

HB 1277, HD2

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512

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 SENATE COMMITTEE
ON
AGRICULTURE**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2011
2:55 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 229**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1277, H.D. 2
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE STATEWIDE AGRICULTURE WATER
DEVELOPMENT STUDY**

Chairperson Nishihara and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1277, H.D. 2. The purpose of this bill is to fund the statewide agriculture water use and development plan (AWUDP). The Department prefers that this project be addressed as a capital improvement project plan and therefore should be funded with G.O. bonds.

The Department of Agriculture has been statutorily mandated to develop the AWUDP. In recognition of this need, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) has been providing matching federal funds to assist in the research necessary to continue the study. We have been informed by the BOR that another request has been submitted in their current budget. To complete this plan, in-depth studies of irrigation systems throughout the state are being conducted. As the State currently has no long-term agricultural water use plan, it is unclear how much of the abandoned sugar cane and pineapple plantation land is suitable for diversified agriculture and what the current and future water demands may be. Additionally, capital improvement projects for the aging irrigation systems need to be identified so the State can take proactive measures to prevent a catastrophic failure of an irrigation system.



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The AWUDP identifies projected water uses and demand for various crops which will be instrumental in long-term planning of the systems. It will also eventually inventory all known systems identified in the first phase of the plan as well as other systems that have come to our attention, and create a capital improvement plan as needed. Work will additionally include a historic description of the original infrastructure, existing conditions, assessment of the current concerns and needs, proposed maintenance improvements, estimated costs, identification of each system's sources and water use requirements for Hawaii's expanding diversified agriculture industry, and development of long-term water use projections. The study will potentially identify which systems can be restored versus which systems may be abandoned as well as possible water source planning and development.

The Department supports the request of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation that State funds be appropriated for fiscal year 2012 utilizing general obligation bonds.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

2343 Rose Street, Honolulu, HI 96819
PH: (808)848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921

March 16, 2011

TESTIMONY

**Re: HB1277HD2 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE STATEWIDE AGRICULTURE
WATER DEVELOPMENT STUDY**

Chair Nishihara and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation on behalf of commercial farm and ranch families and organizations in the State **strongly supports** HB1277 HD2, funding the completion of Hawaii's Ag Water Use and Development Plan.

The State Water Code requires a Hawaii Water Plan that addresses current and future needs of water in the State. In 1998, as large water systems were abandoned with the closure of plantations, the Legislature included the Agricultural Water Use and Development Plan as part of the State Water Plan. The intent of the measure was "to develop a long-range management plan that assesses **state and private** agricultural water use, supply and irrigation water systems." (quote from Commission on Water Resource and Management with emphasis added).

Since passage, attempts have been made to complete the Plan. To date, it remains incomplete and the Water Commission is faced with decision making responsibilities that need this information. Past reports emphasized State systems and while they are important, they are not the only systems in the State. Many areas depend on private systems.

The completion of this plan is needed to provide information for County Water Use and Development Plans as well as the State Water Plan. Additionally, it will provide guidance for future capital expenditures as well as critical information for the Water Commission.

We appreciate this opportunity to provide our opinion on this matter. If there are any questions, please contact Warren Watanabe at 2819718.



March 17, 2011

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

Support of HB 1277, HD 2, Relating to the Statewide Agriculture Water Use and Development Plan.

Thursday, March 17, 2011 at 2:55 p.m. in CR 229

My name is Dave Arakawa, and I am the Executive Director of the Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF), a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers and a utility company. One of LURF's missions is to advocate for reasonable, rational and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources and public health and safety.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony **in support of HB 1277, HD 2, and to offer comments.**

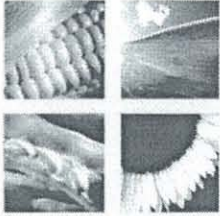
HB 1277, HD 2. This bill proposes to make an appropriation out of the agricultural development and food security special fund for the statewide agriculture water use and development plan (AWUDP) to be completed by the State Department of Agriculture (DOA).

LURF's Position. The DOA is responsible for the preparation of the AWUDP, mandated by the State Legislature through Act 101, Session Laws of Hawaii (1998). The major objective of the AWUDP is to develop a long-range management plan that assesses state and private agricultural water use, supply and irrigation water systems.

With large amounts of prime agricultural lands and irrigation systems made available for conversion to diversified agriculture as a result of the plantation closures in the 1990s, the State presently has an opportunity to strengthen and expand Hawaii's diversified agriculture industry. Agricultural lands, however, require significant quantities of water to support and maintain productivity. Local farmers are thus relying on the AWUDP and studies conducted pursuant thereto, to be completed and updated by the DOA, as required, to work toward expansion of diversified agriculture; promote the agricultural self-sufficiency of the State; and to protect water as an important resource.

For the above reasons, LURF **supports HB 1277, HD 2**, funding the completion of the AWUDP.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding this matter.



Hawaii Crop Improvement Association

Growing the Future of Worldwide Agriculture in Hawaii

Testimony By: Alicia Maluafiti, Executive Director

HB 1277 HD 2 – Making an Appropriation for the Statewide
Agriculture Water Development Study

The Senate Committee on Agriculture

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Room 229, 2:55 p.m.

LATE

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Position: Strong Support

Aloha Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Kahele, and members of the Committee:

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 HB 1277 HD 2 Making an Appropriation for the Statewide Agriculture Water Development Study.

During these tough economic times, it's apparent that there will continue to be competing uses for limited funds especially those from the Agricultural Development and Food Security Special Fund. But water plays an obvious critical role in agricultural sustainability, so the request to use the special fund to pay for the study is legitimate and necessary.

Projected water use is instrumental in the long-term planning of Hawaii's irrigation system and we've seen a number of bills addressing the repair and maintenance of these systems. The study will be important in identifying which systems can be restored, which systems may be abandoned, and based on available land, assist the state and our farmers in water resource planning and development as it relates to agricultural viability.

HCIA respectfully requests your support of HB 1277 HD 2. Mahalo for the opportunity to comment.