

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor



SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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**TESTIMONY OF SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE**

**FEBRUARY 21, 2014, 12:00 P.M.
ROOM 308**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1916
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION
DISTRICTS**

Chair Luke and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1916. This bill appropriates funds to the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts (HACD) to assist with its staffing and operating costs to provide time for the districts to develop sustainable funding mechanisms.

Proper conservation practices are essential to a farmer's success. HACD can provide farmers with the technical expertise needed to create their own conservation plans. With an approved conservation plan, farmers will be able to attain necessary permissions prior to clearing and grading their land to prepare it for planting and to put new lands into production. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture supports this bill, but defers to the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
FINANCE**

**Friday, February 21, 2014
12:00 P.M.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1916
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO
THE HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

House Bill 1916 proposes to appropriate an unspecified amount of general revenues in Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-2015 for staffing and operating costs of the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts (HACD). **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget request.**

The purpose of the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Program is to educate, construct, maintain, and assist in the development of conservation plans to protect soil and water resources. Each SWCD is operated by a five-member volunteer board. HACD is an umbrella organization formed by the 16 SWCDs under Chapters 180 and 180C, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and administratively attached to the Department. HACD and the SWCDs will receive a total of \$76,000 in FY 2013-2014 toward their operating expenses through the LNR 141 Program. Other required funds for their operation and implementation of projects must be sought in the form of grants from other agencies.

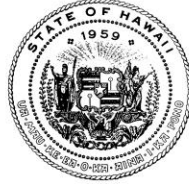
Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ESTHER KIA'AINA
FIRST DEPUTY

WILLIAM M. TAM
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:
File:

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

HB 1916, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Testimony of Gary L. Gill
Deputy Director, Environmental Health Administration

February 21, 2014
12:00 p.m.

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health supports the intent of this bill and would like to
2 offer some suggestions.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** This bill proposes to appropriate an unspecified amount of funds from the general
4 revenues of the State of Hawaii for the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts.

5 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of this bill is to protect Hawaii's natural environment by
6 providing funding to the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts to support conservation projects
7 and programs, and services to farmers and ranchers. The department supports this bill's environmental
8 protection purpose, but offers the following suggestions.

9 The projects and programs carried out by the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts
10 complement the efforts of the department by helping to improve water quality and address pollution
11 sources. In addition, information collected by the districts included in conservation plans, if provided to
12 the department, would assist in implementing the statutorily mandated Total Maximum Daily Load and
13 Polluted Runoff Control programs. Therefore, the department supports the proposed appropriation for
14 the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts, but suggests that amendments be added to this bill to

1 include methods for the conservation plans to be evaluated for overall effectiveness. Specifically, the
2 department suggests an amendment that would require the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts
3 to provide conservation plans to the department, upon request. Ideally, the results of their work should
4 be shared with the department and other affected agencies to help maximize statewide efforts to reduce
5 pollution and improve water quality.

6 The department believes that increased funding to the Hawaii Association of Conservation
7 Districts can help multiple agencies meet their objectives, and allow for greater coordination among
8 environmental programs and more efficient use of State resources.

9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts
P O Box 1411
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

February 19, 2014

Testimony in Support of HB 1916

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson and Finance Committee Members

My name is Karen Ah Mai, Chair of the South Oahu Soil and Water Conservation District, one of the 16 Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the State of Hawaii. I am here to testify in strong support of HB 1916 and representing the 16 Soil & Water Conservation Districts that make up the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts (HACD).

The funding request in HB 1916 is very important to the people of Hawaii. When the State Dept of Health cut our funds on December 31, 2013, it left every Soil & Water Conservation District in the State of Hawaii scrambling to figure out what to do.

Hawaii law Chapter 180-13, authorizes and requires the SWCDs to develop erosion control programs and conservation plans to protect the resources of Hawaii. Current State funding does not allow us to hire appropriate staffing to do this work. Thus when DOH cut our funds, we lost our Oahu trained staff and Big Island, Kauai and Maui were left to seek other temporary funding mechanisms. However, when these funds dry up, those positions are also at risk to be lost.

