

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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**TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE
AND
WATER, LAND, AND OCEAN RESOURCES
MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2010
10:30 A.M.
ROOM 325**

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 184 / HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 119
REQUESTING THAT THE LEGISLATURE CONVENE AN INVESTIGATORY PUBLIC
HEARING TO EVALUATE THE BIOSECURITY PROGRAM BY EXAMINING STATE AND
COUNTY POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT AFFECT THE AVAILABILITY OF WATER FOR
AGRICULTURE AND MAINTENANCE OF AGRICULTURAL IRRIGATION SYSTEMS.**

Chairpersons Tsuji and Ito and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution No. 184 and House Resolution No. 119. The purpose of these resolutions is to convene a hearing to evaluate the biosecurity program by examining availability of water for agriculture and maintenance of agricultural irrigation systems. The department respectfully provides the following comments.

The department has been working on the Agricultural Water Use and Development Plan (AWUDP) since 2003. To date, the first two phases have been published and the third phase is under review pending additional funding. The AWUDP identifies known irrigation systems and will ultimately recommend improvements to those which should remain in service to the agricultural industry. Additionally, the department participates in the Hawaii Drought Council which among other things discusses irrigation water availability in times of low rainfall.

We respectfully suggest that the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands be included in this group and wish to mention that if additional research is required on islands without irrigation staff, we will be unable to participate due to extremely limited travel funds.



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**TESTIMONY OF ALFREDO LEE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE
COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE
AND
WATER, LAND & OCEAN RESOURCES**

**Monday, March 29, 2010
10:30 a.m.
Room 325**

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 184/
HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 119
REQUESTING THAT THE LEGISLATURE CONVENE AN INVESTIGATORY
PUBLIC HEARING TO EVALUATE THE BIOSECURITY PROGRAM BY
EXAMINING STATE AND COUNTY POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT
AFFECT THE AVAILABILITY OF WATER FOR AGRICULTURE AND
MAINTENANCE OF AGRICULTURAL IRRIGATION SYSTEMS.**

Chairs Tsuji and Ito and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on H.C.R. No. 184 / H.R. No. 119. The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) is in support of this resolution. We actively manage irrigation systems on Oahu and Kauai. ADC is a member of the Drought Council and the Ko'olau Mountains Watershed Partnership. We recognize that the availability of water is critical for the sustainability and continued viability of the local agriculture industry.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2010 9:32 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: gottlieb@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Testimony for HCR184 on 3/29/2010 10:30:00 AM

Testimony for AGR/WLO 3/29/2010 10:30:00 AM HCR184

Conference room: 325
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Alan Gottlieb
Organization: Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: _____
Submitted on: 3/24/2010

Comments:

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2010 9:32 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: gottlieb@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Testimony for HR119 on 3/29/2010 10:30:00 AM

Testimony for AGR/WLO 3/29/2010 10:30:00 AM HR119

Conference room: 325
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Alan Gottlieb
Organization: Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Address:
Phone:
E-mail:
Submitted on: 3/24/2010

Comments:

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2010 7:14 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: pennysfh@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Testimony for HCR184 on 3/29/2010 10:30:00 AM

Testimony for AGR/WLO 3/29/2010 10:30:00 AM HCR184

Conference room: 325
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Penny Levin
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail:
Submitted on: 3/23/2010

Comments:

Aloha;

I strongly oppose HCR 184/HR119. This bill uses the nebulous idea of biosecurity as a smokescreen to attempt once again to override the laws of our state in regards to water.

There are clear laws that govern water use and which set forth the Commission on Water Resources Management to steward our use of this resource. They need to be allowed to work. CWRM also needs to have its staff restored to allow it to implement the laws and court rulings they are tasked with upholding. Political pressure that would bow the legislature and the Water Commission to industry interests at the expense of the long term sustainability and recoverability of our watersheds, soils, aquifers and streams is irresponsible. It does not have the concerns of these islands at heart. Water is a public trust resource.

Ag industry has removed the majority of water from streams and groundwater sources on all islands for 150 years. That means for 150 years, water that would traditionally have replenished groundwater systems, springs, ocean seeps and high elevation moisture regimes above and below ground, have not been allowed to return to the source. Add to that more than 7 years of drought. No water from the heavens, no water from the surface of the aina. We pump more and more water from the system and little goes back. Deep soils dry out; soil micorrhizae that support efficient uptake of water by plants and help them survive droughts die out; high elevation fog drip becomes less frequent - because the inputs of the cycle are diminished. Even if the removal of water from our streams stopped right now, it will take decades for our water resources to recover. This is real. The math is clear.

Whether we agree or not, when there is only one coin left in the jar, no turn of argument will make ten - except in our own minds. We are good at this. When gas prices were high, we began to believe that oil was a finite resource and changed our behavior. As soon as prices dropped, so did our concern. The change in price did not create a single drop more of oil in the world; only a false belief that we can continue on as we were.

I have observed outside Hawaii what happens to an island when overused aquifers collapse. Everything dies a slow death from the deepest roots up, from crops to old forests. Wells first go brackish and then go dry. Animals and birds leave or die. Soils and reefs erode.

We are 2,500 miles from the next nearest aquifer. We can not ship water in. We are not equipped to implement the level of desal and demineralization of desal water (without which

crop soils collapse), that would be needed to replace what we have broken. We can no longer afford to make irresponsible political and economic decisions about our water or agriculture.

The only way to replenish these freshwater resources is to restore and repair the complex hydrology that governs Hawaii's streams, springs, seeps, dikes and aquifers; and to restore our soils so they can hold onto moisture longer.

Jobs will mean absolutely nothing if we have not taken care of that which cares for us - our water and soil. That is life. We can and will feed each other, house and care for each other, even without money and even if industrial ag disappears. But, without protected and restored aquifers, without fresh water, all the money in the world will mean nothing. Our communities, all of our families will suffer - not just the few remaining jobs on the plantations.

Allow the land to recover. Have patience that the laws that govern water use will return these islands to health. The short breadth of your political careers or my lifetime are not how the aina measures its recovery. But each of our decisions and actions impacts the speed and quality of that recovery.

Take the politics out of water and put ecology and hydrology back on the table. Put back what is good for the long term survival of island streams, aquifers and reefs, our children. Then we will all survive.

I urge committee members to leave the water code alone and OPPOSE HR119/HCR184.

Mahalo.