

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor



RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

JAMES J. NAKATANI
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512

TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE -
FEBRUARY 24, 2011
11:30 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 308

HOUSE BILL NO. 947, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Oshiro and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 947, HD1. The Department of Agriculture (DOA) supports the overall intent of the bill to support farmers that utilize natural farming methods

The purpose of this bill is to establish a program to provide grants to agricultural producers who implement Cho's natural farming methods. The benefit of natural farming is that it eliminates the need for expensive imported commercial pesticides and fertilizers which may not be safe for the environment. This organic method of farming utilizes local natural farm resources and indigenous micro-organisms. The method has already been successfully demonstrated on a commercial farm located in Waianae.

Given the difficult economy and the anticipated relatively low cost to implement this system, we respectfully recommend that to expedite funding for these ventures that applicants apply for a low interest loans under the DOA's loan program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



KAREN SEDDON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
FAX: (808) 587-0600

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Statement of
Karen Seddon
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation
Before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

February 24, 2011 at 1:30 p.m.
Room 308, State Capitol

In consideration of
H.B. 960
RELATING TO LOW-INCOME HOUSING.

The HHFDC supports H.B. 960. We defer to the Department of Taxation with respect to the fiscal impact of this bill.

The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program is a major financing tool to construct or rehabilitate affordable **rental housing** for families at or below 60 percent of the area median income. Under the program, HHFDC awards federal and state tax credits that may be used to obtain a dollar-for-dollar offset (tax credit) in income tax liability for 10 years or may be syndicated to generate project equity. Approximately \$2.719 million in federal and \$1.359 million in state volume cap tax credits may be awarded each year.

The tax credit exchange program proposed in H.B. 960 is similar to the Section 1602 provisions in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which assists projects receiving competitive Federal volume cap LIHTCs. It would allow eligible affordable rental housing developers to trade in both competitive, State volume cap LIHTCs and non-volume cap LIHTCs for a loan. The loan amount would be equivalent to 70 percent of the State LIHTC award over the ten year period. The exchange of the State LIHTC could provide nearly three times more equity for the development or rehabilitation of affordable rental housing projects compared to the existing credit program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

February 23, 2011

To: The Honorable Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
The Honorable Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF
HB 947 HD1, RELATING TO AGRICULTURE
(With Request for Amendment)

Date: Thursday, February 24, 2011 / Agenda #3

Time: 11:30am

Place: Conference Room 308

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chairman Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Finance Committee,

Partners In Development Foundation (PIDF) is grateful for the opportunity to provide testimony strongly supporting this measure, *with a request for an amendment.*

PIDF is a public non-profit organization that largely serves *at-risk populations* of the Native-Hawaiian community on all major islands within our State, in the areas of education, social services and, environmental sustainability.

PIDF programs have been actively involved in sustainable Natural Farming as a way to provide our families and children with a healthy nutritious diet, while at the same time encouraging the use of techniques that are environmentally sound.

Using vital traditional concepts such as the ahupua'a system of land and environmental stewardship, and ho'ona'auao, traditional mentorship in education, PIDF creates and implements programs to address the needs of the populations we serve.

Our mentoring program in Kohala has been actively involved in the study and application of Natural Farming as part of their community driven "*Kohala Initiative of 50 % Food Sustainability by the year 2018*" in which the goal is to produce at least half of the food requirements of their community by the target year.

Homeless families and youth served by PIDF have also benefitted directly and indirectly, first through hands-on participation in Natural Farming at a small start-up plot at Mountain View Dairy in Wai'anae, and second by the generous offerings of harvested vegetables to displaced families.

PIDF also operates a safe-house for adjudicated male youth. These young men spend part of their day working the field at Mountain View Dairy and further, learn entrepreneurial skills through hands-on participation in the sales of their produce at open markets.

Finally, the result of the previous joint committee hearing of this Bill, in the House Committees on Agriculture and International Affairs was an amendment changing the effective date to July 01, 2020. We would ask that HB 947 HD1 be amended to include the original date of July 01, 2011.

In closing, Natural Farming provides our families and children with a healthy food-source alternative, while at the same time teaching sustainable agri-business skills, and respect for the land.

Mahalo A Nui Loa,

Jan E. Hanohano Dill
President & Chair
Partners In Development Foundation
808-595-2752 (B) / 808-595-4932
<http://pidfoundation.org>

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

To: REP. MARCUS OSHIRO, CHRM.
REP. MARILYN LEE, VICE CHRM.

