

LATE

Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

State Democratic Headquarters ♦ 1050 Ala Moana Boulevard, Ste 221 ♦ Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96814
(808) 596-2980 ♦ <http://EnvironmentalCaucusoftheDemocraticPartyofHawaii.com>

February 27, 2013

Testimony in Support of House Bill 484 HD1

**Aloha mai kakou Chair Sylvia Luke and Vice Chair Scott Nishimoto and members
of the House Committees of Finance,**

**My name is Mrs. Juanita Brown Kawamoto, Subcommittee Chair of Food and
Farm Sustainability of the Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of
Hawaii, Executive Board member at Large and a Native Hawaiian citizen advocate.**

**HB 484 HD1 - RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TARO
POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT**

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii is submitting testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 484 HD1 which involves the protection of taro and taro farm lands.

Lo`i and Kalo farms have historically and culturally been the center of the Ahupua`a system for the Hawaiian people for over 1500 years. The first sustainable farm is dedicated to the Lo`i and the cultivation of Kalo to feed 1 million people. The first important agricultural lands for the people of Hawaii was based on this food sustainable, eco-friendly and organic farming method. We will continue to be sustainable and pono with our aina as long as we recognize the food system supported by traditional taro farming and taro lands are protected and preserved. The economics of supporting this bill will positively impact our major industries - Tourism and Agriculture. The Taro Security and Purity Task force has provided a economically viable report as the engine of this bill - the farmers are telling us what is needed for them to take care of our community, please listen and follow their recommendations. Please pass this bill.

For these reasons, we the Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii stand in **STRONG SUPPORT** of this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**Mrs. Juanita Brown Kawamoto
Subcommittee Chair
Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii**

LATE

TESTIMONY OF EDWARD WENDT, PRESIDENT
NA MOKU AUPUNI O KO`OLAU HUI
IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 484, H.D. 1

February 26, 2013

Na Moku Aupuni o Ko`olau Hui ("Na Moku") is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation whose membership consists of the descendants and current tenants of the adjacent ahupua`a of Wailuanui and Ke`anae in East Maui. These ahupua`a consist of hundreds of acres of public and private taro lands that are in active taro cultivation. The families who reside here live a traditional lifestyle whose mainstay is growing taro, fishing, hunting and gathering.

Our organization is in strong support of H.B. 484, H.D. 1, which amends Hawai`i Revised Statutes Section 206-7 to provide that the BLNR "shall not disturb existing taro growing systems, ancient wetland taro lands, or structural elements of ancient taro growing systems".

Na Moku's members are perpetuating the traditional subsistence lifestyle of their kupuna and are in strong support of protecting taro wetlands systems throughout the state. They are especially concerned that the wetlands they cultivate in both Wailuanui and Ke`anae be protected from development.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of H.B. 484, H.D.1.

Edward Wendt
President
Na Moku Aupuni o Ko`olau Hui
185 Wailua Road
Ha`ikū, Hawai`i 96708
wailuanui@starband.net

FINTestimony

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2013 7:46 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: hokuokekai50@msn.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
Mary Lacques	Hawai'i SEED	Support	No

Comments: Hawai'i SEED support the passing of HB484 to include taro lands and taro-growing structures as special agricultural lands to be protected from development.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

FINTestimony

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2013 2:28 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: mealaaloha@aol.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
Daniel Bishop	Taro Security and Purity Task Force	Support	Yes

Comments: Essential to protect Kalo Lands for food sustainability. Kalo is a primary Starch which can be grown in communities throughout Hawaii which would cut/eliminate much of the cost of shipping/transportation. Kalo has been proven, not only to be a superior starch/food, but also can be grown with much success with high yields as pounds per square foot returns.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

FINTestimony

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2013 8:35 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: tsptfhi@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB484 on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM*

HB484

Submitted on: 2/27/2013

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mark Alapaki Luke	State of Hawai i Taro Security and Purity Task For	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

LATE TESTIMONY

Taro Security and Purity Task Force TESTIMONY

HOUSE BILL HB484 HD1 RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TARO LANDS

House Bill HB484 adds the category of wetland taro lands to the list of property that shall not be acquired for development under HRS206.7 for the purpose of increasing protection of taro lands. This statute allows for the acquisition of agricultural lands for development under limited circumstances, in particular affordable housing on Oahu.

HB484 tightens existing land use statutes to increase protections for taro lands and traditional agricultural structures and addresses the challenge of protecting the capacity to farm when surrounding properties become developed. In the case of taro, a unique set of soil conditions (loamy clay mud), climactic and topographic configurations make up a small subset of public lands that would be affected by this bill.

