

TESTIMONY OF MAR LABRADOR
VICE PRESIDENT, HORIZON LINES, LLC
ON FEBRUARY 2, 2011
TO THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
REGRADING HB865 -- RELATING TO INSPECTION FEES

Chair Tsuji and members of the committee, I am Mar Labrador, Vice President of Horizon Lines, LLC, one of the major container shipping companies on Hawaii, and I am testifying in opposition to HB865, Relating to Inspection Fees.

As the Department of Agriculture (DOA) reported to this committee last week, the vast majority of all invasive species entering the state, do so aboard aircraft and not onboard ocean-going vessels. Yet it is the maritime industry that bears the brunt of this fee. Indeed, even the way the fees are determined, per ton rather than some other basis, places the burden of these fees squarely on the shoulders of the maritime shippers.

In years like 2010, where ocean cargo is significantly down, but air traffic (i.e. visitor arrivals) is significantly up, there is a huge disparity between where funding is derived and where that funding is spent.

We humbly suggest that due to the importance of this matter, additional costs for the inspection, quarantine and eradication of invasive species be addressed via a consistent funding source, i.e., a proper appropriation from the general fund.

Our chief underlying concern has always been the simple issue of fairness. It should be noted that the maritime shippers have always paid for their agriculture inspections and, as such, there should be no claims that the proposed fee, in this legislation, would fund the routine inspections done by the DOA today.

If an invasive species enters the state through the airport, establishes itself in the Hawaiian islands, and needs to be eradicated, it is the maritime shippers who will be paying for its eradication, despite the fact that there is absolutely no nexus between the species introduction and the harbors or its users.

When the invasive species inspection fee was originally proposed, we worked hand in hand with this committee and the DOA to ensure that the fee levels and payment procedures were appropriate, and we look forward to continuing our partnership in fighting the introduction of invasive species into our islands.