



**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 321  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
[www.hawaii.gov/labor](http://www.hawaii.gov/labor)

February 6, 2013

To: The Honorable Mark Nakashima, Chair,  
The Honorable Mark Hashem, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the House Committee on Labor & Public Employment

The Honorable Jessica Wooley, Chair  
The Honorable Richard H.K. Onishi, Vice-Chair, and  
Members of the House Committee on Agriculture

Date: Friday, February 8, 2013  
Time: 10:00 a.m.  
Place: Conference Room 309, State Capitol

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

**Re: H.B. No. 749 Relating to Employment**

**I OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

H.B. 749 proposes to establish a Hawaii Agriculture Workforce Advisory Board composed of representatives from Departments of Labor and Industrial Relations and Agriculture, Department of Education, University of Hawaii, and Community Colleges to promote agricultural self-sufficiency in the State and develop an agricultural workforce. 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.

Funds would be appropriated to the department 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. It 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.

Therefore, DLIR supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities in our Executive Budget.

**NEIL ABERCROMBIE**  
Governor



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

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

State of Hawaii  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT AND  
AGRICULTURE  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2013  
10:00 A.M.  
Room 309**

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

Chairpersons Nakashima and Wooley and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 749 that establishes the Hawaii Agriculture Workforce Advisory Board. The Department supports the intent of 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.

The Department would recommend that the Director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations be named as the Chair of the Board due to the focus on workforce development.

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





# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Labor and Public Employment  
and  
House Committee on Agriculture  
Friday, February 8, 2013 at 10:00am  
by  
Maria Gallo, Dean and Director  
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### **HB 749 – RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Chairs Nakashima and Wooley, and members of the House Committees on Labor and Public Employment and Agriculture, my name is Maria Gallo. I am Dean and Director of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and I am submitting testimony today in support of HB 749 on behalf of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I support the creation of a workforce development plan for the State to support food self-sufficiency. And I would be happy to serve on a Hawai'i agriculture workforce advisory board should it be instituted to help accomplish that goal.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa supports the intent of the bill provided it does not adversely affect our UH priorities as set in our budget request, most notably in health and safety and repairs and maintenance issues.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 749.



# HAWAII ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATION

808-969-7789

76-789 'Io Place, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740  
hofa@hawaiiorganic.org www.hawaiiorganic.org  
Toll Free: 1-877-ORG-ISLE (674-4753)

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Dr. Melissa Yee

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Wednesday, February 06, 2013

## RE: H.B. 749 Farmer Education

Chairman, Vice Chair, Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill.

HOFA, established in 1994 is an Association of Hawaii organic farmers, distributors, retailers, other organic industry members, and organic consumers. HOFA's vision is to create a sustainable future for Hawaii and our mission is to further organic and sustainable agriculture, land care, and lifestyles in Hawaii, thus giving meaning and life to our state motto: *Ua mau ke ea o ka aina I ka pono* "The Life of the Land is Perpetuated in Righteousness".

HOFA strongly advocates that the growing of organic foods is best for Hawaii, its' land, the environment, and for the people, as it excludes the use of genetic engineering, irradiation, the use of toxic sludge, and the use of harmful chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, etc.

HOFA strongly supports passage of this bill and asks that you vote in favor of it.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Fergusson  
President

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**Hawaii Organic Farming Association**

*Our Vision is to:*

*Create a sustainable future for Hawaii.*

*Our mission is to:*

*Further organic and sustainable agriculture, land care, and lifestyles in Hawaii, thus giving meaning and life to our state motto:  
Ua mau ke ea o ka aina I ka pono "The Life of the Land is Perpetuated in Righteousness".*



Testimony for HB749  
Establishing a Hawai'i Agricultural Workforce Advisory Board  
2/7/13

Dear Chairs Nakashima and Wooley, Vice-Chairs Hashem and Onishi, Members of the Committee,

Over many years there has been a decline in interest and programs for agriculture at all levels. Perhaps that has come from the belief that one could not make a living as a farmer in Hawai'i today, and there has definitely been a lack of agricultural education in the schools.

