

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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2011
TIME 9:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 312**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1380
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 1380. The purpose of this bill is to amend Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, by adding three new sections to establish a farm-to-school program in the Department of Education.

The Department of Agriculture supports the overall intent of this bill to increase procurement of locally-grown fruits and vegetables by public schools and recognizes that this measure moves forward the mission of the department.

However, we would like to express our concern with the provisions of ACT175, SLH 2009 which removed the exemption for fresh meats and produce from Chapter 103D, Hawaii Public Procurement Code, Hawaii Revised Statutes, which impact the provisions of this bill.

The Department remains a strong supporter of the "Buy Local" concept. As provided in this measure, the Department of Education, the Department of Health, the

Department of Accounting and General Services and the Department of Human Services will also play prominent roles in the determination of this bill. Thus, the Department defers to the comments from these departments.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Date: 02/04/2011

Committee: House Agriculture

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 1380 RELATING TO HAWAII-GROWN PRODUCE.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes the farm-to-school program in the department of education to increase the procurement of locally-grown fruits and vegetables.
Establishes the Hawaii-grown fresh fruit and vegetable program to increase schoolchildren's access to Hawaii produce. Establishes the farmers to food banks pilot program.

Department's Position: There are several components to Section A (the portion that applies to the Department of Education) of this bill.

(1) Establishes a farm-to-school program in Department of Education (DOE) to increase the procurement of locally grown produce. While DOE supports the procurement of locally grown produce, the barriers to DOE's increased procurement of local produce are largely outside DOE's control. DOE respectfully suggests that the Department of Agriculture (DOA) is a more appropriate agency to take the responsibility for a farm-to-school program. DOE is willing to be an active participant in such a program.

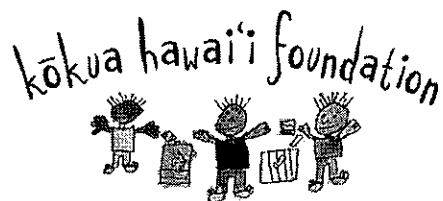
(2) Establishes the Hawaii-grown fresh fruit and vegetable program modeled after the current federally funded Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program (FFVP). DOE is supportive of such a program. However, we need to point out that funds would be needed to implement it. Factoring the 85 eligible schools (not including the schools participating in the

federal program), enrollment in qualifying schools, times the minimum cost per student, the projected general fund baseline appropriation requirement will be \$2.8 million annually. This is based on the United States Department of Agriculture FFVP criterion of approximately \$63 per student cost for the current program. Included in the \$2.8 million cost would be additional full- and part-time positions: grant manager, procurement specialist, data entry clerk, accountant, and cafeteria helpers.

(3) Authorizes DOE to use produce from school gardens in the school lunch program (p. 6, lines 4-5) and the proposed Hawaii-grown fresh fruit and vegetable program. For DOE to receive reimbursement from USDA for school meals, fresh produce must come from safety certified farms. School gardens are not currently safety-certified. While produce from school gardens could be served to students in the proposed Hawaii-grown fresh fruit and vegetable program, providing such produce from sources that are not safety certified would pose a risk to students.

In summary, we respectfully suggest that the bill be amended (a) to make DOA the lead agency for the proposed farm-to-school program, (b) to delete the proposed Hawaii-grown fresh fruit and vegetable program unless funds will be appropriated to operate it, and (c) to provide that produce from school gardens be utilized only if the garden is safety certified.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2011
9:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 312

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

RE: HB1380 – Relating to Hawai'i Grown Produce - Establishes a farm-to-school program in the department of education to increase the procurement of locally grown fruits and vegetables. Establishes the Hawai'i-grown fresh fruit and vegetable program to increase schoolchildren's access to Hawai'i produce. Establishes the farmers to food banks pilot program.

Aloha Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Hashem, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kaliko Amona and am the director of the Kokua Hawai'i Foundation's 'AINA In Schools Program, a farm to school program dedicated to connecting children to their land, waters, and food in order to grow a healthier Hawai'i. I am also the Hawai'i State Lead for the National Farm to School Network.

I am writing to express our support of HB 1380, with one suggestion. As currently drafted, Section 302(b) states that "Every school garden program shall educate students about organic and conventional growing methods." Many school gardens are grown organically, without the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers that can pose a threat to children's health and that of the environment. **While some educators may choose to use and teach about conventional (non-organic) growing methods, this should not be a requirement for all school gardens.**

The Hawai'i-Grown Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program is an important strategy for fostering healthy eating habits and strengthening the Department of Education's position as an institutional market for locally grown produce. With appropriations to fund the program, it is an excellent investment in the future of our children's health as well as Hawai'i's food security.

