

# **SCR 91/SR42**

Testimony



State of Hawaii  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND  
TECHNOLOGY AND  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

APRIL 9, 2012  
2:45 PM  
ROOM 016

SENATE RESOLUTION 42  
AND  
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 91  
RELATING TO ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP TO DISCUSS AND  
RECOMMEND LABELING REQUIREMENTS FOR HAWAII-GROWN TEA

Chairperson Fukunaga, Chairperson Nishihara and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Resolution 42 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 91. The purpose of the resolution and concurrent resolution is to request the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to establish a Hawaii-Grown Tea Working Group to identify problems, discuss and make recommendations regarding labeling requirements for Hawaii-grown tea; determine fiscal impact for stricter labeling requirements or uniform national labeling; and submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the legislature. The department supports these resolutions.

Based on a market feasibility study published by the University of Hawaii, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, there are more than 19 farmers currently growing tea, 14 have developed businesses and 10 are producing and marketing tea products. The value of loose-leaf tea sold on the Internet can range from



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\$132.16 to \$573.92 per pound, and selected prices in other market channels range from under \$100 up to \$4,800 per pound.

This working group would contribute to Hawai'i Tea Society's efforts in acquiring a trademark for "100% Hawai'i Grown Tea" to combat the negative impact on brand quality resulting from flavored "Hawaiian" blends containing no Hawai'i-grown tea and help to protect the value of Hawai'i grown tea.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Agriculture  
and  
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Technology  
Monday, April 9, 2012  
By  
Virginia Hinshaw, Chancellor  
And  
Sylvia Yuen, Interim Dean and Director  
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### SCR 91 – ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP TO DISCUSS AND RECOMMEND LABELING REQUIREMENTS FOR HAWAII-GROWN TEA

Chairs Nishihara and Fukunaga, and members of the Senate Committees on Agriculture and Economic Development and Technology, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SCR 91, establishing a working group to discuss and recommend labeling requirements for Hawai'i-grown tea.

My name is Sylvia Yuen. I am Interim Dean and Director of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and am providing this testimony on behalf of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Last year (2011), CTAHR partnered with the UH-Mānoa Pacific Asian Center for Entrepreneurship (PACE), Shidler College of Business to research and produce a market feasibility study for developing Hawai'i-grown tea into a viable and sustainable agricultural industry for the State of Hawai'i. We engaged many stakeholders in this effort, including tea farmers and retailers, the Hawai'i Tea Society membership, and many other members of the community.

One key finding of this study was that for the currently small and developing tea industry in Hawai'i to grow and for tea to become a sustainable specialty crop, Hawai'i-grown tea must be established as a premium product, both in terms of quality and consumer association of "Hawai'i-grown" with that high quality. This perception of high quality can be diluted by use of the word "Hawai'i" on tea product labels that do not actually consist of tea grown in Hawai'i. These certainly may be quality products in their own right, but if they are not actually grown in Hawai'i and represent both the quality and price structure associated with Hawai'i-grown tea, the brand will be diluted.

SCR 91 will establish a committee to consider and make recommendations on the issue of label protection for Hawai'i-grown tea and, therefore, represents a major step towards establishing tea as a viable and high quality agricultural crop in Hawai'i. CTAHR is willing to participate on this committee, and to serve as either member or chair as the legislature deems appropriate. CTAHR strongly supports SCR 91.

Written Testimony Presented Before  
The Senate Committee on Agriculture  
Sen. Clarence Nishihara, Chair  
Sen. Gilbert Kahele, Vice Chair  
and  
The Senate Committee on Economic Development  
Sen. Carol Fukunaga, Chair  
Sen. Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Monday, April 9, 2012  
by  
Stuart T. Nakamoto, PhD

**Support for SCR 91, Establishing A Working Group To Discuss And Recommend Labeling Requirements For Hawaii-Grown Tea**

Chair Nishihara and Chair Fukunaga, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SCR 91, establishing a working group to discuss and recommend labeling requirements for Hawaii-grown tea.

My name is Stuart T. Nakamoto. I am an Extension Economist in the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. However, today I am providing personal testimony.

I am an author of the report titled "Hawaii-Grown Tea: A Market Feasibility Study. Executive Summary" by CTAHR and the UH-Shidler College of Business. This report documents the strong potential of Hawaii-Grown Tea and makes recommendations for reaching the full potential of this new crop. One recommendation is to protect the Hawaii name.

I personally believe that Hawaii-Grown Tea has the potential to be another Hawaii Coffee industry, if not surpass it. The full potential will probably not be reached without protecting the Hawaii name. The Legislature takes major steps in that direction with this resolution. I therefore support SCR 91.

## nishihara1 - Danille

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 07, 2012 11:49 PM  
**To:** AGL Testimony  
**Cc:** hawaiiitea@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SCR91 on 4/9/2012 2:45:00 PM

Testimony for AGL/EDT 4/9/2012 2:45:00 PM SCR91

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: Support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Michael Longo  
Organization:  
E-mail: [hawaiiitea@gmail.com](mailto:hawaiiitea@gmail.com)  
Submitted on: 4/7/2012

**Comments:**

I am a Tea farmer on the Big Island. I was one of the founding members of the Hawaii Tea Society. I am very interested in providing information and suggestions regarding the labeling of Tea Products in Hawaii.

In order to protect the budding Tea industry in Hawaii, I believe that all tea that is labeled Hawaiian Tea or Hawaii Tea, be required to disclose on labels the percentage of Tea that is actually grown in Hawaii. For example: 100% Hawaii Grown Tea.

In addition, the legislature should set a minimum standard for the percentage amount of Hawaii Grown Tea that would be required before a vendor could use the terms Hawaii or Hawaiian to refer to their Tea product.

If we can be of further assistance with education, or with drafting this piece of legislature, or if any legislator would like to visit our Tea Farm and find out more about the private sector's experience with growing tea, please feel free to contact us on Hawaii Island. (808) 964-3283. [Hawaiiitea@gmail.com](mailto:Hawaiiitea@gmail.com)

Michael Longo  
Onomea Tea Company