

# **HB749**

## **Testimony**

**NEIL ABERCROMBIE**  
Governor



**RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**SCOTT E. ENRIGHT**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND JUDICIARY AND  
LABOR  
TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2013  
10:00 A.M.  
Room 016**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 749 HD 2  
RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

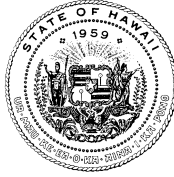
Chairpersons Nishihara and Hee and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 749 HD 2 that establishes the Hawaii Agriculture Workforce Advisory Board. The Department supports this measure.

With the average age of a farmer estimated to be 60 years old, there is a desperate need to build up our agricultural workforce and involve more of our youth. The establishment of a Hawaii Agriculture Workforce Advisory Board with the intent of creating a workforce development plan is an attractive idea.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**  
830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 321  
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March 19, 2013

To: The Honorable Clarence Nishihara, Chair  
The Honorable Ronald Kouchi, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture

The Honorable Clayton Hee, Chair,  
The Honorable Maile Shimabukuro, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Date: Tuesday, March 19, 2013  
Time: 10:00 a.m.  
Place: Conference Room 016, State Capitol

From: Dwight Y. Takamine, Director  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

**Re: H.B. No. 749 HD2, Relating to Workforce Development**

**I OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

DLIR strongly supports the proposal and respectfully requests housekeeping amendments.

H.B. 749 HD2 proposes to establish a Hawaii Agriculture Workforce Advisory Board composed of representatives from Departments of Labor and Industrial Relations, Agriculture, and Education; University of Hawaii, Community Colleges, Farm Bureau, and a representative of the farming community selected by the chair to promote agricultural self-sufficiency in the State and develop an agricultural workforce. The advisory board would be placed within the DLIR for administrative purposes. To accomplish these goals, an agricultural workforce plan would cover the following:

- Introduce Hawaii's youth to agriculture-related activities that would promote interest and aptitude in agricultural sustainability;
- Promote the development of future leaders in the agricultural sector;

- Identify training opportunities for future workforce participants; and
- Develop a seamless Hawaii P-20 program to transition future agricultural workforce participants into the workforce.
- Appropriate funds to assist in establishing and supporting the board.

## II. **CURRENT LAW**

Chapter 226, HRS, establishes that it shall be the policy of the State to promote economically competitive activities that increase Hawaii's agricultural workforce and livelihood.

## III. **COMMENTS ON THE HOUSE BILL**

This bill would support the Governor's priorities to build a self-sustaining agricultural industry. The proposal also would expand the successful collaborations developed among several state, local, and private businesses to promote a more competitive and trained agricultural workforce. For example, a Veteran-to-Farmer pilot project resulted in the recent graduation of 14 Big Island Hawaiian homesteaders, including 7 military veterans, from a new college course that provided classroom and hands-on experience in establishing a productive farm.

Besides learning farming techniques, these graduates acquired skills for managing their own businesses, which are critical for successful farming. Resources used in the project were leveraged among different funding sources of all partners. The goal of the project is to replicate the program statewide so that every University campus can offer similar training in their area, provided sufficient land and water are available.

Preceding the pilot project was a series of Agricultural Skill Panels conducted in each county that were co-sponsored by the Departments of Labor and Industrial Relations and Agriculture to solicit local input and recommendations toward development of an agricultural workforce plan in Hawaii. Over 600 individuals, including farmers and agribusinesses, participated. Their recommendations were considered and incorporated into legislative proposals that became part of the Governor's Package.

These efforts would not have been possible without the contributions of all agencies involved. To sustain and build upon this effort, the partnerships must be supported and strengthened so that separate and disparate workforce training programs among different institutions become comprehensive and well-defined career pathways.

A major cause of insufficient agricultural workers is a common but no longer accurate image of farming as a low-skilled and low-paying job. This perception can only be dispelled by a collective effort among educators, training organizations, and the community in delivering more accurate, updated information about the increasingly

complex nature of farming, and through the development of multiple career ladders to address different skill levels required in the agricultural industry.

DLIR supports this proposal provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities in the Executive Budget.

DLIR requests the following changes to facilitate the establishment of the Agricultural Advisory Board and to ensure that the qualifications of the Board members are clearly described to address situations such as filling vacancies in Board membership in the future:

- In SECTION 2(a), paragraph (7), replace the phrase “A representative from” to “The president of” so that the phrase reads as follows:

“The president of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation; and...”
- In SECTION 2(a), after paragraph (8), insert the sentence, “All provisions of Section 26-34 shall apply as appropriate.” before the sentence, “The director of labor and industrial relations shall serve as the chairperson of the advisory board.” so that the two sentences read as follows:

“All provisions of section 26-34 shall apply as appropriate. The director of labor and industrial relations shall serve as the chairperson of the advisory board.”
- In SECTION 2(b), paragraph (4), replace the abbreviation, “FFA”, with “Future Farmers of America” so that the sentence reads as follows:

“Maintaining and supporting the National Future Farmers of America Organization within the State; and ...”



**Hawaii Farm Bureau**  
F E D E R A T I O N

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March 19, 2013

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR

TESTIMONY ON HB 749, HD2  
RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Room 016  
10:00 AM

Chair Nishihara, Chair Hee, and Members of the Committees:

I am Dean Okimoto, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF). Organized since 1948, the HFBF is comprised of 1,950 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.

