

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor



RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES
ON
AGRICULTURE
&
WATER, LAND, AND HOUSING

FEBRUARY 2, 2012, 2:45 P.M.
ROOM 229

SENATE BILL NO. 3011
RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS

Chairpersons Dela Cruz and Nishihara and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 3011. The purpose of this bill is to require the Department of Land and Natural Resources to transfer title to public agricultural lands under its jurisdiction to the agribusiness development corporation. The DOA strongly opposes this bill.

The Non-Agricultural Parks Program (Chapter 166E, HRS) was established in 2003 with the intent and understanding that the Department of Agriculture (DOA) would provide a significantly better environment for farmers holding State leases. This program has been, and continues to be very successful as comments from the agricultural community have been overwhelmingly positive. This program was created to "...ensure the long-term productive use of public lands leased or available to be leased by the Department of Land and Natural Resources for agricultural purposes by allowing these lands to be transferred to and managed by the Department of Agriculture." In addition, this program, along with its corresponding administrative rules, provides unique opportunities for established farms that were not previously available to holders of State agricultural leases. To date, approximately 128 parcels have been transferred via Governor's Executive order with an additional 93 parcels in the



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queue. Additional lands of up to 491 parcels have been identified as potential for transfer and are with DLNR for paring down. We continue to work with DLNR to identify additional lands appropriate for transfer under the spirit of this program.

Additionally, it is critical to understand that DOA and ADC both strongly believe that the functions of DOA and ADC do not overlap, but in fact complement each other. The ADC was created as a rapid-response agency to stabilize deteriorating plantation water systems and vacant plantation lands and transition these lands and infrastructure into use for diversified agriculture. ADC was designed to be entrepreneurial in practice, with exemptions, to quickly put diversified farmers onto the land and settle issues related to the difficult and complex transition process. Once ADC transition projects mature, these stabilized projects can be transferred to appropriate agencies or organizations (including the Agricultural Resource Management Division - ARM), cooperatives, or other new formats that may be suitable for that particular situation. ARM, in contrast, is the long-term management entity of the state-owned agricultural lands and irrigation systems. Its programs operate under administrative rules, offering users as well as the state protection, predictability, and opportunities to be heard during the public hearing process, as has been mandated by the legislature for the management of these assets.

The DOA does not see that the passage of this bill will improve the farming community's relations with the State, nor provide any additional protections for diversified agriculture. We and ADC strongly believe that farmers benefit from both agencies working with their own particular and complimentary strengths for the growth and advancement of Hawaii's agriculture industry and therefore, respectfully ask that this bill be held.

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor



JAMES J. NAKATANI
Executive Director

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**TESTIMONY OF JAMES NAKATANI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON
AGRICULTURE AND WATER, LAND, AND HOUSING**

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

**SENATE BILL NO. 3011
RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS**

Chairpersons Nishihara, Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 3011. The purpose of this bill is to require the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to transfer title to public lands under its jurisdiction to the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC). The ADC opposes this bill.

ADC's primary mission is to develop/transition abandoned plantation lands and water systems, as in the case of the Kekaha Agricultural Lands and the Kalepa Lands programs transferred to ADC from DLNR that we currently manage in Kauai. This is in contrast to the majority of lands being transferred from DLNR to DOA's Agricultural Resource Management Division (ARM), which already have established farming tenants and/or otherwise do not fit the intended

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model for ADC. We concur with the DOA's position that DOA and ADC functions should not overlap or be in conflict but rather complement each other,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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FEBRUARY 2, 2012

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND AND HOUSING

TESTIMONY ON SB 3011
RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS

Room 229
2:45 PM

Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Nishihara, and Members of the Committees:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Chief Operating Officer and Government Affairs Liaison for 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 supports the intent of SB 3011, which requires Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to transfer title to public agricultural lands under its jurisdiction to the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

From an agricultural industry standpoint, we believe that ADC is the more appropriate state agency that should have the authority to manage public lands within the agricultural land use district currently managed by DLNR. We also feel that the farmers and ranchers who are most interested in this type of land conservation program would be more comfortable with ADC since they are familiar with the industry.

HFBF defers to ADC to determine if they are prepared to manage these lands at this time.

I can be reached at (808) 848-2074 if you have any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.