Important Agricultural Lands (IAL) designation criteria rank large, contiguous and well-watered parcels to be of highest importance (A, B or C lands). This set of criteria typically excludes the small, riparian parcels in many valleys where ancient taro lands are found. Marginal productivity status results in land conversion for other purposes, frequently development. IAL protections also do not apply to public lands.

The Taro Security and Purity Task Force is the legislative body created in 2008 to provide guidance and recommendations regarding research, policy and the challenges that taro and taro farmers face both now and for the future. In 2009, legislators received a report from the task force outlining key issues and recommendations.

During the development of findings for that report, the task force found that taro lands and ancient agricultural structures such as terraces, walls and 'auwai (irrigation canals) have had a long history of conversion (the removal and reuse of stone for other projects; grubbing and grading; roads, structures and subdivisions built directly on top of terraces and systems) and disruption (the breaking apart of whole systems and interruption of water conveyances across taro lands). We also found that the Hawaii State Historic Preservation Office has had little ability to influence protection of ancient agricultural systems on public and more so, on private lands since statehood.

Taro lands are also valley and gulch lands, many which have clear records of taro production in maps, photograph and written record, and still retain easily discernable walls, terrace and 'auwai structures. These lands are particularly vulnerable, especially in Conservation zoned areas, because of their beauty and are frequently at risk of being reassigned to other allowable uses. Yet, these traditional taro lands have great potential for rehabilitation and food production.

We find that taro lands are often perceived of by many agencies as prevalent when, in reality, they have become an endangered resource for food self-sufficiency. One of the reasons behind that is the observation that the number of taro farmers today seems small; total acreage in production is approximately 600 acres. At least one recent study indicates the need for approximately 30,000 acres to provide Hawaii's current population of 1.3 million people with taro as one key staple starch for a period of one year. This is roughly equivalent to the number of acres registered as kuleana taro lands (lo'i) in 1940; a time when Hawaii was still food self-sufficient. The Department of Agriculture has identified starches as the highest at-risk category for food security in the State.

Agencies, and sometimes the general public, have rationalized that additional preservation of taro lands may be unnecessary. They point to existing fallow lands and what appears to be a dearth of commercial taro farmers statewide. Presently, less than 1 percent of the population in Hawaii grows food for local consumption or export. A demand-based rationale for preserving important agricultural lands would fail the test for all crops and all public and private agriculture lands in Hawaii. The idea that taro lands should be held to a different formula of proof of importance and a demonstrated presence of interested farmers in order to be protected is in conflict with the intent and purpose of land use and agricultural lands protection laws, and has the appearance of prejudice.

Statewide, community efforts to revitalize long fallowed and disrupted taro lands have proven time and again that lands believed to be unfeasible for rehabilitation have been restored to productivity. Expertise in determining the capacity for restoration can be found in the Taro Security and Purity Task Force, as well as well-respected groups such as 'Onipa'a Na Hui Kalo. *If we are planning for our future food sustainability, we must protect the remaining taro lands we have.*

The Taro Task Force has found that a significant portion of DOE, charter and private schools (K-12), and after school, cultural and community enrichment programs include kalo in curriculum and school gardens. The University of Hawaii is training a new generation of kalo planters throughout its system. There has been exponential growth in the number of youth and young adults learning how to cultivate and produce taro and poi each year. At the opening day of this year's legislature an estimated 1,200 pounds were turned into poi by these youth; more than has been hand pounded at one time in one place since the 1930s. *If we fail to protect existing taro lands, whether long fallowed or currently in use, our responsibility to these students will have failed.*

Traditional Hawaiian crops are also a vitally important part of Hawaiian health, community food security, and rising niche markets in organic and restaurant/hotel sectors. These unique crops play a significant role in visitor industry's images of Hawaii.

Rapid development of the edges of urban boundaries and rural lands on all islands in the last 20 years has allowed for particularly high losses of ancient taro lands on private property. Public lands remain a critically important repository for remaining taro lands. Many valleys on Oahu retain remnant systems that can be brought back to life.

Because lo'i kalo have unique requirements for soils and site conditions, there are rarely substitutions that can be made within the same watershed or valley. On Oahu, ancient taro lands with existing structural elements are some of the most at-risk agricultural lands in the state. A community center, public park, housing or other state proposed project frequently has the option of being developed and able to function on alternative lands; lo'i kalo (wetland taro fields) do not, particularly where ancient structures are still present.

