



February 21, 2012

Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Support of SB 2692, S.D. 1, Relating to Agriculture (Creates an agricultural development and food security program within the Department of Agriculture.)

Thursday, February 23, 2012, 9:00 a.m., in Conference Room 211

My name is Dave Arakawa, and I am the Executive Director of the Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF), a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers and a utility company. One of LURF's missions is to advocate for reasonable, rational and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources and public health and safety.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express its **support of SB 2692, S.D. 1** and of the various agricultural stakeholder groups who defend the goals of viable agricultural operations, and the conservation and protection of agriculture, including important agricultural lands (IAL) in Hawaii. The bill conveys the need for collaboration amongst diverse sectors of the community - business, government, and agricultural stakeholders - and the importance for them to work together cooperatively to improve the economic viability of the State's agricultural industry.

SB 2692, S.D. 1. This bill authorizes the creation of an agricultural development and food security program within the Department of Agriculture (DOA), through which the DOA shall develop and fund new and existing programs and facilities to promote the development of agriculture and food security within the State.

LURF's Position. This bill is consistent with the underlying intent and objectives of the IAL laws (Hawaii Revised Statutes [HRS], Sections 205-41 to 52), which were enacted to fulfill the mandate in Article XI, Section 3 of the Hawaii State Constitution, "to conserve and protect agricultural lands, promote diversified agriculture, increase agricultural self-sufficiency and assure the availability of agriculturally suitable lands." As noted in HRS Section 205-41, the intent of Act 183 (2005) was to develop agricultural incentive programs to promote agricultural viability, sustained growth of the agricultural industry, and the long-term use and protection of important agricultural lands for agricultural use.

Passage of the long-awaited IAL legislation would be pointless without implementation of these incentives which require the cooperation and support of agricultural, business and research organizations, as well as government agencies, which this bill is intended to cultivate and promote.

By recognizing the significance of, and need to advance the interrelationships between private and public sectors to develop and improve the local agriculture industry, and establishing a program within the DOA to address the needs of the industry, this bill significantly helps to promote economically viable agriculture in Hawaii. As such, LURF is in **strong support of SB 2692, S.D. 1.**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding this matter.