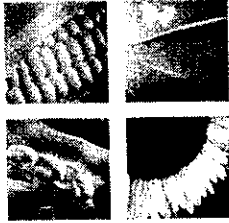


LATE TESTIMONY

Hawaii Crop Improvement Association

Growing the Future of Worldwide Agriculture in Hawaii



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Testimony By: Alicia Maluafiti

SB 145 HD 1 – RELATING TO IRRIGATION

The House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, March 30, 2011
Room 308, 11:00 a.m.

Position: Strong Support

Aloha Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and members of the Committees:

My name is Alicia Maluafiti, Executive Director of the Hawaii Crop Improvement Association, a nonprofit trade association representing the seed industry in Hawaii. HCIA strongly supports SB 145 HD 1 – authorizing the issue of general obligation bonds to make capital improvements to our irrigation systems across the state.

HCIA's member seed companies maintain operations on the islands of Kauai, Maui, Molokai and Oahu. They are vested in the agricultural future of this state and have invested millions into improving the irrigation, buildings and other infrastructure. But our 100-year old irrigation systems owned and maintained by the state are in disrepair and facing serious maintenance issues. Any disruption in delivering water to farmers could severely impact their viability as we saw after the earthquake on the big island.

HCIA has seen and testified on a number of bills to appropriate funds to fix Hawaii's failing irrigation systems critical to ensuring the viability of farmers and ranchers statewide. We believe this bill offers a more comprehensive approach to addressing these challenges. Assuming that the budget appropriations for the HDOA will not include funding for irrigation repair and maintenance, this bill becomes even more critical to the future of agriculture in Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment.