

LATE

SB 738

nishihara5 - Randy

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2011 9:42 AM
To: AGL Testimony
Cc: lfplan@aol.com
Subject: Testimony for SB738 on 2/1/2011 3:00:00 PM
Attachments: ParadiseMeadowsagainstSB738.docx

LATE

Testimony for AGL 2/1/2011 3:00:00 PM SB738

Conference room: 229
Testifier position:
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Megan Collins
Organization: Paradise Meadows Orchard & Bee Farm
Address: South Point Road Na'alehu, Hawaii
Phone: 808 929-9148
E-mail: lfplan@aol.com
Submitted on: 2/1/2011

Comments:

I am a farmer in Ka'u, a director of the Ka'u County Farm Bureau and a beekeeper who raises bees for the pollination for my crops as well as other local farmers. Our bees also produce honey.

I think that SB 738 is unnecessary and waste of our tax dollars.

Megan Collins

Paradise Meadows Orchard & Bee Farm

Home of The Local Buzz 100% Ka'u Coffee & Honey

PO Box 1083, Na'alehu, HI 96772

February 1st, 2011

RE: Testimony against SB 738

Dear Chairman Nishihara, Vice Chair Kahele, and members of the Committee on Agriculture,

I am a farmer in Ka'u, a director of the Ka'u County Farm Bureau and a beekeeper who raises bees for the pollination for my crops as well as other local farmers. Our bees also produce honey.

I think that SB 738 is unnecessary and waste of our tax dollars.

The information required by this bill; the registration of beekeepers, hive counts, queen counts, and where the hives are located is information that becomes obsolete as soon as it is recorded. Bees swarm, queens die, and beekeepers move hives to be near nectar flows, around the islands, all year round. The paperwork and documentation burden for tracking this information by the beekeepers alone would be tremendous.

We and most of the beekeepers on the Big Island have been in constant contact and been involved with local agents of Hawaii Department of Agriculture for the last two years because of the arrival of the *varroa destructor* mite to the island of Hawaii. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture knows who we are, and what we do. We have expressed our needs to them as we have been infected with first the varroa mite and now the small hive beetle. We have never expressed a need to be registered, and think that our taxpayer's dollars would be better spent in other ways to save the bees.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony.

Megan Collins

nishihara5 - Randy

From: nishihara1 - Dale
Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2011 10:59 AM
To: AGL Testimony
Subject: FW: SB738 Testimony/ Howard McGinnis: Opposed

LATE

From: espero2 - Venus
Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2011 10:52 AM
To: nishihara1 - Dale
Subject: SB738 Testimony/ Howard McGinnis: Opposed

Aloha,

Again as with the previous attempt to legislate beekeeping, minimal notice?

I intend to oppose, and to solicit as much public support to oppose, any legislation regarding beekeeping at this time. I was opposed to the 2008 attempt as well.

The Small Hive Beetle issue is the primary reason for the opposition as is the lack of information from the HDOA on bee pests. If the agency tasked with protecting Oahu from the spread of invasive species is instrumental in spreading a pest, why should I support any legislation? What do I as a beekeeper receive in return? How do I benefit?

Varroa was discovered in 2007 on Oahu and later on the Big Island. Initially samples were taken and HDOA was helpful in providing beekeepers with mechanism to attempt to manage varroa. No information on the usefulness of the materials was every made public. In fact, the University of Hawaii has been instrumental in helping beekeepers cope with varroa and without any legislation, most of us have survived. We cooperate with one another, we've been instrumental in bringing a very effective treatment to market. Feral colonies are surviving and both managed and feral colonies have shown remarkable resilience. It's not perfect, but it's working and it hasn't required any legislation.

Small Hive Beetle was announced right after hives were moved from the Big Island to Oahu. Two months ago, the University of Hawaii announced that Small Hive Beetle was present in Kunia. Why UH made the announcement and not HDOA PQB is not known. To date, no public notice of SHB on Oahu has been made by HDOA. The common belief is that the movement of bees from infected areas of the Big Island to Oahu is the reason SHB is present. Administrative rules were in effect to prevent the movement of bees, other than queens, between islands but apparently had lapsed - allowing a pest to move inter-island. Will legislation prevent this? I think not.

The UH Manoa has been extremely helpful in keeping us informed on methods to combat SHB, unlike HDOA. Again, no legislation required.

What will requiring us to register hives (and what other things are present?) do for us? As a beekeeper on Oahu for almost 7 years, I continue to be approached by people who have hives and had have hives for years. Are they going to register their hives?

I keep bees on other peoples land. Will legislation force them to allow state apiarists on their property? I could lose sites because of this. Is the legislation intended to put me out of business?