From: Leslie Hall
66-1528 Pu'u Huluhulu Rd.
Kamuela, HI
HallsFarm@gmail.com

Subject: **HB 947**
Date: **Feb. S4, 2011**

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Natural Farming methods allow both the commercial farmer as well as the backyard gardener to reduce their resource use extensively therefore relinquishing reliance on external inputs for production. It has become common knowledge that over 85% of the food consumed in the State of Hawaii is imported. With conventional farming practices, when oil prices rise, so too must the cost of food because the entire economic system relies so inexorably on oil – oil to run the machinery, to create the chemical fertilizers and pesticides, oil to harvest the food then process it, package and distribute it. I understand that it takes an average of 7 calories of fuel to produce a single calorie of food consumed – this is not sustainable, not economically reasonable and definitely not ecologically responsible.

All this can change when Natural Farming methods are implemented meaning that everything needed for successful agriculture already exists here in our islands regardless of what the cost of oil does around the globe. With Natural Farming inputs, all fertilizers and pesticides are grown, created and propagated locally. This drastically and quickly reduces the cost of production for the farmer and the methods also dramatically increase the nutritional value of the food. Additionally it should be noted that the plants are more hearty and therefore quite naturally resistant to pests, much as a healthy person is much more resistant to and resilient in the face of illness.

Truly, there is no “down side” to Natural Farming when the process of returning the soil to its natural state is supported - herein lies great opportunity. To educate the public about this type of agricultural practice, to financially commit governmental support for the agricultural sustainability of the people who live here, and to increase the health and wealth of those engaging in one of the oldest and most noble professions, that is the opportunity and therefore the reason we ask for your support today.

I understand the question has been asked, “If Natural Farming is all it is said to be, why aren't more people practicing it?” The answer is simple. Humans are creatures of habit and the agricultural model, or habit, from the last 60 years is absolutely chemical based. This is the method that has been taught in schools and colleges, researched in

universities and handed down to the current generation of farmers and gardeners. There is great money to be made by the manufacturers of these chemical products, so the economics of the chemical-based model of agriculture are supported with marketing and lends to perpetuation of the system. This model is what has caused the exhaustion of our soils, the unprecedented depletion of nutritional value in food and the dramatic increase in the need for pest intervention.

What we need is to support a new, sustainable, locally created and perpetuated agricultural system. We need to teach the public how to move away from the current paradigm and forward into the natural paradigm that already exists and can once again flourish given proper support. With your support, Natural Farming can be the avenue to do all of this. We humbly ask you to please support this effort in every way possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of this bill.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

To: REP. MARCUS OSHIRO, CHRM.
REP. MARILYN LEE, VICE CHRM.

From: John Hall
66-1528 Pu'u Huluhulu Rd.
Kamuela, HI
JHall89@gmail.com

Subject: **HB 947**
Date: **Feb. 24, 2011**

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

The support of Natural Farming could be the pivotal point for the future sustainability of agriculture in Hawaii. It allows farmers to move away from the need for chemical-based, imported fertilizers and pesticides. Natural Farming empowers commercial farmers and individual families to be food self-reliant. It is a methodology that looks to the past as a means of supporting the future.

Conventional farming methods are no longer working. Our soils are depleted and the food produced from them is nutrient deficient. Plants that do grow are weak and susceptible to pests therefore requiring more external chemical applications rather than relying on and supporting the plants' naturally occurring health and immunity.

The only reason more people in the United States are not utilizing Natural Farming methods is that the information is slow to become available and people are not aware. By supporting this bill, you will be helping the people you represent to learn to trust the information that is new to them – information that will empower them to grow healthy, hearty food and lives. With your support, Natural Farming can be a powerful catalyst for the future of agriculture in Hawaii and spreading throughout the United States.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of this bill.

February 23, 2011

To: The Honorable Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
The Honorable Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF
HB 947 HD1, RELATING TO AGRICULTURE
(With Request for Amendment)

Date: Thursday, February 24, 2011 / Agenda #3
Time: 11:30am
Place: Conference Room 308
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chairman Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Finance Committee,
Mahalo for this opportunity to share my thoughts.

I will not go into detail of Master Cho's Natural Farming practices. I've attended (3) of his courses within this past 11 months. We are using his methods in North Kohala in our Partners in Development Ka Hana Noe'au youth mentoring program, and our Taro Families (10 x 10 x 10,000) sustainable program. Our goal in North Kohala is to become 50% food sustainable by the year 2018. In the short time of practices, we find our soils is in the process of reclamation by using shread materials from trees while also limits filling the County's landfill. The reduction of fertilizer cost is 50-60 % which is a large portion of saving and converts to profit for the farmers. The usage of water is reduced in large amount.

