

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**

**Wednesday, February 27, 2013
11:30AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 484, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TARO**

House Bill 484, House Draft 1 proposes to include taro lands and taro growing structures as special agricultural lands to be protected from development. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) appreciates the intent of the bill, but has concerns and offers the following comments.**

The bill prohibits the Board of Land and Natural Resources from acquiring for development projects, lands used or to be used for taro growing that possess: 1) Existing taro growing systems, 2) Ancient taro lands, or 3) Structural elements of ancient taro growing systems. As written, the bill's prohibitions are overly broad, especially with regard to ancient taro lands and growing structures. The bill does not provide for any determination as to whether the lands may be feasible for present or future taro cultivation. In addition, the bill does not take into account whether there is any demand to engage in taro cultivation on a property. The broad application of bill's language may result in preventing noteworthy public works projects without any taro cultivation being conducted. Furthermore, the bill appears to create a conflict with other language in the statutory provision, which allows for the acquisition of agricultural lands for development under certain limited circumstances.

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



HB484 HD1
RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TARO
House Committee on Finance

February 27, 2013

11:30 a.m.

Conference Room 308

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB484 HD1, which designates existing kalo-growing structures and lands as special agricultural lands and protects them from development.

The traditional mo‘olelo of Wākea and Papahānaumoku explains that the first kalo plant, Hāloanakalaukapalili, is the elder brother of Native Hawaiians. As the elder sibling, Hāloa provides sustenance to Native Hawaiians and, in return, we as the younger siblings care for Hāloa by ensuring that kalo flourishes. The bond that connects Native Hawaiians to kalo remains a sacred one, and it is our kuleana to preserve it. Kalo is not only integral to the identity of Native Hawaiians but also to the State of Hawai‘i as a whole.

However, although much of Hawai‘i’s resident population still relies on kalo as a staple starch and our tourism industry requires a high volume of kalo to create a more authentic cultural imprint upon our visitors, Hawai‘i imports millions of pounds of kalo every year to support these demands. This bill would promote local production of kalo to improve our state’s food self-sufficiency and keep jobs and resources in our local economy.

This Legislature established the Taro Security and Purity Task Force (Act 211, Session Laws 2008) to explore ways to strengthen state policy to restore our once-flourishing kalo market. In their report issued in 2010, the Taro Task Force’s primary recommendation was for the state to take an active role in remedying the severe reduction in the amount of and access to kalo-growing lands. The Task Force found that rapid development in the last 20 years has led to a catastrophic loss of lands with the unique set of natural conditions necessary for kalo growth and the dismantling of ancient structures most efficient for fostering thriving kalo production. Protecting these historic lands and structures from further destruction and development will ensure that they are available to help support our present and future kalo needs and will demonstrate our return to a more traditional, self-sufficient, and sustainable model of food production.

Therefore, OHA urges the committee to **PASS** HB484 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2013 1:05 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: thomasy@hawaii.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB484 on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM

HB484

Submitted on: 2/26/2013

Testimony for FIN on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Thomas Young	Windward Community College	Comments Only	No

Comments: HB484, Chair(s) and Members AGR/WAL, FIN Hearing Date 2/27/2013, 11:30 AM Aloha mai, My name is Thomas Young. I am a Cultural Technician at WCC, working with students to create a mala, dryland system, to be used as a living laboratory for Hawaiian Studies students to learn about kalo and other course related plants. This is one component in the coursework offered to obtain a Hawaiian Studies Certificate. This newly approved certificate eases the transfer process for Hawaiian Studies majors to enter UH Hilo, Manoa, and West Oahu to complete their B.A. There will certainly be those who will want to pursue the skills and knowledge towards farming kalo, and we are partnered up in the Ko'olau community to give them service learning experience in lo'i kalo, wetland systems. This bill protects a vital component of Hawaiian culture and food security and assures students who desire this way of life that there will be aina around to do so. Please pass this bill and all others that speak to the food security of Hawaii and protection of Hawaiian culture. It is encouraging to see that we are on the same path. Mahalo nui, Thomas Young Windward Community College 45-720 Kea'ahala Road Kaneohe, HI 96744 808 236-9245

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To: FINTestimony
Cc: ohana@kipahulu.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB484 on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM

HB484

Submitted on: 2/26/2013

Testimony for FIN on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Scott Crawford	Kipahulu Ohana, Inc.	Support	No

Comments: As wetland taro farmers on Maui, we support preserving remaining O'ahu taro lands for future food security.