All that is beginning to change. According to the 2012 Hawai'i School Garden Survey just completed with the Department of Education, 168 ( 43%) of Elementary, Middle and High Schools in Hawai'i have a school garden. Last year 21,577 students took part in hands-on, place-based garden and nutrition education along with 830 teachers on 29.7 acres of land. The eight schools that weighed their harvest recorded 9,090 pounds of food grown.

Hawai'i has just been selected to be the 14<sup>th</sup> FoodCorps State. FoodCorps is a nationwide team of leaders that connects kids to real food and helps them grow healthy and whole. FoodCorps places leaders in limited-resource communities for a year of public service where they conduct hands-on food education, build and tend school gardens, and facilitate getting high-quality locally produced foods into public schools. Funding for FoodCorps is provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Americorps, and a diverse array of private and public donors.

We think that the foundation of agriculture is now beginning to change, and that our future farmers are being created in schools all across Hawaii everyday. We would like to suggest that you also consider K-12 agricultural education programs as you choose and plan the work of the Advisory Board. Perhaps we can lend our assistance to help create a fully coordinated agricultural education picture and pathway from Pre-K to 20. Please call upon our many members if we can assist your important work.

Sincerely,

Nancy Redfeather -  
Member Hawai'i Farm to School and School Garden Hui  
Member Hawai'i School Garden Task Force  
Director Hawai'i Island School Garden Network  
Director Hawai'i FoodCorps – Class of 2013-2014

HB--749

Chairs: Nakashima and Wooley and the members of the Committees on Labor and Public Employment and Agriculture.

My name is Ernie Gill and I applaud your efforts to address the shrinking supply of trained agriculturists needed to meet the demands of agriculture and natural resources in Hawaii.

I work for the National FFA Organization as the Western Regional Director. My responsibilities require me to work with the 10 western states to facilitate the delivery of agriculture education and FFA by working with state staff, teacher leaders and Universities in those states. Currently the National FFA Organization is at record highs for number of agriculture education programs and student membership in the National FFA. In Hawaii the number of programs and FFA membership are at all-time lows. Although there may be many more enrolled but a small percentage are in FFA where they learn crucial leadership skills necessary to for employment in today's agriculture. Every state in the nation has a State Director of Agriculture Education. In Hawaii, since the mid-70's, there has not been a full time person dedicated to the delivery of agriculture education and FFA. This has had a dramatic effect on the number of program and students enrolled in Agriculture education and FFA. This person is responsible for teacher accountability and professional development including program growth and quality. Without this position teachers are dependent on their own creativity and instruction. Students are not aware of the "all" opportunities that are available to them in agriculture and FFA. Consequently, reduced participation and missed opportunities for premier leadership, personal growth and career success. Hawaii has a rich heritage in the FFA dating back to 1929 when Hawaii territory was recognized with a National Charter and in 1931 when Wilbert Choi, Hawaii Territorial FFA President, received the first American Degree. Over the years there have been many finalists in Public speaking at the National level and students have participated in numerous leadership development events at the national level. However, this has dwindled over the years. There are numerous programs that are offered through National FFA and most are offered at a minimal fee or cost sharing but it takes human and financial resources. This bill, HB 749, would be a starting point for support that is necessary to reverse this

trend allowing the resources necessary for participation. It is imperative that one person, a State director of Agriculture Education, be established to reverse the trend and reinvigorate school based secondary agriculture education. National FFA in partnership with Hawaii has the ability to provide activities that promote self-sufficiency and opportunities for the future agricultural workforce. The focus of National FFA is to provide opportunities for students to develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success in the agriculture industry and related fields through agriculture education. One of the keys to National FFA's success is the ability to form partnerships with non-profit organizations and for profit organizations and organizations that will enhance opportunities in the agriculture workforce. Under the guidance of the Agriculture Workforce Advisory Board, appropriate funding and a person to coordinate, deliver and supervise current and future agriculture education programs and to develop necessary partnerships, Hawaii will be able to meet its future workforce needs. The system is in place it just needs the human and financial resources to succeed. I strongly support this bill. Thanks for allowing my testimony.