As we struggle looking at solutions for our State of Hawaii to be food sustainable, we need to seriously look at "Living in a manner that can be continued without exhausting our Natural Resources or causing ecological damage." Malama Ika Aina' means to preserve, protect, and care for the land. Each individual have a duty and responsibility or "Kuleana" to protect our Natural Resources.

I believe Master Cho's Natural Farming is one of the solution to this large issue of Food sustainability and Malama Ika Aina';

What's the Economics? The cost to ship feed or fertilizer from the mainland to Hawaii in a container is equal to the imported products such as milk or vegetable. Before the conventional farmer starts, he is at a financial disadvantage. The results: Very little Dairy exist in our state, farmers are struggling and must look for niche markets to be competitive and survive. The common layperson would like to support the local grown

(2)

products. When the cost becomes beyond their means, they have no choice but pay cheaper for non-locally grown product.

What is the Health Benefits? We make our own fertilizers from our land that is chemical free. The inputs or nutrients are natural minerals and very nutritional for our health. The Soils becomes richer, with natural mineral which help reclaim our polluted soils from the over use of chemicals during the plantation era.

This Natural Farming wave is moving so fast within the last year. We need to educate the public as well as support models that are working. We depend on our leaders of Hawaii to really "ask the hard questions at the same time consider our fiscal challenge." Your visionary character and wisdom as lawmakers leads Hawaii's future. Federal NRCS grant (experimental) are becoming available to Pioneer Farmers willing to try Natural Farming. Some Agriculturists are doing it on their own. Observing their results is crucial to affirm the validity of this new paradigm. My priority is having the State DOA, Universities, Community Colleges, DOE, Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, HAFFA Foundation and Natural Farmers collectively share in Research, Education in the proper implementing of Natural Farming practices to ensure it reaches it's highest capability. Why? The saying "A little education is dangerous and can be more harm than good."

Our President Obama in his address on Jan. 20, 09' said. "We know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness."

When Capt. Cook discovered Hawaii, we were totally food independent. Did we have chemicals or did we grow our plants Naturally?

The result of the previous joint committee hearing on this Bill in the House Committee on Agriculture and International Affairs was amendment changing the effective date to July 01, 2020. We humbly ask that HB 947 HD1 be amended to include the original date of July 01, 2011.

Thank you House Finance committee members for allowing me to write this testimony. Natural Farming will help our precious State of Hawaii in the many ways mentioned above. It comforts me to share my thoughts to our Premiere leaders in Hawaii.

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2011 1:29 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: kalaniai@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB947 on 2/24/2011 11:30:00 AM

Testimony for FIN 2/24/2011 11:30:00 AM HB947

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Susan Horie
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: kalaniai@gmail.com
Submitted on: 2/22/2011

Comments:

Chair Marcus Oshiro and Vice Chair Marilyn Lee: There is a reason why Natural Farming practices have been adopted by universities and governments in Asia and India. The reason is that the practices restore soil fertility, improve productivity, and amplify the nutritional content of crops grown. Natural farming techniques are proven to work commercially, are extremely cost efficient, and most importantly, wean the farmer from dependence on escalating chemical needs. Please support HB 947.

FINTestimony

From: Allan King [allanhawaii@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2011 8:22 PM
To: FINTestimony
Subject: HB 947

Dear Mr. Oshiro and Ms. Lee

I would like to tell you how much I think Natural Farming could change the way agriculture is done here in Hawaii. This method uses natural materials that are already here on the Islands. There's no reason to import expensive fertilizers from thousands of miles away. There's no pollution of the soil, water or air with this system and this method produces the finest quality fruits and veggies that command the best prices in the market place. Animals are treated humanely and are clean and happy.

I urge you to pass this bill because Natural Farming needs to be expanded. More people need to know about it and it needs to be shown to conventional farmers and proven to be the best way to grow food.

Please pass House Bill 947.

Thank You,
Allan King

FINTestimony

From: hiskinut@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2011 11:03 AM
To: FINTestimony
Subject: Fwd: Testimony For HB 947, HD 1

-----Original Message-----

From: hiskinut <hiskinut@aol.com>
To: webmaster <webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov>
Sent: Wed, Feb 23, 2011 3:52 am
Subject: Testimony For HB 947, HD 1

Committee on Finance

The Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Representative Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee

Aloha Chairman Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee on Finance.

My name is David Wong and I am a farmer. Our Farm is located in Waianae, Oahu.

I am providing testimony in strong support of HB 947, HD 1.

