

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

JAMES J. NAKATANI
Deputy to the Chairperson

**TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2011

9:40 AM

CONFERENCE ROOM 312

**HOUSE BILL NO. 528
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 528, Relating to Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture supports this bill which proposes to establish a full-time grant writer position within the Department of Agriculture to assist farmers and ranchers to seek grant opportunities offered by USDA and other granting entities.

The Department concurs with your committee's finding that many of our farmers and ranchers are struggling to secure the financial support necessary to establish thriving and vibrant businesses. Grant writing is indeed an arduous, complex and technical process. A well trained grant writer with a good track record could contribute immensely to assist our existing farmers and ranchers to access federal and private funds that many observers believe are under-utilized in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.



January 29, 2011

Testimony

RE:HB 528 Relating to Agriculture

Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committee

Maui County Farm Bureau on behalf of our commercial farm and ranch families and organizations on the island supports with comment, HB528, establishing a grant writer position in HDOA

Lack of General Funds and other direct appropriations has resulted in an increased level of dependence on grants. Many federal programs have turned into competitive grant programs. Many states have dedicated resources to go after these monies. We do not deny it make sense. Unfortunately, when there is a limited pot of money and there really is no additional resources within the State, other critical programs may need to take precedence.

We respectfully request that this bill be **passed with a defective date** to allow further discussion between HDOA, industry and the Legislature about priorities before decisions are made.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this important matter. If there are questions, please contact Warren Watanabe, Executive Director of MCFB at 2819718.