As we speak, HACD is asking Dept of Ag for budgetary support to cover our employee's expense until this funding measure can be released in July (2014).

The CS position is a great value for the people of Hawaii. We provide conservation plans, technical support, and guidance for our land owners and tenants. We assist with conservation, environmental education and public safety projects statewide. We do this at a minimal cost to State govt, because we cost share with our partners at the Federal and County govt. With the exception of Honolulu, all of our other counties provide financial support to the SWCDs. The USDA – NRCS provides us with office space, office equipment, computers, IT support, technical training, vehicles, and field equipment, valued at over \$200,000 per year.

Our 80 SWCD directors (5 directors/ district) are all volunteers and provide technical support, guidance and supervision at no cost.

The CS position is a fulltime job, requiring specific training and skills. Without proper funding, we will not be able to provide the key services to the people of Hawaii as authorized under Chapter 180.

Thanks you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Karen Ah Mai
Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 21, 2014

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 1916
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Room 308
12:00 AM

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Johanson, and Members of the
Committee:

I am Christopher Manfredi, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFBF is comprised of 1,832 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

HFB strongly supports HB 1916, which seeks an appropriation for the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts to assist with its staffing of Conservation Specialists.

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) are mandated by HRS §180. The SWCD is comprised of volunteer directors that are closely tied to Island communities. Many of these SWCD directors are also farmers, ranchers and members of HFB. They understand the issues related to land use, stewardship, resource management and agriculture.

The 16 SWCDs assist the agricultural communities throughout the entire State. They help farmers and ranchers develop and process conservation plans and address issues relating to erosion, water quality, agricultural water, and grading and grubbing plan reviews.

State of Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) has historically funded districts \$207,000 annually, for the staffing of Conservation Specialists. Effective December 31, 2013, DOH totally eliminated these funds and has not provided any replacement funding.

Thus there is a backlog of conservation plans throughout parts of the State (particularly Oahu).

Under these tough economic times, the SWCDs funding continues to get squeezed at the State, County and Federal levels. The requested funds, while nominal are vitally important for farmers, ranchers, agricultural landowners, birds and animals, the environment and the present and future citizens of the State of Hawaii.

Since many SWCD Directors are volunteers, SWCDs take pressure off county planning departments and alleviating backlogs. In working through public-private partnerships SWCDs provide free engineering services for low-impact projects. These cost savings are reflected in lower food and foliage production costs that are ultimately saved by consumers and make Hawaii's producers more competitive in the marketplace.

HFBF considers the SWCDs a vital partner in Hawaii's agricultural Industry and our Island communities.

Please pass HB 1916.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure of critical importance.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
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Cc: alan.takemoto@monsanto.com
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HB1916

Submitted on: 2/19/2014

Testimony for FIN on Feb 21, 2014 12:00PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alan Takemoto	Monsanto	Support	No

Comments: We support HB 1916 which appropriates funds for the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts (HACD). The HACD is one of the most important organizations that assist farmers and ranchers in maintaining and improving their agricultural lands. They provide an invaluable land stewardship service that farmers and ranchers can utilize to develop a soil and water conservation plan that protects the natural resources overall. These plans are often times required of farmers and ranchers to qualify for state and federal programs. The HACD has been well underfunded and needs additional funds to better service Hawaii's agricultural community. We strongly support HB 1916 that provides the HACD the adequate funding that is necessary to support Hawaii's farmers and ranchers. Thank you.

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HB1916

Submitted on: 2/20/2014

Testimony for FIN on Feb 21, 2014 12:00PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Watson	Individual	Support	No

Comments: My name is Michelle Watkins and I would like to submit testimony in support of HB1916. The 16 Hawaii SWCD's are all run by volunteer's and would not be able to assist the community without the funds to hire at least 1 (one) Conservation Specialist per county.

