



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

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MARCH 17, 2011

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER LAND AND HOUSING

TESTIMONY ON HB 744 HD 1  
RELATING TO DAM SAFETY

Room 225  
1:15 pm

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Solomon and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, representing approximately 1,600 farm and ranch family members statewide, **supports HB 744 HD1 which establishes a Dam Safety Task Force.**

Dams and reservoirs are critically important infrastructure to agriculture and the general public across the state. Moreover, we are cognizant of the duty of Government to uphold public safety.

Agriculture cannot exist without water. Climatic influences, both long and short term, drive the need for diversion and storage of water. These resources are critical to food security and overall sustainability of our island state.

The cost to construct, operate and maintain structures and to comply with Dam and Reservoir Safety Rules will invariably be passed to consumers and should be gauged carefully by policy makers. As the cost to produce food locally increases, our ability to compete with less expensive imports decreases. If compliance with said rules drives local producers out of the marketplace, the dependence on imported goods increases, and the sustainability structure erodes to the point of collapse. The importance of this delicate balance cannot be understated. If we are ever to achieve food security, cost of production must be kept low in order to compete and reduce dependence on imported food products.

The Task Force proposed by HB 744 HD1 would create a structure in which public and private stakeholders can collaborate, evaluate impacts, and make recommendations to policy makers. So important is this issue that public and private stakeholders have already begun meeting.

We also ask you to support measures that would appropriate funds to DLNR for the purpose of implementing the state's Dam and Reservoir Safety program and help fund the cost of compliance for owners and operators.

Thank you.

Chris Manfredi  
Vice President  
Chairperson, Government Affairs