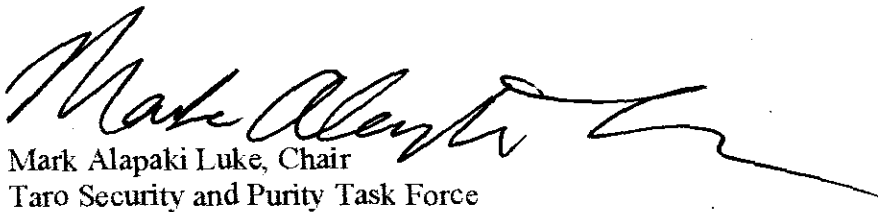
Additionally, taro lands are typically located in riparian areas and low areas prone to flash floods, upwelling groundwater and ponding. Building in these sites represents a significant liability for the County and State, both where developers sue for protection from natural environmental occurrences, and in ongoing costs to government for flood mitigation. Oahu examples abound from Mapunapuna with its annual flooding, to Kuli'ou'ou, which cost the State more than \$25 million in damages. HB484 protects the Counties and the State from potential liability for developing on or permitting development in known riparian and low-lying flood zones that are also taro lands.

HB484 does not pass judgment on the merits of other noteworthy public works. It acknowledges the rarity of taro lands, the limited areas where taro lands remain and the growing importance of their presence for cultural and food sustainability efforts, whether utilized now or protected for future use.

The highest and best use of traditional taro lands that are still viable is to grow taro, whether that means for commercial purposes, subsistence, as a training ground for students, cultural programs and practitioners or as an incubator for future taro farmers.

The Taro Security and Purity Task Force strongly supports this measures and will work with the Department of Land and Natural Resources and Department of Agriculture to identify taro lands and reduce the destruction or conversion of taro lands to other uses on State lands.

Respectfully,



Mark Alapaki Luke, Chair
Taro Security and Purity Task Force

LATE

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
Lyn Scott	Taro Security and Purity TAsk Force	Support	No

Comments: Aloha Rep Luke, Mahalo for taking the time to read our testimony in support of HB 484 to protect kalo lands on the island of Oahu. Now is the time to set aside these areas for our children and future generations so they may be able to continue the Hawaiian Culture and their heritage. Kalo was a staple in old Hawaii and is still loved by Hawaiians today. Thus, we need more lands to put more farmers on the aina. Please vote to assure the future of Kalo. Mahalo, Lyn Scott Honopou, Maui, Hawaii

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

FINTestimony

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2013 12:01 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: rangien2010@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB484 on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM

HB484

Submitted on: 2/27/2013

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Puanani Rogers	Ho`okipa Network - Kauai	Support	No

Comments: Testimony in strong support of HB 484 a measure to preserve wetlands and fertile lands for agricultural purposes, specifically kalo. Mahalo for your support and to the author of this bill.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

FINTestimony

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2013 8:40 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: waioli2@hawaiiantel.net
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
chris kobayashi	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

FINTestimony

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2013 5:55 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: tabraham08@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
Troy Abraham	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

FINTestimony

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2013 5:32 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: Kealii8@hotmail.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
Kealii Makekau	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

FINTestimony

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2013 7:34 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: farmfreshhawaii@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB484 on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM

HB484

Submitted on: 2/27/2013

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Juanita Brown Kawamoto	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I strongly support this bill. Lo`i and Kalo farms have historically and culturally been the center of the Ahupua`a system for the Hawaiian people for over 1500 years. The first sustainable farm is dedicated to the Lo`i and the cultivation of Kalo to feed 1 million people. The first important agricultural lands for the people of Hawaii was based on this food sustainable, eco-friendly and organic farming method. We will continue to be sustainable and pono with our aina as long as we recognize the food system supported by traditional taro farming and taro lands are protected and preserved. Please pass this bill. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

FINTestimony

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2013 8:47 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: toolohana@hawaiiantel.net
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB484 on Feb 27, 2013 11:30AM

HB484

Submitted on: 2/27/2013

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Larry Tool	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Honorable Representatives, I heartily support this bill. The time to protect remaining historic and arable land in Hawaii is now. Once they are developed they are lost forever. I am appalled that the DLNR seems to put no value on preservation; isn't that part of their job? Here on Molokai we already have certain well-known individuals going on the radio to advocate the development of pristine valleys like Wailau, Pelekunu and Waikolu. This would be like auctioning the crown jewels, or more accurately, like a self-inflicted barbarian invasion. I applaud Representative Wooley and others who are trying to preserve what is left and keep real options open for our children and grandchildren. Please pass this bill. Mahalo

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov