmers have been sued - often losing their farms and livelihoods after saving seed when Monsanto’s Round-Up Ready crops contaminated their fields; and the very real threat of increasing punitive and expensive litigation, should provide us with ample reason for circumspection and caution in allowing Hawaii’s precious land and water to be exploited for the expansion of an untenable industry.

Ultimately, as (independent, non-corporate-funded) scientists, economists, farmers and the growing ranks of vocal (voting!) health conscious citizens have been telling us – even for some of the very reasons put forth in this legislation – *we simply cannot afford the continued proliferation of GMO production in Hawaii.*

Hawaii Farmers Union has received many communications from throughout the state demanding that HFU be represented in this proposed Ag Working Group. As stated before, we can certainly concur with the need for “radical restructuring.” However we recognize the many individuals and organizations already engaged in creating positive change - through farmers markets, CSA’s, school gardens, neighborhood groups, conservation and green tech applications , watershed stewardship and restoration, and other solutions. We see validation and enhanced support for these initiatives – rather than propping up a doomed biotechnology sector - as a reasonable starting place.

The real imperative to recalibrate Hawaii’s agriculture/economy rests on these overall tenets;

We must:

- Transform tourism to a dynamic experience of agro-eco tourism – where visitors participate in malama ‘aina experiences that bring revenue and other resources to ag producers while providing visitors with a tangible and transferable understanding of what is truly Hawaii’s necessary gift to the world – an understanding of Aloha ‘Aina.

- Devote sufficient resources to teaching children the skills and knowledge required to produce, prepare, and enjoy healthy, nutritious food.
- Encourage the production and consumption of local, seasonal, high quality products reconnecting citizens with their food and food producers.
- Reduce the concentration of power in the agricultural, food processing and retail sectors and their influence on what is produced and consumed, and promote food systems that shorten the distance between farmers and eaters.
- Guarantee food safety by ensuring transparency along the food chain so that citizens know how their food is produced, where it comes from, what it contains and what is included in the price paid by consumers. (See NFU 2010 Food Safety policy.)
- Respect the local and global environment, protect the finite resources of soil and water, increase biodiversity and respect animal welfare.
- Guarantee that agriculture and food production be free from GMOs and foster farmers' (saved) seeds and the diversity of domestic livestock species, building on local knowledge.
- Give priority to maintaining an agriculture all over Hawaii that involves numerous farmers producing food and caring for the 'aina. This is only achievable with fair and secure farm prices, providing a fair income for farmers and agricultural workers, and fair prices for consumers.
- Consider food as a universal human right, not merely a commodity, prioritize growing food and feed for Hawaii, consider export capacity in accordance with principles of equity, social justice and ecological sustainability. Hawaii agriculture should not harm other countries' food and agriculture systems.

Can we do this? Can we radically restructure our approach and practice of agriculture to be truly sustainable? A look at Hawaii's history offers a resounding "Yes!" One example is the recent GPS-enhanced archeological discovery that confirm the extensive, unmatched productivity of pre-contact mahi'ai in Kohala. Another is the accomplishments of the ILWU and Hawaii's Labor Movement that brought working people together across racial lines to stand up against corporations for the larger common good. Willing to fight to achieve wellness for their children and grandchildren, their courage, sacrifice and vision has provided us with an ongoing legacy of advancements in workers rights, and benefits and quality of life that affects everyone in Hawaii.

HFU recognizes the achievements of earlier generations, and embraces the ideas and energy of our youth today. As we ALL come together to meet the many challenges we face, we know that Hawaii can and must fulfill its' destiny and be a model of regenerative agriculture and aloha 'aina for the world.

Sincerely,
Eden Marie Peart, President
Hawaii Farmers Union

Citations, global scientific consensus, increasingly calls for different ecological-models of agriculture that protect biodiversity, the environment, and that are respectful and cognizant of local socio-economic conditions:

Study by World Bank and United Nations (a 4-year study conducted by 400 scientists from 60 countries):

Beverly D. McIntyre, H.R. Herren, J. Wakhungu, and R.T. Watson (eds.). 2009: International assessment of agricultural knowledge, science and technology for development (IAASTD) : global report. Island Press, Washington D.C. ISBN 978-1-59726-538-6, 606 pp.

UK Study:

Royal Society, UK. 2009. Reaping the benefits: Science and the sustainable intensification of global agriculture. October 2009, ISBN: 978-0-85403-784-1, 86 pp.

National Farmers Union policy

www.nfu.org

Kauai County Farm Bureau

Affiliated with Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation

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The Voice of Kauai's Agriculture



**LATE
Testimony**

March 19, 2010

ATTN: Committee on Agriculture
Rep. Clift Tsuji (Chair), Rep. Jessica Wooley (Vice Chair) and Members of the
Committee

RE: HR118 – HCR183
Testimony of Kauai County Farm Bureau in SUPPORT
Roy Oyama, President

HEARING DATE: March 19, 2010 – 10:00am, Conference Room 312

Kauai County Farm Bureau on behalf of our member farm and ranch families, and affiliated with Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, **requests your support of HR118**, requesting the Legislative Reference Bureau to convene an agricultural working group to recommend structural changes to meet the needs and opportunities of Hawaii's agricultural industry in the twenty-first century.

It is a stated goal of our government to work together to provide for a sustainable and prosperous future for our state and its diverse communities, with greater food security. A critical component is to ensure the viability of agriculture in Hawaii today and to be working on long term solutions to ensure agriculture remains an important sector in our economy and create conditions for it to flourish in the 21st century.

We support this resolution to establish a working group as an opportunity to review State, Federal and County government structures related to agriculture, identify common needs across the state, propose revisions to increase effectiveness, create more opportunities for collaboration, and propose a strong approach to serve agriculture and our communities into the future. This could provide valuable guidance to our legislature and community as we work together toward our state's food security and the viability of the agricultural sector.

Please lend your support to HR118. Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Roy Oyama
President – Kauai County Farm Bureau

LATE
Testimony

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

March 19, 2010

TESTIMONY
before the
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Rep. Clift Tsuji, Chair

Rep. Jessica Wooley, Vice Chair

**HR 118 / HCR183 Requesting The Legislative Reference Bureau to Convene an
Agricultural Working Group**

Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Wooley 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. It is for these reasons, and the severe budget cuts to agricultural programs, we **strongly support HR 118/ HCR 183**. We respectfully ask for favorable consideration of this resolution that aids in the food security and sustainability of Hawaii.

Thank you for your support of Hawaiian Agriculture.

To: House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture. (586-8544)

From: West Oahu County Farm Bureau (676-9200)

Re: Testimony for 3/19/10 Hearing at 10:00 AM in Room 312

No. of Pages: 2

Support HR 118/HCR 183

Requesting 5 Copies