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David "Buddy" Nobriga
P.O. Box 1170, Wailuku, HI 96793

Testimony in Support of HB 1916
Making an Appropriation to the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts
House of Representatives – Committee on Finance
Friday, February 21, 2014
State Capitol Conference Room 308

To: Chair Sylvia Luke, Vice Chair Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair Aaron Ling, and Finance Committee

My name is David "Buddy" Nobriga. I was born on December 7, 1926, Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii. I served as a volunteer on the West Maui Soil & Water Conservation District Board from 1956 to 2008.

I strongly support HB1916 for the appropriation of funds for the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts to assist with staffing and operating costs.

The Hawai'i Association of Conservation Districts was organized in September 1954 to serve as the state instrument and voice for the conservation movement in Hawai'i. It maintains and promotes relations with organizations and government agencies; publishes information about districts; works with youth, agriculture, urban programs, the environment, industry, and other fields; and provides specialized services to the Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs).

The SWCDs have long served the people of Hawaii, by providing planning and education/community outreach services to proactively manage erosion, and productively use our natural resources, while providing agricultural products to the community.

The SWCDs are legally constituted, self-governing units under the Hawaii Soil and Water Conservation Law, Chapter 180, Hawaii Revised Statutes. We were organized for the protection and conservation of soil and water resources in the interest of the health, safety, and general welfare of people in this region.

The SWCDs exist under the State Department of Land and Natural Resources. The SWCDs receive an annual allotment of \$2050.00 from DLNR for operating expenses, which includes travel, printing and binding, postage, and education programs.

All of the programs involving SWCDs are community based. SWCD directors are citizens from their respective communities and welcome community input toward identifying natural resource problems. The SWCD Programs carries out its activities in partnership with County, State, and Federal agencies.

In the years that I have voluntarily served on the West Maui SWCD Board, we have done many things:

1. Conservation Planning (ongoing): The SWCDs work with Cooperators to develop conservation plans in an effort to minimize negative impacts of agriculture on natural resources. In partnership with all SWCDs Statewide and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
2. County Grading and Grubbing Permits (ongoing); The SWCDs responsibilities also include reviewing drainage and erosion control plans for land use changes, developments and subdivisions (Chapter 20.08.080

Grubbing and Grading Permit Review). Sponsors and/or Partners: Maui County SWCDs and the County of Maui DSA

3. Honolua Watershed Project: (1983 – 1997) These projects brought in \$14.25 million of Federal funds and established partnerships between, NRCS, West Maui SWCD, Maui County and private landowners to protect life and property, and improve coastal ecosystems.
 - Kahana Basin
 - Napili 4-5 Basin
 - Napili 2-3 Basin
 - Honokowai Basin and Channel
 - Mahinahina Basin and Channel
 - Honokeana Basin
 - Kaopala Basin
4. West Maui Algae Bloom Projects: (1993) \$50,000. This was a partnering project between West Maui SWCD, EPA, DOH, NRCS, and ML&P, to construct 2 sediment retention basins in West Maui.
 - Pohaku Kaanapali Basin
 - Smaller Kaopala Basin
5. Lahaina Interim Flood Control Project: (1997, with annual inspections) \$120,000. This was a partnering project between West Maui SWCD, EPA, DOH, NRCS, and ML&P, to construct 2 diversion channels and 3 sediment retention basins in West Maui as an interim measure to protect Lahaina town from flooding and storm damages.
6. Lahaina Watershed Project: (Current) \$14 million. This project is an ongoing partnering project between, NRCS, West Maui SWCD, Maui County and private landowners to protect Lahaina Town from flooding and storm damages.
7. West Maui 319 Projects (1992 – 2002) \$500,000. These projects were partnering projects between West Maui SWCD, EPA, DOH, NRCS, and ML&P, to construct multiple Best Management Practices (BMPs) on pineapple lands to reduce sediment runoff and improve coastal waters.
8. Puamana Channel Maintenance Project: (1999) \$21,000. This was a partnering project between West Maui SWCD, Puamana Homeowners Association and ML&P, to clean out Kauaula Channel in West Maui.
9. Lahainaluna High School Drainage Improvement Project: (1996, 2013) \$15,000. This was a partnering project between West Maui SWCD, NRCS, Lahainaluna High School, ML&P, and Puu Kane Farms to construct a diversion channel to protect flooding on lower school campuses.
10. State Land Terraces – Lahaina (2002): \$9,500 Construction of Terraces in partnership with DLNR, Maui Land & Pineapple Company, and West Maui SWCD
11. Sugarcane Diversion Improvements: (1994) \$50,000. Diversion Improvements. Partners: EPA, Dept. of Health, USDA-NRCS, Pioneer Mill, Maui Land & Pineapple Company, and West Maui SWCD
12. Kamehameha School Diversion Improvements: (1997) \$50,000 This was a partnering project between West Maui SWCD, NRCS, Kamehameha Schools to re-construct diversion channels in former sugar cane fields.
13. Feral Animal Control Fencing Project: (1998) \$100,000. This was a partnering project between West Maui SWCD, EPA, DOH, and West Maui Mountains Partnership Program to construct fencing in the upper West Maui Watershed to keep feral pigs and deer out of our native rain forest.

