

SB2362

Testimony

Ka'u Farm Bureau
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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AND HOUSING

January 30, 2012

Re: Testimony in support SB 2362

RELATING TO IRRIGATION.

Authorizes the director of finance to issue general obligation bonds to finance capital improvements to various irrigation systems.

Thursday, February 2, 2012
2:45 P.M.
Conference Room 229

Aloha Chairs Nishihara and Dela Cruz, Vice Chairs Kahele and Solomon, and Members of the Committees:

Ka'u Farm Bureau supports the aforementioned measure.

The 24th and 25th Hawaii State Legislatures, of 2010 and 2011 respectively, saw fit to include a combined \$3.5MM budgetary allocation for Capital Improvement Projects surrounding the Ka'u Irrigation System. Two Governors to date have released only but a fraction of these allocated funds. Issuance of General Obligation Bonds for this purpose represents a path toward moving forward on this long overdue project.

Ka'u is ideally suited for agricultural projects that will foster sustainability, food security, disaster preparedness and drought resistance. Irrigation in Ka'u will foster agricultural and economic development and stimulate job creation and retention by creating an environment in which agriculture can thrive.

There are approximately 30 water source tunnels located on State of Hawaii lands in Ka'u. Since the demise of sugar, many of these sources are largely underutilized and many have not been maintained for more than a decade, resulting in a reduction in productivity. The longer we wait to transition these sources from plantation uses to diversified ones, the further they deteriorate and the more costly improvements become. Working collaboratively with the Agribusiness Development Corporation, a cooperative has been formed to plan, prioritize, advocate for and survey these sources.

Please lend your support for SB2362.

Mahalo,



Chris Manfredi
President