

HB 318

HD2, SD1



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April 1, 2011

**Committee on Ways and Means
Room 211
9:00 AM**

RE: HB318 HD2, SD1 RELATING TO VOG

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Farm Bureau on behalf of our commercial farm and ranch families and organizations is in **strong support with comment** of HB318 HD2, SD1, creating an interagency task force to recommend action 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, especially leafy vegetables and flowers, livestock and degradation of fences and other infrastructure. There has been a USDA 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 volcanic activity.

There are other insured disaster programs for flowers and livestock but many eligible applicants have not enrolled, therefore they do not qualify for insurance reimbursement.

Opportunities exist but assistance is needed to educate eligible recipients concerning existing programs. Moreover, collaborative study may help alleviate health and safety risks and design new programs to assist those in greatest need. To this end, we recommend the addition of a representative from USDA, Farm Service Agency to be a part of this group. They could provide services available and the interagency group could identify mechanisms to get the assistance out to affected parties.

In addition, 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 Big Island Farm Bureau and Big Island Cattlemen's Association.

We appreciate this opportunity to testify and respectfully request passage of this measure, adding representatives mentioned above to the list.

Thank you for supporting HB 318.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2011 12:17 AM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: jm2day@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for HB318 on 4/1/2011 9:00:00 AM

Testimony for WAM 4/1/2011 9:00:00 AM HB318

Conference room: 211
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Jolene Molinaro
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
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Submitted on: 3/31/2011

Comments:

I strongly support HB 318 which would allow for the establishment of a County of Hawaii Interagency Task Force on Vog to discuss the impact of vog on the people of Hawaii and find ways to address these issues.

I personally know several people who are seriously affected by vog, one being my own daughter and one being a dear friend and colleague who nearly died of complications of pneumonia due to VOG this past month. I believe it is a serious health risk especially to those who suffer from asthma and allergies, which accounts for many people in Hawaii.

Thank you for your consideration.