We support the intent of this measure as developing and maintaining an agricultural workforce is a vital component to our farmers and ranchers. A trained workforce with varying degrees of skills are necessary to any agricultural operation. There currently is a shortage of employees resulting in agricultural businesses not producing to their full potential. This need has to be addressed along with generating interest in our youth to pursue the various careers and to become our future leaders in Hawaii agriculture.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you in developing a trained and reliable agricultural workforce.



**National FFA Center**  
6060 FFA Drive  
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*The FFA Mission: FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for **premier leadership, personal growth and career success** through agricultural education.*

## **NATIONAL FFA ORGANIZATION**

March 18, 2013

Testimony for HB749 – Relating to the Hawaii Agricultural Workforce Advisory Board

Dear Chairs Nishihara and Hee, Vice Chairs Kouchi and Shimabukuro, and members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

I am Ben Meyer and I work for the National FFA Organization representing the nine western states of the US including Hawaii. I sincerely applaud your efforts to establish state level leadership for the Hawaii FFA Association.

At present, the National FFA Organization is witnessing record high numbers for membership and interest in agriculturally related careers and leadership opportunities. This unfortunately is juxtaposed by the state of Hawaii experiencing record low membership numbers. In learning more about your great state and your agriculture education programs I'm convinced that these low numbers will grow with the creation of a position for full time formalized leadership at the state level. Current part time state staff including Denna Macanas, are doing everything they can to grow and support the Hawaii FFA and agriculture education programs across the state. Creating a full-time position will exponentially improve student leadership and career success opportunities.

Currently your state has a number of very strong agriculture education teachers who run outstanding programs. Unfortunately these great teachers lack clear direction and leadership which in turn diminishes the opportunity for students to experience leadership, personal growth, and career success. Thus in turn, reduces the number of students ready to enter the workforce in Hawaii or to pursue further education.

The National FFA Organization is proud to count Hawaii as one of our earliest state associations and reflects fondly on the successes experienced by many Hawaii students in the 1930s through 1990s. Unfortunately, the past +/- 15 years have been a bit of a drought for Hawaii success in FFA. If this legislation could include a state level position to provide leadership, guidance, and accountability for Agriculture Education/FFA in Hawaii it is our firm belief that this will put the state back on track of growth and quality in agriculture education and FFA. This is the model followed by all other states with great success.

Furthermore, the National FFA Organization is committed to investing time and personnel to making sure your state is successful and this new state position (based on the passing of legislation) has what they need to succeed.

Our organization at the national level will continue to send people and resources to your state. Personnel from National FFA represent our organization's vested interest in seeing Hawaii succeed and continue to be a vital part of our nationwide organization. Staff from the National FFA center are committed to traveling to your state to help grow your association and foster leadership and career success in agriculture and agriscience for your students. Creating a full-time state staff position is key to this growth, relationship, and continued success.

As you well know, the advancing careers related to agriculture in Hawaii are diverse, growing, and competitive. Strong agriculture education programs in your high schools across the state will mean that more Hawaii youth are prepared to enter the workforce ready to succeed in these good paying jobs. These students are more likely to maintain lifelong residency on the islands and contribute more to the economy and tax base.

FFA is a key component to this long term vision and I thank you and your committees for taking up this important issue.

I am available as a technical resource at 317-802-4347 or [bmeyer@ffa.org](mailto:bmeyer@ffa.org).

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Meyer  
National FFA Organization, Western Region LPS Specialist

**From:** [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
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**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB749 on Mar 19, 2013 10:00AM  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 13, 2013 10:01:06 AM

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HB749

Submitted on: 3/13/2013

Testimony for AGL/JDL on Mar 19, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nancy Redfeather	The Kohala Center-HISGN	Comments Only	No

Comments: I am concerned that if the "Advisory Board" is not connected to either agriculture or education, (DOA and/or DOE) that the true future needs for the direction and broad vision of agricultural education for K-16 will be diluted by focusing only on agricultural labor per se and not on the broader idea of educating our youth to participate in development of local agricultural systems that will ultimately contribute to the overall food security needs of Hawai'i. Yes we must continue our support for FFA by separating the funding going to DOE from the "weighted student formula" and dividing it equally among "active" FFA organizations statewide. There were some FFA groups on Hawai'i Island this year that did not have enough funding to take their students to the State Convention in Hilo! Mahalo, Nancy Redfeather Director Hawai'i Island School Garden Network Hawai'i Farm to School and School Garden Hui Hawai'i School Garden Task Force Director Hawai'i FoodCorps

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**To:** [AGL Testimony](#)  
**Cc:** [mendezj@hawaii.edu](mailto:mendezj@hawaii.edu)  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB749 on Mar 19, 2013 10:00AM\*  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 13, 2013 10:49:51 AM

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HB749

Submitted on: 3/13/2013

Testimony for AGL/JDL on Mar 19, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**From:** [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
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**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB749 on Mar 19, 2013 10:00AM  
**Date:** Monday, March 18, 2013 12:57:47 PM

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HB749

Submitted on: 3/18/2013

Testimony for AGL/JDL on Mar 19, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Troy Abraham	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I support urgent passage of this bill to expand farms and promote island sustainability and job creation

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