

SB2957

Measure Title: RELATING TO HAWAII-GROWN TEA.
Report Title: Hawaii-grown Tea; Labeling
Description: Establishes labeling requirements for Hawaii-grown tea.
Companion:
Package: None
Current Referral: CPN, WAM
Introducer(s): ESPERO, Kahele, Nishihara

<u>Sort by</u> <u>Date</u>		Status Text
1/25/2012	S	Introduced.
1/25/2012	S	Passed First Reading.
1/27/2012	S	Referred to CPN, WAM.
1/31/2012	S	The committee(s) on CPN has scheduled a public hearing on 02-10-12 9:00AM in conference room 229.

Volcano Tea Garden

February 7, 2012

The Honorable Will Espero
Hawaii State Capitol, Rm. 231
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Espero:

I am writing to offer you support in your quest to secure the "Hawaii-grown Tea; Labeling" (SB2957), a bill that would help to protect Hawaii's good name.

My name is Mike Riley, I am the owner of Volcano Tea Garden and have been growing tea on the Big Island for more than 15 years, and I am the founding president of the Hawaii Tea Society. For many years Hawaii has been recognized in the world of tea for its potential for greatness, tea masters from around the world have come to visit and share information, merchants from Europe, Asia and America have sought us out. We have also been discovered by entrepreneurs from China. I have had several opportunities to sell our tea to blenders that would mix our leaf with inferior leaf from elsewhere and use the Hawaii name to sell it. To my knowledge this has not happened yet, but there is nothing other than the farmer's unwillingness to do that kind of business that prevents it from happening. We desperately need protection of the Hawaii name, before our reputation is smeared for profit.

I urge you to continue your effort at securing the Hawaii Grown Tea label. Tea is a huge industry around the world and Hawaii is taking its place among the best producers. In communities around the state tea gardens are sprouting up and one day our children will have the opportunity to build lives on this healthy plant.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mike Riley

*P. O. Box 211 Volcano, Hawaii 96785 phone 808 9678689
Email Volcanotea@hawaii.rr.com*



Cam Muir PhD, Co-Owner, Big Island Tea
808-938-9926, cmuir@hawaii.edu

Testimony Presented Before
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Chair Sen. Baker

Friday, February 10, 2012 at 9:00 am Conference Room 229

By

Cam Muir PhD, Co-Owner Big Island Tea, Mountain View, Hawai'i

SB 2957 Relating to Hawaii-Grown Tea

I support the intent of SB 2957 to protect producers and consumers of *Camellia sinensis* tea grown and processed in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to present testimony in support of SB 2957. The global tea industry is one of the most important and long standing agricultural industries in history. Tea is presently the most consumed drink on the planet next to water. The market for high quality tea grown in Hawai'i is vast and has, over the last 2,000 years, only gotten bigger. It is important to ensure that tea sold under the banner of "Hawai'i Grown Tea" is, to protect the integrity of high value tea grown in Hawai'i.

I support the simplicity of the proposed bill and would argue against amendments that unnecessarily complicate the interpretation. I believe that it is very important, to avoid confusion, to adhere to a definition of "Tea" that refers only to the leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* tree and does not include other herbs or fruits. Therefore, teas that are flavored with fruits or other products, should not be considered "100% Hawai'i Grown Tea" if a significant proportion of the weight is attributable to anything but *C. sinensis* leaves. It may be advisable to allow recognition of domestic production of favored teas that contain a significant amount of local flavoring products. In such cases the mixture would not be "100% Hawai'i Grown Tea" but would be a mixed tea "Containing Only Ingredients Grown in Hawai'i"

I assert that a minor revision to the proposed bill be added to allow the use or lack of a hyphen ("-") and for use of alternate, culturally significant, spelling of Hawai'i so that a label could lawfully state "Hawai'i Grown Tea", "Hawai'i-Grown Tea", "Hawaii Grown Tea", or "Hawaii-Grown Tea".



Hawaii Tea Society
PO Box 10644
Hilo, HI 96720

February 7, 2011

Dear Senator Rosalyn H. Baker and members of the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection,

As the President of the Hawaii Tea Society, a non-profit organization of tea growers and enthusiasts based here in the State of Hawaii, I would like to express our support for Bill SB2957 establishing labeling requirements for Hawaii grown tea.

While tea has long been the most common drink worldwide after water, it has recently seen dramatic growth in North America with an estimated market size of \$7.5 billion dollars in recent years. While most of this market is supplied by tea leaves produced in foreign regions with much lower labor costs, the specialty tea segment – consisting of higher priced tea leaves and into which Hawaii-grown tea falls, is estimated at \$1.3 billion according to the Tea Association of the U.S.A., Inc.