Will the legislation allow the state to dictate what will be the disposition of hives? Will the state compensate me for hives destroyed and if so, how much? What will be the criteria for determining the worth of a hive? Who will do the appraisal? Will the rules apply uniformly to honey producers (a \$1.1M business according to 2005 USDA reports) and queen rearing companies (estimated at \$20M annually)?

Laws are not needed. What is needed is funding for UH to continue their research on varroa, small hive beetle and other pests now present in Hawaii. What is needed is accountability at the state level for the spread of an invasive species, namely Small Hive Beetle.

Other states have enacted legislation because of common borders - pests can move through migratory beekeeping and the movement of bees and equipment from state to state. Hawaii already has laws prohibiting the importation of bees, live or dead, and used equipment into Hawaii. We do not have the migratory beekeeping like the mainland or at least to the extent the mainland does.

When the previous attempt to enact legislation was made in 2008, the reaction from the public was to support my position. I anticipate that I will garner support in opposing this as well.

Mahalo,

Howard McGinnis

Aloha again.

Requiring beekeepers to register colonies with the registration valid for 3 years is pointless.

Over the course of one year, I will lose hives and I will gain hives. As an example, I can lose 20 colonies for various reasons, catch 20 swarms to replace them and the effect is no change in colonies. But I've still lost 20 colonies. You aren't asking why, you aren't asking

losses and gains. The industry reports that normal losses can range from 0 to 25 percent each year - Colony Collapse Disorder has distorted the figures so that no one knows what the numbers are any more.

So there's no good information to be gained other than total number of colonies at a given instant in time. A lot can happen in 3 years.

And doesn't the National Agriculture Statistic Service already compile data on colonies and honey production, which is the true measure of colony health? I already have a hard time filling this out.

Are other industries subject to the same accounting? Is the egg producers required to register the number of egg layers they have? Does the beef industry register cows?

Information can be obtained voluntarily with out requiring laws. Ask UH to do a survey. Do a web site survey. When HDOA wanted to sample hives for varroa, the Oahu beekeepers went above and beyond the call of duty - we bought sample jars and alcohol and took sampes and submitted them to HDOA - no laws required, we wanted to help.

We DONT need more unenforceable legislation.

Mahalo,

Howard McGinnis

nishihara5 - Randy

From: nishihara1 - Dale
Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2011 11:00 AM
To: AGL Testimony
Subject: FW: SB738 Testimony/ Richard Spiegel: Opposed

LATE

From: espero2 - Venus
Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2011 10:53 AM
To: nishihara1 - Dale
Subject: SB738 Testimony/ Richard Spiegel: Opposed

From: Richard Spiegel [mailto:richard@volcanoislandhoney.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2011 9:58 AM
To: governor.abercrombie@hawaii.gov; espero2 - Venus; "sennishihara@capitol.hawaii.gov."@smtp2.pauspam.net
Cc: 'Russell Kobubun'; 'Daniel K Inouye'; 'Daniel Akaka'; ddir.director@hawaii.gov; Sen. Malama Solomon; Lyle.Wong@hawaii.gov
Subject: RE: Beekeeping Bills/Hearings scheduled for 2/1, 2/2: Request to submit supportive testimony

To: Senator Clarence Nishihara, Chairman, Senate Agriculture Committee

Hearing Date: 2/1/11

Bill #: S.B. NO.738 and HB NO. 866

From: Richard Spiegel
Owner
Volcano Island Honey Co.
www.volcanoislandhoney.com
808-775-1000 ext 307

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I do not support this bill.

This is what it makes me feel: "Sound the alarm! The Barn is burning! Quick, tell the stable boy to count the horses!"

In my opinion, S.B. NO.738 and HB NO. 866 recognize a crisis in the beekeeping industry as follows:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii's beekeepers are experiencing devastating losses in their industry due to a combination of bad weather and the infestation of varroa mites, nosema spores, and small hive beetles.

And makes an absurd proposal: "Sound the alarm! We need action. Tell the Department of Ag to count the beekeepers and then report back to us in a couple years and tell us how the counting is going."

This sounds so nuts to me it has pushed me to respond.

There is a real bee crisis occurring on the Big Island and on Oahu. And so far in nearly 4 years there have been very few effective accomplishments. There really are things that can be done to address these ongoing “devastating losses”. This bill does none of them. It does add another task for the underfunded, understaffed HDOA.

I respectfully suggest that if you want to participate in the ongoing honeybee crisis, the following is one of the things that might be effective:

Talk to and listen to the people involved!

