

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
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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

**FRIDAY, APRIL 1, 2011
TIME 9:30 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 312**

**HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 265
RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 2012 AS "HAWAII-GROWN CACAO MONTH"**

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Resolution No. 265. This resolution recognizes February 2012 as "Hawai'i-Grown Cacao Month," a month-long effort to educate and promote public awareness of the multiple benefits of Hawai'i-Grown cacao.

The Department of Agriculture is a strong advocate for the development of new crops and market niches for diversified agriculture in Hawaii, and fully supports this resolution. Hawaii grown cacao is an attractive product that is constantly in demand by many of our top chefs. A Hawaii-grown cacao month, filled with different promotional activities, will help to raise public awareness and to generate more consumer interest in local chocolate products.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this resolution.



April 1, 2011

**Testimony submitted to the House Committee on Agriculture
regarding House Resolution 265, Recognizing February 2012 As
"Hawaii Grown Cacao Month"**

**House Committee on Agriculture
Conference Room 312, 9:30 A.M.**

Position: Support

To Chair, Vice Chair & Members of the House Committee on Agriculture:

My name is Michael Conway. I am the Agriculture Manager for Dole Food Company Hawaii which includes Waialua Estate Coffee & Cacao.

The relatively new business of growing cacao for cocoa bean and chocolate production is one of the few bright spots in the State's diversified agriculture sector. Serious growers on all the major islands are planting cacao for the first time or planning to expand their existing base. The reason for this is the growing recognition, unique quality and taste of the only 'bean to bar' chocolate produced in the U.S. And while Hawaii's cacao industry is regarded as small at the present time it is picking up momentum due to a growing interest among chocolate manufacturers, candy makers, chefs and entrepreneurs. For example, our Waialua Milk Chocolate recently won a gold medal at the San Francisco Chocolate Salon Awards and the 70% Dark gained high recognition at the London Academy of Chocolate. Chef Alan Wong, a strong advocate of locally grown products, included Hawaiian grown chocolate at the White House Congressional Picnic in 2010 and last month at the James Beard Culinary Academy.

The passage of HCR 89 in 2010 designated the month of February 2011 as 'Hawaii Grown Cacao Month' and afforded an excellent opportunity for growers and chocolatiers to display, sample and sell their chocolate products at different venues from boutiques to farmer's markets. The months' festivities culminated with the first Hawaii Chocolate Festival at Dole Cannery which was a resounding success and will likely become an annual event.

It is our desire to keep this momentum going through 2012. We strongly ask for your support of Hawaii's cacao industry by passing HR 265.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Conway".

Michael J. Conway