14. Farm Bill Projects: \$1.48 million. Through the SWCDs of Maui County, Farm Bill Projects have been awarded to farmers, ranchers and Ag landowners to implement conservation projects through EQIP, WHIP and WRP Programs.
15. Created Tri-Isle RC&D for the Island of Maui. Tri Isle RC&D Projects: over \$2.0 million. The SWCDs of Maui, Molokai and Lanai actively serve on the Tri Isle RC&D Board and sponsors projects to promote agriculture, improve rural life styles and protect our environment.
 - Molokai Ag Development Projects Phase 1,2,3, 4
 - Maui Ag Development Projects Phase 1, 2
 - Keanae Water Flume Restoration Project
 - Kahakuloa Stream Intake Project
 - Lanai and Molokai Market Places
 - Molokai Heifer Program
 - Coqui Frog Eradication Program
 - Miconia Eradication Program
 - Ulumalu-Peahi Water Line Distribution
 - Maui Invasive Species Committee fight against, noxious weeds
16. Animal Stocking & Quarantine Station (2003): \$66,000, Develop staging area for livestock shipping. In partnership with West Maui SWCD and Maui Cattlemen's Association
17. Hawaii State Livestock Waste Management Guidelines (2008-2010): \$50,100. West Maui SWCD is partnering with U.H. Cooperative Extension Service, USDA-NRCS, EPA, State of Hawaii-DOH Waste Water Branch and Clean Water Branch and representatives of livestock producers to update the State of Hawaii-DOH's Livestock Waste Management Guidelines developed in 1996.
18. Conservation Awareness Program: (Annually) \$1,000 for Island Contest, \$6,000 State Contest, and \$10,000 National Contest. The Maui SWCDs partner with the U.H. Cooperative Extension Service and USDA-NRCS to give students the opportunity to learn about various soil characteristics, environmental conditions and topography and how they can affect the use of land.
19. Fireweed (2002-2005): \$78,000 for fireweed eradication and education project. Sponsors and/or Partners: West Maui SWCD, NRCS, RCUH, County of Maui, and Cattlemen's Association
20. Support the Honolua Bay Coral Reefs Initiative Projects.
21. Inspect and Support Kahoolawe Restoration Project
22. Inspect and support Maalaea Wind Farm project.
23. Support West Maui Mountains Watershed, Leeward Haleakala Watershed, and East Maui Watershed Partnerships

A State voluntary board cannot adequately provide enough time to initiate, implement, and support its program. Please approve HB1916 to better serve the farmers, ranchers, land users, civic groups, schools and government agencies on state and federal programs relating to water quality and conservation of our natural resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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HB1916

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Maggie Kramp	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	No

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Warren Watanabe	Maui County Farm Bureau	Support	No

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HB1916

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alan Gottlieb	Hawaii Cattlemen's Council	Support	No

Comments:

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