



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

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February 9, 2012

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AND HOUSING

TESTIMONY ON **SB 2857**
RELATING TO SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE TO ASSIST DAM AND RESERVOIR
OWNERS

Room 225
1:15 PM

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Soloman, and Members of the Committee:

I am Dean Okimoto, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF). Organized since 1948, the HFBF is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community.

HFBF is in **strong support of HB2595**, providing special purpose revenue bonds to assist owners of dams and reservoirs.

Reliable and affordable water is key to viable farms and ranches. Ranches and irrigated areas across the State depend on reservoirs and dams to carry them through times of little or no rainfall. Since the passage of the Dam and Reservoir Safety law, owners and users of these structures have worked with DLNR to seek practical implementation measures while meeting the goal of safety. While the rules are one issue, the classification of the reservoirs continues to be a concern and we are working with staff to review the current status of the dams and reservoirs. This will determine how much work is needed.

In the case of high risk reservoirs, extensive engineering studies followed by corrective action are placing extreme economic burdens on our farmers and ranchers. They all want to do the right thing. Safety is of utmost concern. At the same time, it is not the intent of the Dam and Reservoir safety law to put farmers and ranchers out of business as they try to comply with the measure. This bill provides a mechanism to reduce the premature

decommissioning of reservoirs. Testimonies will be received by this body from farms and ranches across the State providing unique examples of impacts of this measure.

We respectfully request your assistance in passing this measure to protect our critical agricultural water infrastructure while complying with safety requirements.

Thank you for this opportunity to address this important issue. If there are questions, please contact Brian Miyamoto, Chief Operating Officer and Government Affairs Liaison at (808) 848-2074.