

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting H.B. 1569 Relating to Agriculture
House Committee on Agriculture
Wednesday, February 9, 2011, 10:00AM, Rm. 312

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 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 supports H.B. 1569 and its purpose to develop an import replacement program and to support the local production of agricultural commodities to reduce the pest risks associated with importing some agricultural products.

Invasive weeds, insects, diseases, snakes, and other pests are one of the greatest threats to Hawaii's economy, agriculture, natural environment, and the health and lifestyle of its people. The HDOA has developed a multi-faceted Biosecurity Plan to enhance its invasive species prevention efforts with more inspectors, more efficient and effective inspection services, improved inspection facilities, and agreements with importers and producers for improved sanitary protocols before items are shipped to Hawai'i. Another important component of this Plan is to support efforts to develop local agricultural production for import replacement. The Legislature's ongoing policy and financial support of the Biosecurity Plan has been essential to its implementation.

The Nature Conservancy had the pleasure of participating in a Buy Local event during the past holiday season with the Department of Agriculture, local flower growers and local floral designers. The event was a wonderful opportunity to share with the public the beauty of Hawai'i grown flowers and foliage while simultaneously supporting the local agricultural industry and providing education about the risks associated with some imported flowers and foliage. We look forward to continuing this collaboration.

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Hawaii Floriculture & Nursery Association

Testimony for the Twenty-Six Legislature, 2011
State of Hawaii

House Committee on Agriculture
Wednesday, February 09, 2011 10:00 A.M.

A bill for an act
HB1569 Relating to Agriculture

Honorable Chairperson Rep. Clift Tsuji
And
Committee Members

My name is Eric S. Tanouye and I am the pro-tem president for the Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association. HFNA is a statewide umbrella organization with approximately 300 members. Our membership is made up with breeders, hybridizers, propagators, growers, shippers, wholesalers, retailers, educators, and the allied industry, which supports our efforts in agriculture.

Invasive species is an important concern to Hawaii with our delicate ecosystem and our need to import products into our islands. No one wants a new pest or organism to spread. Farms and Nurseries are well aware of the need to stop invasive species as new pests have to be controlled, which can lead to an increase in the cost of production as new controls have to be established and implemented. Then as an exporter invasive species that would threaten other areas can lead to threats of embargo and quarantines.

With the reduction in funding and the resulting loss of inspectors, this has created a situation where inspectors are only intercepting 10% to 25% of what they did prior to the funding drop. The 75% to 90% difference can cause Hawaii economic harm if an invasive species was to take a foothold. This could lead to higher costs of control in our production areas and in turn a loss of market. I can not stress the importance of our inspectors having the funding to be able to prevent invasive species.

The 'Import Replacement Program' can help ease the quantity of high risk items needing to be inspected and at the same time provide products that will help strengthen the Floriculture Industry, all Farmers and Ranchers as well as the Community in the State of Hawaii.

If you have any questions at this time, I would be happy to discuss them and can be reached by phone at 808-959-3535 ext 22, cell 960-1433 and email eric@greenpointnursery.com.

Supporting Agriculture and Hawaii,

Eric S. Tanouye
Pro-Tem President
Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association



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February 5, 2011

To: House Committee on Agriculture
Re: Hearings on February 9th, 10:00 am, Rm 312
Subject: Testimony regarding HB 1569

Aloha Committee Chair and Committee Members,

I am an organic farmer on the North Shore of Oahu and President of the Hawaii Center for Organic Farming. Please accept my testimony on the subject Bill.

In the case of HB 1569: HDoA to Develop an Import Replacement Pilot Program. I am a huge supporter of improving Hawaii's food security in particular, "local food for local consumption". In fact this is the first legislative session wherein dozens of bills are being introduced that will, in some small way, improve this condition. HB 1569 will target invasive species, the many other bills will: provide income and excise tax incentives, put local food in our schools, seek better utility rates, improve irrigation, subsidize feed expenses, even build a slaughter house. All of these bills nibble away at individual issues and will somehow benefit a local farmer here and there but none, including HB 1569, has yet to address all of these issues under a single umbrella bill to "identify problems and solutions to improving food security under the Hawaii 2050 Sustainability Plan".

HB 1569 will put the burden of yet another study, task force, improvement plan on the shoulders of HDoA, all of which are guaranteed to fail and all of which could and should be combined into one. Improvements to agriculture are most definitely needed; our public demands it and our Legislators recognize it. We need a comprehensive plan, not bits and pieces, to better identify where to invest public dollars. I recommend that HB 1569 be amended to become the vehicle for combining these many similar and supportive bills into one with specific direction as outlined above and with specific guidance to focus on "local food for local consumption". Mahalo.

Al Santoro, Farmer