



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

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March 20, 2012

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AND HOUSING
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR

TESTIMONY ON HB 2594, HD2
PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE VII, SECTION 12, OF THE HAWAII
STATE CONSTITUTION TO ASSIST DAM AND RESERVOIR OWNERS.

Room 016
12:30 PM

Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Hee, and Members of the Committees:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Chief Operating Officer and Government Affairs Liaison for the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF). Organized since 1948, the HFBF 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.

HFBF strongly supports HB 2594, HD2, which proposes a constitutional amendment authorizing the issuance of special purpose revenue bonds to assist dam and reservoir owners.

Reliable and affordable water is the key to viable farms and ranches. Ranches and irrigated areas across the state depend on reservoirs and dams to carry them through times of little or no rainfall. Since the passage of the Dam and Reservoir Safety Law, owners and users of these structures have worked with DLNR to seek practical implementation measures while meeting the goal of safety. While the rules are one issue, the classification of the reservoirs continues to be a concern and we are working with staff to review the current status of the dams and reservoirs. This will determine how much work is needed.

In the case of high risk reservoirs, extensive engineering studies followed by corrective actions are placing extreme economic burdens on our farmers and ranchers. They all want to do the right thing. Safety is of utmost concern. At the same time, it is not the intent of the Dam and Reservoir Safety Law to put farmers and ranchers out of business as they try to comply with the measure. This bill provides a mechanism to reduce the premature decommissioning of dams and reservoirs. Testimony will be received by this

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bid from farms and ranches across the state providing unique examples of impacts of this measure.

HFBF respectfully requests your assistance in passing this measure to protect our critical agricultural water infrastructure while complying with safety requirements. Thank you for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this important matter.

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