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Cc: hankhawaiian@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB484 on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM

HB484

Submitted on: 2/26/2013

Testimony for FIN on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Harry Fergerstrom	Na Kupuna Moku O Keawe	Support	No

Comments: The need to protect wet lands for the growth of taro is extremely important for basic food sovereignty. Further wet land Taro is a traditional food source that also couples with Hawaiian Religion and customs. We feel that the extension of we lands for the growth of taro is something that should be explored as once Hawaii had over 200,000 acres under cultivation. Taro is our source of life. It is traditional food that passes from generation to generation. It is from the growing of Taro that we pay homage to Haloa. It teaches us many important lessons such as the value of Ohana, proper water management, and the value of family. Na Kupuna Moku O Keawe is an organization composed of elders from all six major districts of the island of Hawaii. We have well over 200 voters and our organization continues to grow. Other islands are also following the lead of the Big Island and are organizing for our mutual protection. We will be watching carefully. Thank you

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Cc: nredfeather@kohalacenter.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB484 on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM

HB484

Submitted on: 2/26/2013

Testimony for FIN on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nancy Redfeather	Hawai'i Island School Garden Network	Support	No

Comments: Agricultural Education is beginning to return to Hawai'i. With it follows interest in farming and food production. Layered on that idea is the interest statewide for a Farm to School program and the building of a local agricultural economy to support our state institutions. Preserving our local taro growing regions and lands is essential for increased future food security and availability of production areas for our farmers and farmers-to-be. The Hawai'i Island School Garden Network representing 65 school programs and over 8,000 students on Hawai'i Island is in support of this measure.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [FINTestimony](#)
Cc: inunyabus@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB484 on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM
Date: Monday, February 25, 2013 1:01:36 PM

HB484

Submitted on: 2/25/2013

Testimony for FIN on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Elaine D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments: HB484 Please delete this section. It nullifies the bill: If, however, the board finds that the land is necessary for a development project, it may provide assistance, monetary or otherwise, in relocating the enterprise elsewhere or pay such damages to the owner or operator of such enterprise as will reasonably compensate the owner or operator for the owner's or operator's loss, if the owner or operator has not already been so compensated under a lease agreement, or both." I SUPPORT this very important bill.

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Cc: jinybeans@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB484 on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM

HB484

Submitted on: 2/26/2013

Testimony for FIN on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM in Conference Room 308

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

Comments: I support this bill to protech lo'i lands from all development.

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Cc: kahiwal@cs.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB484 on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM

HB484

Submitted on: 2/26/2013

Testimony for FIN on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Clarence Ching	Individual	Support	No

Comments: In the 1800s, lo'i kalo extended the length of Nu'uuanu Valley - seaward as far as Beretania Street. It is no more. In the 1950s, my family stewarded a lo'i in Pauoa Valley. It is no more. Like all ag lands, kalo lands should be protected and conserved. These are "sacred" lands that grow the "sacred" food of Hawaiians and others. Our "civilization" (if we can be so designated) must take care of our breadbaskets - or we will all starve. This is especially so as hyperinflation starts to rear its ugly head over our tables.

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Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB484 on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM*

HB484

Submitted on: 2/26/2013

Testimony for FIN on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Pono Kealoha	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Cc: Abensley80@yahoo.com
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HB484

Submitted on: 2/26/2013

Testimony for FIN on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Adam Bensley	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I strongly support this bill. Wetlands and lo'i kalo must be protected.

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Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2013 12:59 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: amybrinker@mac.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB484 on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM*

HB484

Submitted on: 2/26/2013

Testimony for FIN on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Amy K. Brinker	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Cc: tane_1@msn.com
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HB484

Submitted on: 2/26/2013

Testimony for FIN on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David M.K. Inciong, II	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: It behooves us to protect the Wetland Taro Lands for sustainability since it is the mainstay of our diet in Hawaii. It's important to us culturally, historically, and lifestyle; it's our traditional foods that we partake it today.

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Leon Siu	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Passing this bill will help to encourage the growing of kalo. Kalo is not only vital as a food source, it is vital for the healing, health and restoration of the Hawaiian people. Eo!

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Cc: palolo@hawaii.rr.com
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HB484

Submitted on: 2/26/2013

Testimony for FIN on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lynette Cruz	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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To: FINTestimony
Cc: mdeycaza@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB484 on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM

HB484

Submitted on: 2/26/2013

Testimony for FIN on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mike deYcaza	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I support HB484. Taro is an essential staple that the people of Hawaii will need if we want a chance to farm sustainably. Protect the taro growing areas and use them to relearn the old knowledge before it is lost. I have spent many hours working in taro lo'i and hope to do so again.
Sincerely, Mike deYcaza

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