



## **Hawaii Agriculture Research Center**

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### **TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND WATER, LAND, & OCEAN RESOURCES**

#### **HOUSE BILL 1277**

#### **Making an Appropriation for the Statewide Agriculture Water Development Study**

February 7, 2011

Chairmen Tsuji and Chang and Members of your Committees:

My name is Stephanie Whalen. I am Executive Director of the Hawaii Agriculture Research Center (HARC). I am testifying today on behalf of the center and our research and support staff.

**HARC strongly supports House Bill 1277 providing for an appropriation for the agriculture water development study.**

HARC is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support agriculture in Hawaii through research and infrastructure preservation. Its experiment station is located at the urban/agricultural boundary in the Kunia agricultural area, essentially the gateway to this agricultural district. It has been stated in the past as being located among some of the best agricultural lands in the state. In the sugar era it produced some of the highest yields on record. It continues to show that with other crops.

The only source of agricultural water for HARC is the Waiahole Irrigation System. The Board of Water Supply limited the use of potable water to domestic use on this parcel and where available to other agricultural operations in the area. Without water there can be no viable agriculture on this land as it receives very little rainfall.

It is my understanding that while some effort has gone into the state agricultural water use plan the funding has always been limited. A critical factor needed by other departmental policy-making bodies is a clear and well developed plan for agriculture water. Whereas, the IAL process is intended to support the set aside of agricultural land, the uncertainty over water policy for agriculture continues to impede the process of designation. Having an agriculture water development study that clearly delineates what is needed for sustainable agricultural water systems throughout the state is long overdue and critical to the long-term viability of agriculture for Hawaii.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment on this critical matter for agriculture.

## hashem3 - Casey

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Friday, February 04, 2011 8:16 AM  
**To:** AGRtestimony  
**Cc:** john.mchugh@pioneer.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for HB1277 on 2/7/2011 11:15:00 AM

Testimony for AGR/WLO 2/7/2011 11:15:00 AM HB1277

Conference room: 325  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
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**Comments:**

The Waiahole Ditch system provides high quality irrigation water to several farms in the Kunia region on Oahu. Without this system there would, most likely, not be any agriculture in the area. The age of the system is, in some places, more than 100 years. Because of this many of its parts will fail soon. Already some stretches of the Ditch have been repaired over the last 15 years.

For the future of agriculture in the state of Hawaii please approve the HB1277 which will provide money to make urgently needed repairs to the Waiahole Ditch system.