



LATE TESTIMONY

Maui County Farm Bureau

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January 29, 2011

Testimony

RE:HB869 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Tsuji and Member of the Committee

Maui County Farm Bureau on behalf of our commercial farm and ranch families and organizations on the island requests your support of HB869 creating a partnership between the Counties and the State in agricultural research and development.

Over the years we have seen funding for the Cooperative Extension Service within CTAHR. Hawaii is unique by having the majority of funding for the Extension offices borne by the State. Cooperative funding, much of it coming from the Counties is the norm across the country. We have urged the Maui County Council to support our local Extension Office and have been fortunate to receive assistance for the past 4 years. We do not know if it will continue but we feel it is an opportunity for the entire State. Each county's needs are different. Funding these programs would be a very effective means by which the Counties could help with the viability of local farms and ranches. They would have a vested interest in the operation.

The measure seeks to leverage State funding with County funding to enable a stronger Cooperative Extension Program. These offices are the direct contacts for our farmers and ranchers. The agents will be important contacts to enable compliance with new regulatory requirements on the farms and ranches. Ultimately, collaboration with Federal offices should also be encouraged.

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.