

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE
AND
TOURISM, CULTURE & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2009
11:00 A.M.
ROOM 312**

**SENATE BILL NO. 696, SD1
RELATING TO COQUI FROGS**

Chairpersons Tsuji and Manahan and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 696, SD1. The purpose of this bill is to authorize the counties to use a portion of their share of the transient accommodations tax for coqui frog eradication and requires each county to adopt an ordinance to exercise the authority granted by this measure. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture supports this measure.

The coqui frog is now wide spread in the East Hawaii area and is beyond eradication at this time on the Island of Hawaii with available tools. However, there are many areas on the Island of Hawaii not yet infested with the frog and where community groups have been vigilant to prevent the frog from becoming established through community based treatment programs to knock out known incipient infestations.

The frog has limited distribution on Kauai, Maui, and Oahu and eradication is feasible on these islands.

William P. Kenoi
Mayor



William T. Takaba
Managing Director

Walter K.M. Lau
Deputy Managing Director

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March 20, 2009

The Honorable Clift Tsuji, Chair and
Honorable Joey Mahahan, Chair
And Members of the House Committee on Agriculture
And House Committee on Tourism, Culture and International Affairs
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: Senate Bill 696 SD1, RELATING TO COQUI FROGS

Dear Chair Tsuji, Chair Manahan and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 696 SD1, which as originally drafted would appropriate funds for grants-in-aid to the counties for coqui frog eradication for fiscal year 2010.

As you know, Hawai'i County has for years been a leader in the fight against the spread of coqui frogs despite the fact that this problem is clearly under the jurisdiction of the state Department of Agriculture. Today, our declining revenues and increasing expenses make it extremely difficult for the county to continue to finance this effort.

Despite the county's financial difficulties, we stand ready to assist in state and federal efforts to control and eradicate the coqui frog. In the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, the county will provide matching funds for any grants-in-aid money the state devotes to these efforts on Hawai'i Island.

We hope that with the assistance of the state we will be able to continue the community-based effort to control the spread of the coqui, and even to eliminate this invasive pest in those areas where it has not yet become firmly established.

Thank you for your consideration.

Aloha,

Billy Kenbi
MAYOR