

**HB 866**

**HD 2,SD1**

**NEIL ABERCROMBIE**  
Governor



**RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**JAMES J. NAKATANI**  
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**TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2011  
9:30 A.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 211**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 866 HD2, SD1  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Ige and Members of the Committee:

House Bill 866 S.D. 1 proposes to amend Chapter 142 HRS by creating a new section to provide the opportunity for beekeepers to voluntarily register with the department of agriculture and provide information that may assist the department in compiling accurate information on Hawaii's beekeeping industry. This information shall be kept confidential by the department. We recommend that the measure provide an appropriation out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii for the sum of \$350,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2011 – 2012 and the same or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2012-2013 to establish an apiary program, including permanent positions: 1) one apiary specialist; 2) one apiary planner; and 3) two apiary technicians.

With the recent introductions of the varroa mite and small hive beetle into Hawaii, bee keepers on the Islands of Oahu and Hawaii have collectively lost thousands of hives over the past two years. The pests, currently only on the islands of Oahu and

Hawaii, pose a serious threat to honey bees and agricultural production reliant on pollination throughout the state. The department is in critical need of an apiary specialist and staff to develop programs to contain and control these and other serious pest of the honey bees that threaten honey bees, honey production and the pollination of crops for agricultural production in Hawaii.

The department strongly supports this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.



NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
GOVERNOR

BRIAN SCHATZ  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

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CATHY L. TAKASE  
ACTING DIRECTOR

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Cathy L. Takase, Acting Director

Hearing: Wednesday, March 30, 2011, 9:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Room 211

Re: Comments on H.B. No. 866, H.D. 2, S.D. 1  
Relating to Agriculture

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The purpose of this bill is to require beekeepers to register with the Department of Agriculture (DOA). The Office of Information Practices (OIP) takes no position on the bill's registration requirement but recommends that the bill's confidentiality provision be revised to enable the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to disclose statistics about the beekeeping industry.

At OIP's recommendation, the House Committee on Agriculture had amended the bill to make the registered beekeepers' names and business addresses publicly available. However, the bill still requires all other registration information to be kept confidential while allowing the DOA to compile statistics on the information. Confidentiality of registration information under this bill would necessarily restrict DOA from publicly disclosing statistics about the beekeeping industry since the statistics will be derived from such confidential registration data.

Therefore, OIP recommends that the bill's confidentiality provision be amended in either of two ways. First, OIP suggests that the bill's confidentiality provision (page 2, lines 8 through 13) be amended to require DOA to keep confidential registration information to the extent that this information falls within an exception to disclosure under chapter 92F. Alternatively, OIP recommends that the bill be amended to make confidential registration information that is

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individually identifiable so that the DOA can still disclose statistics and other data about the beekeeping industry without identifying the specific subject registrants.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

## In Support of House Bill 866

On behalf of the Big Island Beekeepers Association, I wish to register our support for this measure. In particular, we support funding for the position of State Apiary Specialist and related support positions. Beekeeping in the State of Hawaii has suffered from inconsistent state support. The system of funding temporary, emergency programs in response to the invasive species threatening our industry has proved inadequate. The devastation caused by Small Hive Beetle (SHB) on Hawaii Island is a case in point.

When this pest arrived, state support for investigating honey bee pests was limited to the varroa mite only and funding for this temporary project had ended; UH Varroa Mite Project personnel had been let go. Given limited resources, all HDOA personnel on island were directed to investigate the coffee borer. In the seven short months following the identification of SHB on our island to the end of 2010 over 50 percent of managed honey bee colonies on Hawaii Island were wiped out. This is known only because our association conducted a survey to collect these data.

There are still islands unaffected by either varroa mite or SHB. Beekeepers on these islands deserve better than what we have experienced. We also know that there are more threats to our industry elsewhere on the mainland U.S.A. and in the world in the form of tracheal mites, Africanized bees, and more. If there is to be a honey bee industry in the state at all and all the benefits that derive from it, in the form of jobs and pollination for other crops, then there must be public support for extension services for beekeepers.

Currently, the State Apiary Specialist is supported by a one year grant. The passage of this bill will extend that term for another year. Hopefully within that time frame the benefits of a more stable program of outreach to beekeepers will be made obvious.

The 2030 effective date for this measure should be corrected.

Cary Ploeger-Dizon, President  
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