The Hawaii Tea Society believes that with support, growers in Hawaii can become the United States' domestic tea production region supplying both North America and the world, creating jobs in both the agriculture and retail sectors, and providing Hawaii with a unique product loved by visitors from around the world, particularly Asia.

Regarding the wording of Bill SB2957, we have concern that "One hundred per-cent Hawaii-grown tea" may not be the best representation of the phrase as it is. We believe the bill should allow for variations including "100% Hawaii-grown tea" and "100% Hawaii grown tea" if it does not do so already.

Furthermore, the drafters of the bill should take into consideration that unlike coffee, tea has centuries-old traditional blends consisting of tea leaves and/or blended tea leaves with other ingredients as in the case of British teas such as Earl Grey tea (made from black tea leaves and bergamot peel), Japanese tea genmaicha (mixed with toasted rice), and Chinese teas utilizing flowers.

While the HTS does not believe Hawaii growers or tea companies will seek to blend Hawaii-grown tea leaves at this stage in the industry's production capacity, as capacity grows, the blending statement, "Blended from Hawaii-grown teas and other teas not grown in Hawaii", may have a negative impact on the local industry's ability to penetrate the mainstream tea market consisting largely of blended teas.

Nonetheless, we would like to again express our strong support of the passage of this bill in order to strengthen the position of Hawaii tea growers.

Aloha,
The Hawaii Tea Society Board of Directors

Ian Chun, President, Hawaii Tea Society
JoAnn Aguirre, Vice President
Suzanne Wang, Treasurer
Bob Jacobson, Secretary
Wayne Knapstad and Bob Shaffer, Directors



HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (HFIA)

1050 Bishop St. Box 235
Honolulu, HI 96813
Fax : 808-791-0702
Telephone : 808-533-1292

TO: COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Vice Chair

DATE: Friday, February 10, 2012
TIME: 9:00am
PLACE: Conference Room 229

FROM: Hawaii Food Industry Association, Lauren Zirbel – Executive Director

RE: SB 2957 RELATING TO HAWAII-GROWN TEA.

In opposition.

HFIA respects the intent of this measure as a means to promote Hawaii's brand. HFIA is very supportive of this goal, however, this bill is chipping away a large issue with one product. HFIA prefers the efforts of the Buy Local campaign and the Hawaii Seal of Quality logo.

Launched in May 2006, the Seals of Quality represents the cream of the crop of Hawai'i's agricultural producers. It was established to protect the integrity and value of the marketing cachet for Hawai'i branded farm and value-added products. Products with this seal are genuine, Hawai'i-grown or Hawai'i-made premium products, a guarantee that is enforced by the State of Hawai'i.

The result of this particular legislation will be increased burden for retailers and producers and increased cost for consumers.

It cost Money for manufactures to make adjustments like this and in turn it cost retailers money, which impacts all consumers.

For this reason we oppose the bill while continuing to support efforts by the Department of Agriculture to promote Hawaii's products.

Dear Senator Rosalyn H. Baker and members of the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection, I wish to express my, enthusiastic support for SB2957 establishing labeling requirements for Hawai'i grown tea. Please give it your serious consideration and support.

In my personal opinion as a tea farmer, former president of the Hawai'i Tea Society (HTS) and formerly elected Hawai'i County Councilmember, I perceive the overarching need to protect the industry from predatory marketing and false labeling or worse yet over-enforcing a plan that hurts small farmers. Right now the thrust and goal of the legislation is good. We need it to move forward now through the many hoops of the legislative process. There is a good opportunity to do this now, while the industry is young. This industry offers a great opportunity for small family farms to sell a premium product to augment their incomes.

There are a few details that should be worked out after a reading or two by the legislature. These are also areas that will arise that are germane to making this work for all of us.

First, in keeping with a respect for cultural traditions and respect for our host culture I suggest that the okina in Hawai'i be placed in all appearances of the word "Hawai'i" such as "100% Hawai'i Grown Tea".

Second, along with some of my colleagues in the business, I agree with allowing a small percentage of a flavoring, to be allowed into 100% Hawaii grown tea. It is the volume or percentage that we need to address. We need to define how much of an addition can be made to a 100% Hawaii grown product without the risk that blending that could seriously detract from the integrity of 100% Hawaii grown *Camellia sinensis*, and *assamica* teas. There should be a clear expression of the intent to maintain a very high percentage of 100% *Camellia sinensis*, and *assamica* that is grown in Hawaii covered by this label. In order to account for historical tea flavoring (such as bergamot included in "Earl Grey" or some flower teas) it has been suggested that a small percentage of a minor ingredient to be allowed and the tea (*Camellia sinensis*, and *assamica*) still be labeled as 100% Hawai'i Grown Tea.

