

NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
Governor



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

# LATE TESTIMONY

RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

JAMES J. NAKATANI  
Deputy to the Chairperson

TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE  
ON  
AGRICULTURE

FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 2011  
10:30 A.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

SENATE BILL NO. 1443, S.D. 2  
RELATING TO IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 1443, S.D.2. The purpose of this bill is to clarify that public lands that are transferred from the Department of Land and Natural Resources to the Department of Agriculture shall be subject to the same standards for identifying and designating important agricultural lands, and that important agricultural land incentives shall not contradict or otherwise violate chapters 166 and 166E. The Department strongly supports the passage of this bill.

When Act 233, SLH 2008 was being discussed during the 2008 legislative session, a significant concern of the department was the impact of the new language to the Agricultural Park and Non-Agricultural Park programs. Discussions centered around how the two DOA land programs actually set a higher standard for agricultural land use than the proposed IAL language. The language in this bill encapsulates the concerns



stating that "...uses under sections 205-2 and 205-4.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, are in conflict with the intent, purpose, and rules of the agricultural parks program and the non-agricultural parks program. The Department of Agriculture utilizes a thorough qualification process to ensure potential lessees will undertake substantial agricultural activity." The language goes on to state "The purpose, rules, and management of these public lands by the Department of Agriculture are unmatched in their support of agricultural production and, unlike the privately owned lands under the important agricultural lands legislation, are not subject to reclassification, subdivision, lack of monitoring, and special permitted uses."

The language in this bill clarifying that the incentives provided by IAL designation do not apply if they would "...contradict or otherwise violate the conditions and requirements of chapters 166 and 166E..." provides a solid foundation for the department to protect the integrity of these vital programs. We appreciate the energy put into crafting this bill and look forward to its passage.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

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March 16, 2011

**TESTIMONY**

**Re: HB1443SD2 RELATING TO IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL LANDS**

Chair Tsuji, Chair Chang and Members of the Committees:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation on behalf of commercial farm and ranch families and organizations in the State provides the following comments on SB1443, clarifying the relationship between IAL and State Agricultural Parks.

Important Agricultural Lands are a subset of the Agricultural District. Similarly, we believe the Ag Parks are a subset of Important Agricultural Lands. HFBF strongly believes that all State and County Ag Parks should be IAL designations. During the discussions leading to the identification of standards and criteria associated with Important Agricultural Lands, there was a general agreement among the working group that a priority was to preserve lands that had working farms and ranches. Agricultural Parks are just that – working farms and ranches and therefore deserve to be designated as IAL.

Chapter 166 and 166E seek to provide land for farming. IAL goes beyond that. It provides incentives to nurture farmers and ranchers and increase their viability. The concern of this measure may be related to farm worker housing allowed on IAL lands. If this is the case, it would appear that Chapter 166 and 166E could continue to regulate activities...e.g. what kinds of structures could be erected on the property but it should not reduce the other incentives available to tenant farmers and ranchers.

We need more farmers and ranchers. We need to identify ways to attract them into this business and provide them the support so they can provide the volume of products for those who do not farm and ranch. This is important to meet the goal of the Constitutional Mandate to increase Hawaii's self sufficiency. Your support of this measure will provide a strong message that agricultural use of state lands is a priority.

We respectfully request your support in passing this measure. If there are any questions, please contact Warren Watanabe at 2819718. Thank you