Had the opportunity to attend a Workshop by Master Cho in April of 2010 in Hilo. It was the identical weekend as the tidal wave alert. Fortunately, we did not have a tidal wave. However, Master Cho did provide us with a tidal wave of information.

In May of 2010 we started to test some of his programs. We were very conservative in our approach because his program is counter to what we were taught in the Agricultural Institutions. Many of the programs are almost totally opposite of present accepted farming practices.

As we gained confidence in the programs, we slowly started to put additional programs in place. We now have a section of the farm where Natural Farming is 100% being utilized.

We are happy to report that the projected results that Master Cho presented at the work shops are achievable and can be done on a commercial size farm.

Natural Framing has the potential to rejuvenate Hawaii's Agriculture. It uses less water, no imported fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. It is a system of farming that is independent of ocean freight. The implementation of

Natural Farming should be encouraged.

Because it is so counter intuitive, farmers will be reluctant to attempt this at a commercial level. HB 947, HD 1 will provide an incentive to encourage farmers try to implement some of the Natural Farming practices.

I ask for your support of HB 947, HD 1 and I urge the Committee to amend the it to permit the implementation to begin as soon as possible. This system has the potential to revitalize Hawaii's Agricultural Industry.

Mahalo for allowing me the opportunity to submit testimony.

David Wong
Mountain View Dairy
Waianae, Hawaii
808-383-3972
hiskinut@aol.com

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
ent: Wednesday, February 23, 2011 10:50 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: palmtree7@earthlink.net
Subject: Testimony for HB947 on 2/24/2011 11:30:00 AM

Testimony for FIN 2/24/2011 11:30:00 AM HB947

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: janice palma-glennie
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: palmtree7@earthlink.net
Submitted on: 2/23/2011

Comments:

This bill provides much-needed incentivizes for farming that does not destroy the land and water upon which we depend. ¶As a farmer and horticulturalist by trade, i understand that farmers that use the Cho technique, a method of farming without the use of imported pesticides and fertilizers, would be able to apply for grants. ¶Please support this legislation.
mahalo.

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
ent: Thursday, February 24, 2011 7:35 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: Cocoller@aol.com
Subject: Testimony for HB947 on 2/24/2011 11:30:00 AM

Testimony for FIN 2/24/2011 11:30:00 AM HB947

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Collin Coller
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: Cocoller@aol.com
Submitted on: 2/24/2011

Comments:

I support HB 947. I hope the committe on Finance supports this bill as well. Thank you for your time and consideration.

- Collin Coller

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 24, 2011 7:14 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: edpinner@hilo.net
Subject: Testimony for HB947 on 2/24/2011 11:30:00 AM

Testimony for FIN 2/24/2011 11:30:00 AM HB947

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Dean Pinner
Organization: Endangered Small Family Farmers Inc.
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: edpinner@hilo.net
Submitted on: 2/24/2011

Comments:

I have 30 years experience as a full time ginger farmer both conventional and certified organic and have witnessed the devastation caused by the "bacterial wilt" pathogen known now as "Ralstonia Solanaeacearum". Personally, i have lost over 80% of my crop in the latter stages 4 times in the last 10 years. I have been conducting research with Dr. Shintaku (UH-HILO)for some years.

This past season, the ONLY solution that ever had ANY positive effect in controlling the rotting capacity this bacteria was the addition of IMO#4 a Natural Farming concoction that is one third the price of a pallet of triple 16 with trace.

Do the Math.

You all should DO EVERYTHING possible to assist and promote the education anyone saddled with the job of growing FOOD.

Sincerely,

Dean Pinner- Husband of the 2008 Teacher of The Year

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 24, 2011 3:45 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: redahi@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Testimony for HB947 on 2/24/2011 11:30:00 AM

Testimony for FIN 2/24/2011 11:30:00 AM HB947

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: B.A. McClintock
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: redahi@hawaii.rr.com
Submitted on: 2/24/2011

Comments:

Please SUPPORT this important bill. We need to stop the use of toxics in our environment not only for the environment itself but for everyone's health and well being. Thank you for your time.

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
ent: Thursday, February 24, 2011 6:53 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: jdoriacoller@aol.com
Subject: Testimony for HB947 on 2/24/2011 11:30:00 AM

Testimony for FIN 2/24/2011 11:30:00 AM HB947

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Jane Collier
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: jdoriacoller@aol.com
Submitted on: 2/24/2011

Comments:

I apologize for not being able to attend the hearing this morning but, I am in support of House Bill 947.

Thank you