The 'AINA In Schools Program is developing a snack program toolkit highlighting 24 local crops through a generous grant from the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture. We look forward to making these materials available to schools participating in the Hawai'i-Grown Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program as an educational complement to the snacks being offered to students.

Again, thank you for your time. We humbly ask you to support House Bill 1380, with the above suggested amendment, and we appreciate your continued support of the farm to school movement in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Kaliko Amona
'AINA In Schools Program Director



Friday, February 04, 2011
9:00am
Conference Room 312

TESTIMONY TO
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

RE: HB 1380 – Relating to Hawaii-Grown Produce

Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Hashem, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Robert Witt, executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), which represents 99 private and independent schools in Hawaii and educates over 33,000 students statewide.

HAIS supports the intent of House Bill 1380 and finds that the aspirations expressed in this measure are in many cases aligned with the goals of our own new farm-to-school initiative, GROW HAWAII.

Nevertheless, we are very concerned that this measure may be requiring the DOE and DOA to be in compliance with some very noble and urgently needed goals without enough “readiness” or internal “capacity.”

Whereas the DOE and HAIS and its various partners are moving in the direction outlined in this measure, this may be the kind of situation where “too much, too soon,” is being asked of a department already stretched to the limit, with regard to human and financial resources.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Cyndy Kahalewale, MPH, RD
President, Hawai'i Dietetic Association
Measure: HB1380, Relating to Hawai'i Grown Produce
Committee on Agriculture
Representative Clift Tsuji, Chair
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair
Date: Friday, February 4, 2011
Time: 9:00 am
Place: Room 312

Dear Representative Tsuji and Representative Hashem,

The Hawai'i Dietetic Association supports HB 1380. The Farm to School program would greatly benefit school children by increasing the availability of healthful fresh vegetables and fruit for better physical health, and will provide an opportunity to educate students on nutrition science, and environmental science, while supporting Hawai'i farmers.

School gardens are a particularly important way for children to learn. From preparing the soil and composting, to nurturing and watering, and harvesting and preparation, involvement with school gardens increases the likelihood that children will eat the healthful veggies and herbs and beans that they can grow.

Through volunteer work with the 'Aina in Schools Nutrition Program and Garden Projects (Kokua Foundation), HDA members have experienced first-hand the powerful impact farm to school/garden to school programs have on Hawaii's children: a 6-year old boy who refused to eat fruits and vegetables, quietly munching on cherry tomatoes he planted himself; two rival 12 year-old girls, laughing together in class while tasting poi smoothies for the first time.

This bill promotes the priceless well-being and health of our children, our future. They can learn about food safety and food preparation, while being physically active outside in the fresh air. Being able to use the harvest in the school food service program is an excellent way to further support the hard work of the "student farmers". It makes good sense.

Initiating a farmers to food bank program would increase the availability of fresh produce for low-income people. This could be another win-win situation; more fresh produce for low-income people and greater sales for local farmers. The opportunity for low income people to purchase produce at farmer's markets that sell locally grown produce would also be beneficial. A system in which EBT cards could be used by low income families, and vendors equipped to accept the cards should be explored.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our views.

Respectfully Yours,

Cyndy Kahalewale, MPH, RD

President, Hawaii Dietetic Association



Papa Ola Lokahi
Nana I Ka Pono Na Ma

Papa Ola Lokahi

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Papa Ola Lokahi

is a non-profit Native Hawaiian organization founded in 1988 for the purpose of improving the health and well-being of Native Hawaiians and other native peoples of the Pacific and continental United States.

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TESTIMONY: HB 1380, RELATING TO HAWAII-GROWN PRODUCE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Rep. Cliff Tsuji, Chair

Rep. Mark Hashem, Vice Chair

Friday, February 4, 2011

9:00 am

Conference Room 312

State Capitol

Hardy Spoehr, Executive Director

Aloha Chairman Tsuji, Vice Chair Hashem, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture. Papa Ola Lokahi strongly supports for this measure.

For too long school lunches have not incorporated our locally grown produce. With obesity rates increasing for our island youth, it is critical that our children and their families be able to have healthy food with a heavy dose of fresh fruits and vegetables. This measure goes a long way in making this happen. If done correctly, it will help to reduce health care costs for us all.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide strong supportive testimony for this important measure.