Direct the HDOA to release previously allocated and budgeted monies, to fund a coordinator to facilitate effective meetings, ongoing communication and collaborative decision making by the stakeholders in this crisis. The stakeholders include: queen breeders, honey producers, beekeepers, farmers, HDOA, DLNR, UH Honey Bee Program, state and county beekeeping organizations, state and county legislators, USDA. That collaborative effort was underway but has been blocked by the HDOA for more than a year by withholding funding and support and by less than forthright communication.

At a public meeting on Feb 24, 2010, then Representative Dwight Takamine, once again, strongly urged HDOA to release funds for a coordinator and collaborative stakeholder group. There was money available for this from at least 2 rounds of funding (that I know of) provided to HDOA to respond to honeybee issues: \$650,000 in 2007 (I believe from the State Legislature) and \$350,000 in October 2010 (I believe from the USDA). After previous obtuse responses concerning these funds, HDOA, at that Feb 24th meeting, agreed that it could and would release funds to the Big Island Varroa Mite Steering Committee (a group that was already functioning on donations) to be received and administered by the Kohala Center, (a 501c3 organization). To date (11 months later) that commitment has not been kept by HDOA and the crisis deepens.

In my opinion and experience as a mediator and facilitator, it will take the different perspectives and experiences of the various stakeholders to create an effective response to this crisis. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture cannot solve this crisis themselves (made obvious by the results of the past 3-1/2 years) (especially since they are not beekeepers and are understaffed and underfunded; and they should not be expected to figure this out.

It has been my personal experience, from the very beginning of this situation, that HDOA has not communicated effectively (except for Lyle Wong) or consistently with beekeepers about the circumstances and status of this continuing crisis. They have not responded to my emails or phone calls for the past year, so I just gave up, intending to remain silent and ignore this legislative and administrative morass, and work independently to preserve my honey business (an internationally known producer of a world class, organic, Hawaiian honey) until I saw this proposed bill which vaguely implies that somehow, in some future time, there might be a possible response to this very real issue. Then in 2013 HDOA will be able to report a success – We registered the beekeepers. It was pretty easy. There weren't many left.

This proposed bill brought up all my old frustrations of the past nearly 4 years.

What I have described above is only one small piece of a long and frustrating saga that threatens agriculture here in Hawaii and on the mainland, and has put the livelihood of some very good people in jeopardy. Even if we re-open the dialogue, there may be startling damage that we did not avoid, but at least we should have some real discussions about possible solutions.

Thank you for your consideration of my perspective. I offer my perspective to provide benefit, not harm.

Sincerely,

Richard Spiegel

Owner

Volcano Island Honey Co.

www.volcanoislandhoney.com

808-775-1000 ext 307

nishihara5 - Randy

From: Kona Queen [queenbee@aloha.net]
Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2011 11:59 AM
To: AGL Testimony; Sen. Clarence Nishihara
Cc: Lyle Wong; Darcy.E.Oishi@hawaii.gov; Neil.J.Reimer@hawaii.gov
Subject: Testimony for S.B. No. 738

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

LATE

RE: S.B. No. 738
Date: Tuesday, February 1, 2011
Time: 3:00 P.M.

Please forgive the tardiness of this testimony as we just received a copy of this Bill from an Oahu beekeeper this morning on February 1, 2011. We had no prior knowledge that such a Bill was being considered or that a hearing was scheduled.

I am Gus Rouse, owner of Kona Queen Hawaii, Inc. We are a major supplier of mated queen honeybees to the US Mainland and Canada. My company is among the largest commercial beekeeping operations in the State of Hawaii.

I oppose S.B. No. 738 for the following reasons:

1. The success of a large commercial beekeeping operation depends upon our ability to relocate hives frequently. It would place an undo burden on this business and other commercial beekeepers to have to notify HDOA each time our bees are placed at a different location.
2. Requiring registration does not mean that everyone WILL register. There are good guys and bad guys. The bad guys who may be bringing in or spreading pests and diseases are likely the very ones who would not register. I have known of this to occur in many states in my 30+ years of beekeeping experience.
3. As this Bill is written, it would require additional reporting of statistics that I feel are my personal business. The HDOA is already aware of the size of my operation. Having to file statistical reports will only increase the additional labor that we are already experiencing because of the pests and diseases that have recently been introduced.
4. **It is my opinion that the money required to run such a program would be better spent on a border protection program that could prevent the introduction of more new pests not only for the beekeeping industry, but for other agriculture entities as well.**

Please consider my testimony although it is late. I am disappointed that I have not been notified of the hearing until the day that it is to begin.

Yours truly,
Gus Rouse
Kona Queen Hawaii, Inc.