

SR 18



Hawaii Farm Bureau
F E D E R A T I O N

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March 18, 2011

HEARING BEFORE
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE and
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, & HOUSING

TESTIMONY ON SR 18

Room 225
2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Nishihara, Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committees:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, the largest non-profit agriculture advocacy organization in the state with approximately 1,600 farm and ranch family members **strongly supports SR 18**, "Urging the City and County of Honolulu to Expend Monies Already Dedicated in its 2010-2011 Executive Operating Budget to Conduct a Study to Map and Determine Important Agricultural Lands on Oahu, for That Purpose."

HFBF has long supported efforts to identify and designate the important agricultural lands (IAL) of the State of Hawaii. Since the adoption of Act 183 (2005), the process of voluntary IAL designation has been proceeding. The second phase of Act 183, which requires each County to identify lands within its boundaries for consideration by the Land Use Commission for IAL designation, will begin effective July 1, 2011.

Oahu is by far the most populated island in the Hawaiian chain, and the most dependent on imported food. Honolulu is extremely vulnerable to food shortages if there is any interruption in ocean transportation. Honolulu is also the most accessible large market for Hawaii's agricultural products. Despite these facts, residential development continues to consume much of Oahu's prime agricultural land – most obviously on the Ewa Plain, but also in smaller increments islandwide. It is essential that Honolulu identify and designate its IAL while enough land remains to make any impact on Oahu's food needs.

Honolulu's FY 2010-11 budget allocates the sum of \$500,000 for the Department of Planning and Permitting to begin the critical process of identifying and mapping IAL on Oahu as required by Act 183. In order to be used for this purpose, the funds must be encumbered by June 30, 2011. So far, however, no schedule for their use has been created. We therefore support the Hawaii State Senate's efforts to encourage the City and County of Honolulu to begin IAL identification and mapping by expending the funds it has allocated for this purpose. The Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation stands ready to assist Honolulu by active participation in this critical task.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter of the greatest importance to the future of Honolulu

Oahu Farm Bureau
2343 Rose St.
Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
March 21, 2011

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair, Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Housing
State Capitol Building, 415 S. Beretania St.
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairs Nishihara and Dela Cruz and Members of the Committees:

I am sending this testimony to express the **strong support** of the Oahu Farm Bureau for **SR 18**, "Urging the City and County of Honolulu to Expend Monies Already Dedicated in its 2010-2011 Executive Operating Budget to Conduct a Study to Map and Determine Important Agricultural Lands on Oahu, for That Purpose." Act 183, passed in 2005, requires the Counties to identify and map important agricultural lands (IAL) within their boundaries starting in July 2011.

Oahu has Hawaii's largest population, and is by far the largest market in the State for agricultural products. Nevertheless, steady urbanization has absorbed large areas of Oahu's prime agricultural land, and much of the remaining land will inevitably be lost to development if the most critical areas are not preserved. The recent tsunami should serve to emphasize the vulnerability of Honolulu's supply chain, and the importance of establishing some level of self-sufficiency in food production. It is imperative, therefore, that the City and County of Honolulu begin the process of identifying and mapping IAL as envisioned by the Legislature when it passed Act 183.

Although Honolulu's FY 2010-11 budget allocates \$500,000 for the Department of Planning and Permitting to identify IAL on Oahu, these monies have yet to be encumbered. We encourage the City and County of Honolulu to spend these funds for their intended purpose, and thank the Hawaii State Senate for sending a strong message on this important matter.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Frederick M. Mencher
for Grant Hamachi, President



LATE

THE SENATE
THE TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2011

Senate Committee on Agriculture
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Senator Gilbert Kahele, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Housing
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Malama Solomon, Vice Chair

HEARING DATE: Tuesday, March 22, 2011
TIME: 2:00pm
PLACE: Conference Room 225, State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Subject: Testimony in Support of S.R. 18

Chairs Nishihara and Dela Cruz, Vice Chairs Kahele and Solomon, and Committee Members:

The Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association (HAAA) strongly supports SR 18, which urges the City and County of Honolulu to expend funds that are in its 2010-2011 Executive Operating Budget to conduct a mapping study to determine Important Agricultural Lands (IAL) on Oahu. Current and future aquaculture and aquaponics farming could greatly benefit from identification of quality land sites on Oahu and their designation by the Land Use Commission (LUC) as IAL to preserve them for Island food production.

As of 2005, farmers and landowners can voluntarily petition the LUC to designate their land as IAL. Beginning July 1, 2011 each County is required to go through a process to identify lands as IAL for submission to the LUC. The City and County of Honolulu has demonstrated leadership in this process by appropriating \$500,000 to begin a process to identify IAL starting in July. HAAA recommends the Legislature pass SR 18 to demonstrate its strong interest in seeing the IAL process begin in Hawaii's most populated county.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ronald Weidenbach, President
Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association