

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2011
10:00 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 312

HOUSE BILL NO. 1569
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 1569, Relating to Agriculture. This bill requires the Department of Agriculture to develop and implement an import replacement pilot program.

The Department understands the importance of this effort and supports the intent of this bill to reduce the importation of "high risk" commodities by increasing the production of replacement commodities in the state.

The Department is a strong supporter of the bio-security program and for reducing the impacts of invasive species on Hawaii's agriculture and the islands' fragile environment. Such a pilot program as outlined in this measure could effectively reduce the risk of highly contagious pathogens, such as the *ohia rust*, which could potentially wipe out Hawaii's native *Ohia Lehua* forests and to this end, the Department has met with growers interested in a pilot initiative to grow crops in Hawaii that can lower and/or reduce the import of fresh products that represent a significant pathway for new pest introduction in Hawaii. Additional funding may be required to carry out the responsibilities of this initiative.

LATE TESTIMONY

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.