

Date and Time of Hearing: 03/01/11, 9:20 am
Room: 211
Bill Number: SB1145
Ways and Means Committee

LATE

To: Senator David Y. Ige
Ways and Means Committee

From: Alani Apio
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Re: Support for SB1145 SD1: RELATING TO AGRICULTURE, "Food Sustainability Bill"

This testimony is in strong support of SB1145. Hawai'i's incredible level of vulnerability with respect to imported food compels us to take action. Any number of scenarios could leave us simply unable to feed our population for an extended period of time—people may literally starve. A hurricane strike to O'ahu, a global disease outbreak or even the current political turmoil in the Mideast can cause disruptions to our food supply in myriad ways. To not begin immediately addressing our dangerous over-reliance on imported food is simply immoral. We have put our citizens and society at huge risk.

I strongly support the passing of this legislation because we need to set goals for food sustainability through government in order to begin addressing the systemic changes that are needed to bring us back to acceptable levels of food self-sufficiency. However, I would encourage the legislature to work with the Department of Agriculture on defining more ambitious, yet reachable goals; we do not have the luxury of time to rebuild our local food systems because we are already at high risk. I recommend setting goals based on a timeframe of 2013, 2016 and 2021 rather than 2020, 2030 and 2040.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB1145SD1.

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor



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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

JAMES J. NAKATANI
Deputy to the Chairperson

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TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2011
TIME 9:20 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 211

SENATE BILL NO. 1145, S.D. 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Ige and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill No. 1145, S.D.1, Relating to Agriculture. This bill requires the state to attain certain food sustainability standards with enumerated deadlines; requires the department of agriculture (DOA) to monitor the state's progress to achieving food sustainability standards; requires DOA to report annually to the Legislature; and to make appropriations to DOA to effectuate the purpose of this Act. The Department supports the intent of this bill.

The Department is a strong advocate for local farmers and ranchers and appreciates your committee's interest in setting a specific goal for food self-sufficiency in Hawaii by creating measurable standards over a long-term period. Furthermore, this goal reflects Governor Abercrombie's *Agricultural Renaissance in Hawaii*, to produce more of our own food, to keep money in the local economy, protect green space, support thriving rural communities, reduce the risk of invasive species, and make us more secure against disruptions to our food supply lines.

The Department realizes that growth in food self-sufficiency is not only dependent on the availability of land in the state. There are also other considerations such as water, labor, financing, appropriate technology, available markets, and other determinants that should be taken into account and quantified.

The food sustainability standard as proposed in this measure requires the collection and compilation of in-shipment data. This is necessary because imports and exports from/to the U.S. mainland are not available from federal or state sources. Imports and exports data from/to other countries are available from the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The Department previously collected and compiled in-shipment data for fresh fruits and vegetables (FFV). This in-shipment data, used in conjunction with local production data, give us reliable estimates of the proportion of locally grown FFV sold in the local market. Currently, no in-shipment data is available as all staff members in the program were directly affected by the 2009 reduction-in-force. The Department has initialized discussion with the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) to develop a collaborative system to gather and analyze relevant dates and to present findings to the community at large.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.