The law should allow for a small of a minor ingredient and still maintain the integrity of *Camellia sinensis*, and *assamica* that is 100% grown in Hawaii.

Third, packaging and inspection requirements should reflect that this will likely be a cottage industry that cannot spend a large amount of money on inspections and testing. This legislation needs to recognize that most tea growers have a vertically integrated system where all growing processing, packaging and marketing is done on an estate and that most of the product will leave the state in its final packaging.

The certification can easily be accomplished by looking at the farm to see if the facility is capable of producing the quantity of tea marketed and that the tea itself reflects our own unique taste and appearance. UHH Pharmacology has considered genetic and qualitative testing to see if Hawai'i Grown Tea can be identified by certain markers, but that research remains to be done.

Please support SB2957 establishing labeling requirements for Hawai'i grown tea.

Mahalo,

Bob Jacobson, President Hawai'i Rainforest Tea, PO B 900, Kurtistown, HI 96760, voice 808-966-8831

Testimony for CPN 2/10/2012 9:00:00 AM SB2957

Conference room: 229

Testifier position: Support

Testifier will be present: Yes

Submitted by: Aurencio Seguritan

Organization: Individual

E-mail: aurencio212@gmail.com

Submitted on: 2/4/2012

Comments:

As part of the research team from the University of Hawaii that performed a feasibility study on Hawaiian Grown Tea, label requirements and name protection is critical to the success of developing an industry here. Without such name protection, the brand is subject to dilution. Thus, branding and name protection are keys to helping improve Hawaii's economy.

Testimony for CPN 2/10/2012 9:00:00 AM SB2957

Conference room: 229
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Jie
Organization: Individual
E-mail: jiezg@hawaii.edu
Submitted on: 2/2/2012

Comments:

over the summer I've been fortunate to be part of the emerging industry by conducting the market feasibility of Hawaii Grown Tea. Labeling protection is one of the fundamental issues the new industry needs to resolve immediately in order to grow strong. As the industry is still in its infant stage, it needs lots of promotion and education. Label protection will enhance the market recognition of Hawaii Grown Tea. If name protection is not set up at this stage to differentiate itself with other Hawaii style teas, the new industry will lose the potential million dollar market. Therefore, the labeling issue is a key success factor to the Hawaii tea industry. We all want jobs, we all want our communities to thrive, we all want our state economy to be in better shape. Say Yes to this bill please!

Jie@Hawaiiicollaborators

SB2957 Testimony

Submitted by: Elyse Petersen

As an individual that is deeply involved in the global tea industry I am very happy to see this bill. I am in full support of this issue and hope that this bill is passed. I believe that the establishment of a Hawaii Grown Tea brand will be the foundation on which the industry can be built. In turn this industry is not only going to be an additional crop opportunity for local agriculturalists, but it will also help diversify the state's economy. Diversifying into low quantity, high profit margin exports will help the state build a more sustainable future.

"Hawaii Grown Tea"

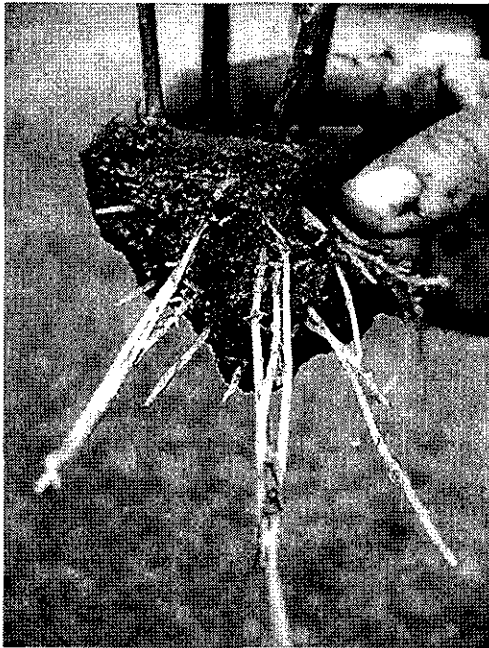
By Eva Lee

What do these words mean? Why have they become so important after several years of effort by so many people?

