



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

2343 Rose Street • Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Phone: (808) 848-2074 • Neighbor-Islands: (800) 482-1272
Fax: (808) 848-1921 • Email: info@hfbf.org
www.hfbf.org

February 24, 2011

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 318 HD1
RELATING TO VOG

Room 308
10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, the largest non-profit agriculture advocacy organization in the state with approximately 1,600 farm and ranch family members is in **strong support with comment** of HB318 HD1, creating an interagency task force to recommend actions relating to VOG.

Since 1984, vog has been an ongoing concern on the Big Island and periodically on other islands. Farmers and ranchers have experienced various levels of losses, including death of plants and livestock and degradation of infrastructure. There has been a USDA secretarial emergency designation for areas of the Big Island that authorized low interest loans but there have been few takers because people don't want to invest due to the uncertainty of the duration of the activity.

There are other disaster programs through insurance, but many have not signed up for programs and/or do not qualify for assistance.

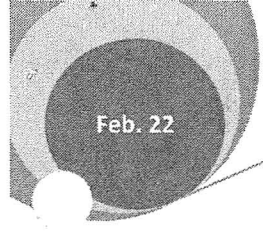
Opportunities exist but assistance may be needed to educate farmers and ranchers and assist them in understanding the risk/benefits of the various USDA programs. To this end, we recommend the addition of a representative from USDA, Farm Service Agency to be a member of this task force.

Additionally, it would be valuable to obtain first hand information about impacts as well as pragmatic opinions of delivery of assistance. We recommend adding a representative of the Hawaii Farm Bureau and Big Island Cattlemen's Association.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Manfredi", written in a cursive style.

Chris Manfredi
Vice President; Chair, Government Affairs



Support HB 318 HD1

HEALTH; CIVIL DEFENSE; AGRICULTURE; VOLCANIC ACTIVITY ESTABLISHES A VOLCANIC ACTIVITY TASK FORCE TO DISCUSS THE IMPACT OF VOG ON THE PEOPLE OF HAWAII AND FIND WAYS TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES. EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2050. (HB318 HD1)

I, Angela Kaaihue, support HB 318 HD1.

The vog has been a problem and may continue to be a problem for us. Simply breathing, has been difficult for some people. The vog has devastated crops and animal livestock. In the past, ashes from volcanoes have ended civilization. We may not be able to stop a natural devastation as to those in the past, but we may be able to control some of the devastation occurring now from the Big Island.

One solution is to place a big air vacuum right at the opening of the volcano. This could suck the sulfuric acid as it leaves the ground and enters the air. I'm sure there are other ideas or solutions. But if we don't spend the time to further evaluate and research methods, we will never make progress.

Living on the Big Island, is such a beautiful place filled with waterfalls, and vast amount of land. There are valleys, and the people are so kind. There are the lush tropical forests, the black sands and green sandy beaches. The people are so kind yet they are suffering. They may not even realize how bad this air can be because not enough research has been conducted. Or the lack of research thereof.

We need to take air quality more seriously. Perhaps the sulfur dioxide can be captured and can become a valuable resource to us. There are many uses for sulfur dioxide. But we won't know until we spend the time and research into this.

Please protect our air quality. The hazy air over us is terrible. It blocks the sun. Living on Oahu, many of us may think that the hazy sky is humidity or clouds. But actually is the vog, many of us don't even know it's vog. We can't smell it, but those who know what it is, and know about the weather system, we know that when the wind changes, and we get those KONA winds, that the haze in the sky OVER HONOLULU is not humidity, or clouds, instead it is VOG from the Big Island.

SOLUTION: Capture the vog, air vacuum the vent, filter the sulfur dioxide, and then find a use for it. Perhaps sulfur dioxide can be a valuable resource for Hawaii. There are many uses for it. But first, we need to spend the time, and energy researching and studying VOG from the BIG ISLAND.

We know that when it is Voggy on Oahu, it is clear on the Big Island. However, when it is clear on Oahu, it is voggy on the Big Island. We're just fortunate that most of the vog is blown into the ocean from our North East Trade winds. But those days, when we don't have those trade winds, we can definitely see the vog.

We have seen the realty market in Kona drastically decrease because of VOG. Island crops have been devastated. The vog has blocked our island's sun for days at a time. Putting this off any longer, we can't afford it!! Protect our air quality so that I may breathe easier, so that my family may breathe easier, and for my children, and for my friends.

Mahalo, for letting me provide testimony on this matter.

Sincerely,

Ms. Angela Kaaihue
Candidate for Master Degree in Bioengineering
University of Hawaii at Manoa '11

Testimony of
Bob Loy
Waimanalo, Hawaii
Supporting
HB 318 HD1 Relating to Vog
Committee on Finance
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As you discuss this legislation please consider adding to it specific language that emphasizes that Vog is not a problem that is limited to the Big Island of Hawaii and please require the Volcanic Activity Task Force to investigate vog-related issues on other islands as well.

My wife suffers from asthma and other lung related diseases. For her and thousands of other Hawaii citizens—most of whom do not live on the Big Island—Vog is more than an irritant and annoyance, it is a threat to their health and even to their lives. This is especially true following the increase in volcanic activity in recent years which has greatly increased the amount of vog in the air and the number of days when vog is present.

What is most urgently needed on Oahu and other neighbor islands is access to real-time air quality information, and just as important, an effective outreach program from the Department of Health to help vog victims identify the presence and intensity of the threat. Currently on Oahu, for example, the DOH has a reasonable real-time air monitoring network that provides via a DOH website, hourly updates on air quality information. However, there are only four monitoring sites, none of which are located on the North Shore or Windward Oahu where meteorological conditions and vog density can vary widely. So while Honolulu residents can learn about current air quality conditions near their communities, residents in other areas cannot.

The other significant problem associated with the DOH monitoring and reporting efforts is that little or no effort has been made to inform people where they can find the information, and how to interpret the information once they have found it on the internet. This is critical. This is where the state can take steps to reduce vog-related threats to citizens. By educating people where they can find the information and teaching them how to interpret the information, residents can take responsibility for limiting their exposure to vog and thereby reducing the health impacts it creates.

These are issues that must be explored and dealt with by the Vog Task Force. There is much work to do to help Hawaii residents cope with and limit the damage done by health threat.

Please make sure that if this Task Force is created that it give adequate attention to vog issues statewide...not just on the Big Island.