

LATE TESTIMONY

har2-Samantha

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Sent: Thursday, January 26, 2012 9:27 PM
To: WLOtestimony
Cc: brian@hfbf.org
Subject: Testimony for HB1944 on 1/27/2012 9:00:00 AM
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Testimony for WLO 1/27/2012 9:00:00 AM HB1944

Conference room: 325
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Brian Miyamoto
Organization: Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation
E-mail: brian@hfbf.org
Submitted on: 1/26/2012

Comments:



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LATE TESTIMONY

JANUARY 27, 2012

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, & OCEAN RESOURCES

TESTIMONY ON HB 1944
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION
DISTRICTS

Room 312
9:00 AM

Chair Chang, Vice Chair Har, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Chief Operating Officer and Government Affairs Liaison for the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBB). Organized since 1948, the HFBB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community.

HFBB strongly supports HB 1944, which seeks an appropriation for the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts to assist with its staffing and operating costs.

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) are mandated by HRS §180. The SWCD is comprised of volunteer directors that are closely tied to Island communities. Many of these SWCD directors are also farmers and members of HFBB. They understand the issues related to Agriculture and farming.

The 16 SWCDs assist the Agricultural communities throughout the entire State. They help to farmers with conservation plans and address community problems related to erosion, water quality, agricultural water, and grading and grubbing reviews.

State of Hawaii has historically funded districts at about \$2,000 per district annually. Most districts cannot operate on such a small budget and depend on Federal and County support. But even those funding sources have recently been cut back this volunteer boards are personally contributing to keep the districts viable.

Under these tough economic times, the SWCDs funding continues to get squeezed at the State, County and Federal levels. The requested additional funds are needed to help cover operational expenses.

HFBF considers the SWCDs as an integral partner in Hawaii's Agricultural Industry and our Island communities.

I can be reached at (808) 848-2074 if you have any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.