

**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 KOKUBUN  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2011  
8:30 A.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 312**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 867  
RELATING TO HEALTHY INITIATIVES**

Chairperson Tsuji, Chairperson Brower and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 867. The bill proposes to expand the sale and consumption of Hawaii-grown produce by establishing a safe food certification pilot program to benefit farmers and consumers, encourage farmers to form agricultural cooperatives, and coordinate purchasing agreements between agricultural cooperatives and schools, hotels, restaurants and other buyers in the visitor industry. The Department of Agriculture supports the intent of the proposed bill.

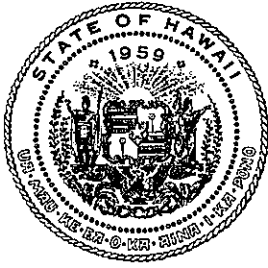
Over the past several years, the Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii, the Hawaii Farm Bureau, the Hawaii Department of Agriculture and the University of Hawaii and Kyo-Ya (Sheraton Hotels) have worked cooperatively to inform farmers and agricultural supply chain members about the need to become food safety certified. Collaboratively, these organizations have offered farmers food safety training and certification at no cost to the farmers.

Due to the recent reductions in force, the Department of Agriculture is not currently staffed to support the food safety component of the proposed legislation. The bill would require funding for the hiring, training and certification of several additional personnel.



Currently the Department is not staffed nor legislated to coordinate purchasing agreements or to assist farmers to form agricultural cooperatives. Purchasing agreements and agricultural cooperatives are private sector initiatives. However, the department of agriculture's food safety website could serve as center in support of agricultural cooperatives and food supplier registration (<http://www.HawaiiFoodSafetyCenter.org>) and, with appropriate funding, adequate staffing could be hired and trained to support the intent of the proposed legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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MIKE MCCARTNEY  
President and  
Chief Executive Officer

# Hawai'i Tourism Authority

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Testimony of  
**Mike McCartney**  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Hawai'i Tourism Authority

on  
**H.B. 867**  
**Relating to Healthy Initiatives**

House Committee on Agriculture  
House Committee on Tourism  
Friday, February 4, 2011  
8:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 312

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) strongly opposes SECTION 3 of H.B. 867, which makes an appropriation out of the Tourism Special Fund for a safe food certification pilot program.

The HTA was established to develop, coordinate, and implement state policies and directions for tourism, with a strong focus on marketing and promotion of the Hawai'i brand for the tourism industry. In addition, HTA is tasked with working eliminate or reduce barriers to travel by addressing issues affecting air transportation to Hawaii, coordinating the enhancement of Hawaii's visitor product, development of the visitor industry workforce, and working to ensure visitor safety and security.

H.B. 867 directs the HTA to carry out a function, which would be better carried out by agencies that are involved with the agricultural industry.

The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, under Chapter 147, HRS, has the responsibility to certify the "grade, classification, quality, or condition of food products," and has the Certification Services Revolving Fund to support certification of fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, honey, and coffee, processed food, eggs, and meat. Further, the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service is the federal agency responsible for the safety of food.

H.B. 867 seems primarily to serve as a means to provide funding for the pilot program. Section 37-52.3 provides that special funds shall only be established by an act of the legislature and one of the criteria for establishing a special fund is that there is a "*clear nexus between the benefits sought and the charges made upon the users or beneficiaries of the program, as opposed to serving primarily as a means to provide the program or users with an automatic means to support the program...*" This is not an appropriate means of financing such a program.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.