The *Camellia sinensis* tea grown in Hawaii is an agriculture crop reintroduced in 2001 by horticultural research from the Pacific Basin Agriculture Research Center USDA and continued experimentation with the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. The formation of potential growers interested in participating in Hawaii's new industry was established, hence the Hawaii Tea Society HTS was founded in 2003 and Tea Hawaii & Company was founded in 2006 to support the tea growing community passionate in producing a high quality small-scale tea industry in the state of Hawaii.

Our original diverse group of tea growers as well as on-going new tea growers has brought about a tremendous amount of useful information in propagation, cultivation and processing over the last handful of years. It is quite amazing that all of Hawaii's tea growers have accomplished so much in such a short amount of time without any tea farming heritage of our own to draw upon.

HTS rooted tea cuttings propagation program.



Unlike many other tea producing countries that have tea growers sending their picked harvests to processing factories, tea growers in Hawaii are also processing our own tea. Finding our way as to what works best for us, courageously taking risks, adopting traditional aspects of tea processing methods and crafting our own skills into a unique tea experience that has been the original premise on which the Hawaii tea growing community began.

Innovative thinking has enabled us growers to utilize a wide spectrum of agricultural approaches including conventional farming, gardening, nurseries, HTS workshops with tea farmers from abroad and locally practiced wild organic techniques all integrated with good old intuition. Hawaii's growers have been experimenting with various known cultivars as well as seedlings from the unknown with a focus most suited for each location. The commitment to the daily attention in the field to the processing of tea has placed Hawaii on the map as the only state in the United States setting sail in moving forward as a tea producing state.

Volcano region tea flush.



We now find ourselves in a phase of understanding what we have produced and how to continually improve upon it. Often we find ourselves placed in moments of reflection and contemplation when asked what makes our tea so unique. How do we build a strong consumer following from the lessons we've learned so our tea doesn't just become a novelty item and will gain speed as a high quality agriculture product? What makes us stand apart?

We all know that the elements of soil, air and water are the gifts that Hawaii provides us growers and how fellow tea growers in other countries are constantly battling man made pollution. Hawaii's recent developments of the eruption from Kilauea Volcano Halemaumau crater spewing large amounts of Sulfur dioxide (SO₂) has shown that the camellia sinensis tea growing in Hawaii is holding up well under the circumstances. As we hone in on our growing practices, refine our processing techniques in developing a greater tea industry in Hawaii we are faced with

environmental and cultural issues that effect the understanding origins of our tea.

The established marketing philosophies of products grown in Hawaii or imported and repackaged in Hawaii that are labeled "Hawaiian" have long been adapted for the purpose of commercial marketability. This method has brought about much discussion and questions being considered for the tea industry in Hawaii.

How do we identify the origin of the camellia sinensis tea we grow, process and market? Shall we follow the status quo in commercial marketing of tea grown in Hawaii as "Hawaiian" and if so what is the historical thread the Hawaiian people have with camillia sinensis tea? Should we respond accurately to our children's questions, the children who may be Hawaii's next generation of tea farmers, if what we grow in Hawaii is Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, African, East Indian or Turkish? How do we convey to our supporting communities a truth in labeling that speaks of who we are and what we produce?

It's a topic that comes up time and time again. Here are a few facts for folks to draw their own conclusions. In 2005 it was concluded at the Tea Conference Hawaii that cultural sensitivity should be considered when educating the public and the marketing of tea grown in Hawaii. There is no historical reference of the Hawaiian people using camellia sinensis tea. Tea produced in Hawaii should identify its origin by region not ethnicity. College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources and the Hawaii Tea Society has agreed in educating the public and work toward legalizing the branding of tea grown in Hawaii as "Hawaii Grown".

2008 Mayor Harry Kim and tea grower Eva Lee at Tea Conference Hawaii discuss culture and agriculture.



Profiling ourselves as individuals within communities that believe in Hawaii becoming an established high quality small-scale tea producing state with creative signature branding has and continues to evolve for Hawaii's tea growers.

So this brings us back to the area concerning what makes us stand apart from all the other established tea-producing countries. Today's consumers have discriminating tastes. The specialty market is rising and these consumers respond to quality goods, terroir and place of origin. Perhaps in welcoming those entering our tea world we should consider expressing two simple words..."Hawaii Grown".
Even better, 100% Hawaii Grown Tea.



Eva Lee is a founding member of the Hawaii Tea Society. www.hawaiiteasociety.org She held the office of Vice president 2003-2004, President 2005-2007 and is presently the Chair of Propagation. Lee and her husband Chiu Leong grow tea in Volcano Village and are owners of Tea Hawaii & Company representing a collective of Hawaii tea growers and are participants of Hawaii agro-tourism showcasing Hawaii grown tea. www.teahawaii.com
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