

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor



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

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
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 2011
9:00 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 312**

**SENATE BILL NO. 249, SD2
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill No. 249, SD2. The Department of Agriculture strongly supports the intent of this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to appropriate moneys to the Department of Agriculture to purchase the slaughterhouse in Campbell Industrial Park and to make necessary capital improvements to the facility. The slaughterhouse is an essential component of the State's livestock industry. It is the largest slaughterhouse on Oahu and one of the most modern in the State. In order for Hawaii to increase food self-sufficiency it will need centrally located USDA inspected slaughterhouses to ensure a safe food supply for its citizens, provide hog producers and ranchers access to retail markets and to ensure that local hogs and cattle are humanely processed.

Since there are structures on the parcel already owned by the State and to clarify previous testimony, the Department would suggest language be included to clarify that the purchase is to consist of the Cooperative's existing slaughter equipment, refrigeration units and capital improvements to the leasehold. The Department is also investigating possible capital improvements to the facility that could increase efficiency, such as the installation of a photovoltaic system that would allow the facility to become more energy self-sufficient, thus reducing operating expenses.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Rep. Clift Tsuji, Chair
Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 16, 2011
9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 312

SB 249 SD2 Making an Appropriation to the Department of Agriculture

Aloha Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Hashem, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, representing farmers and ranchers throughout the islands, **supports** this bill because it will help assure that the Hawaii Livestock Cooperative facility is available to address the food needs of the islands.

- For food sustainability and food security reasons, the Oahu facility should remain open to supply locally raised meat to people in Hawaii.
- Even if mainland meat shipments are available to the islands, this facility supports local livestock farmers/ranchers.
- The Campbell facility is in close proximity to the market since most people live on Oahu.
- Most residents and island visitors are not vegetarians; they eat meat.
- Many in the community prefer fresh meat to that coming in from the mainland.
- Our understanding is that at the present time, the facility is used mainly for pork processing but that in the future it could be used for beef processing.

Thank you very much for your continued support of local farmers and ranchers.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
Wednesday March 16, 2011 9:00 a.m. Room 312

SB 249 SD2 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Appropriates funds to the department of agriculture to: acquire a slaughterhouse within the Campbell Industrial Park on the island of Oahu; to fund necessary construction, renovation, and improvement projects; and to purchase equipment for the slaughterhouse

Chairman Tsuji, Vice Chairman Hashem and Members of the Committee:

My name is Alan Gottlieb, and I am a rancher and the Government Affairs Chair for the Hawaii Cattlemen's Council. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc. (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the five county level Cattlemen's Associations. Our 130+ member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of approximately 25% of the State's total land mass.

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council supports the intent of SB 249 SD2 with some explanation of our situation as it pertains to this slaughterhouse.

As we understand it, the Oahu slaughterhouse in The Campbell Industrial Park has been in financial difficulty for several years. Their mortgage with Central Pacific Bank (CPB) for about \$1.4 million was close to being foreclosed upon, but was guaranteed by the USDA, and last year USDA paid off CPB, and now the US Treasury wants to recoup its \$1.4 Million. The slaughterhouse primarily slaughters hogs, as there are very limited cattle on Oahu for slaughter. Even if ALL of the Oahu cattle were kept in State, there would still be a fairly small amount of cattle for this facility. Nevertheless, we see the value in protecting this important resource.

The cattle industry is currently undergoing State wide planning to determine whether we can keep more cattle in State and create a State wide brand, rather than shipping our young calves to the Mainland. Current practices of shipping calves to the Mainland has been done for economic reasons, not for lack of infrastructure, but some of the cattle currently being shipped could stay in Hawaii if we can develop a premium grass finished market for our beef. County Cattlemen Associations have all indicated they prefer to have slaughter and processing infrastructure on their own Island and not have to ship their live cattle off Island for slaughter and processing. Ultimately, if we can create a State-wide network for a branded, high specification Island grass finished beef, facilities such as the Oahu slaughterhouse will play an integral role in the network. Perhaps at that time, slaughter may be a small part of what that facility does for the cattle industry, but perhaps that facility may, for example, do all of the State's value added processing. These are some of the elements that will be discussed in the coming months as we go County to County working on our Cattle Industry Master Plan, funded by a USDA Rural Development Grant, through 4AgHawaii.

Of course, if the State goes further with its plan to buy this slaughterhouse, some questions might be: Who will run it; or will the State lease it out to the highest bidder; or will they leave current management to continue to run the plant.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify in favor of this very important issue.

From:
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2011 11:44 AM
To: AGRtestimony
Subject: SB249; AGR; 3/16/2011; 9AM, Rm 312

Importance: High

SB249, SD2, Making An Appropriation...to Slaughter
House Agriculture; Chair, Rep Tsuji

PLEASE KILL THIS BILL ALSO, MAKE-DIE-DEAD!

In a session that will be devoted to finding ways to cut our deficit, this may be one of the strangest bills to be heard. How could the State possibly appropriate monies to give to a company that is behind some \$100,000 in the money they owe the state? Plus, why in the world would the state even want to spend its own money when the processing of meat products is in the province of private companies. This part of the bill just does not pass the common sense, "sniff" test.

Furthermore, almost all of our beef comes from the Big Island; what possible reason is there to build a slaughterhouse on O`ahu? none!

NEW LANGUAGE: Doesn't the term "slaughterhouse" sound like an awful business for the state to be paying for? That is because the slaughter of animals is simply a grisly, morally questionable endeavor. Instead of this bill, I recommend it be gutted and new language inserted that will govern slaughterhouses and all animal management practices to make them more humane. I have some guidelines that are used by Whole Foods to rate animal facilities as to their animal welfare practices. I would be happy to meet with any Rep. interested in improving animal welfare practices in Hawai`i and/or to send them these guidelines.

Thank you.

Aloha, joel

Dr. Joel Fischer, ACSW
Professor (Ret.)
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"It is reasonable that everyone who asks justice should DO justice."
Thomas Jefferson

"There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because one's conscience tells one that it is right."
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Never, never, never quit."
Winston Churchill

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2011 8:19 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc:
Subject: Testimony for SB249 on 3/16/2011 9:00:00 AM

Testimony for AGR 3/16/2011 9:00:00 AM SB249

Conference room: 312
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: William Harris, M.D.
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: _____
Submitted on: 3/14/2011

Comments:

SB249 says "The legislature has long recognized the benefits of maintaining the viability of the State's beef industry"

Who says? Why? For whose benefit? All the essential nutrients required in the human diet are photosynthesized by plants and microorganisms, and are readily obtainable by eating plants.

There is an inevitable thermodynamic loss inherent in all animal agriculture, the result of feeding plants to animals, and then eating the animals.

Percent Protein:Calorie losses: Eggs 78:82, Milk 75:85,Chicken 77:88, Pork 86:86, Beef 96:97, Lamb 97:98 Scientific American ISBN 0-7167-0183-9 p 35.

For this reason animal agriculture in Hawaii and the rest of the US will always be on the dole, and if you bail 'em out this year they'll be back at the trough next year. Why not just let this unhealthy endeavor just die a natural death on the open market?

Every nutritional authority in the world is recommending the consumption of more pigmented fruits and vegetables; none are recommending the consumption of more animal foods.

Why then does the Hawaii legislature feel obliged to once again support an endeavor that has never been able to hold its own on the free market?

William Harris, M.D.