

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor



RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & BUSINESS
MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2013
11:15 A.M.
Room 312**

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 79
REQUESTING THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE TO
CONVENE A TASK FORCE ON FISH LABELING**

Chairpersons Wooley and Tsuji and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution 79. The purpose of this resolution is to request the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture to convene a task force to determine whether the State should adopt laws on fish labeling in order to distinguish fish that are line-caught from fish that are net-caught or raised on farms.

In 2005, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) established country of origin labeling (COOL) rules, which require retailers to notify their customers by labeling seafood which identifies the country of origin where it is from and whether it was farm raised or wild caught. The Department has entered into a cooperative agreement with the USDA to conduct assigned retail audits for compliance with the COOL regulations.

The department feels that this task force is unnecessary for labeling of seafood is already being regulated.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Testimony on HCR 79
Requesting the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture to Convene
A Task Force on Fish Labeling

House Committee on Agriculture
House Committee on Economic Development & Business

March 25, 2013 at 11:15 am – Room 312

Chair Wooley, Chair Tsuji and members of the Committees, I am Brooks Takenaka, Assistant General Manager of the United Fishing Agency, Ltd. (“UFA”), located at Pier 38 since 2004. United Fishing Agency is also known as the “Honolulu Fish Auction” which auctions “wild caught” fish primarily by long line fishing vessels, private citizens & corporations holding Hawaii commercial fishing licenses.

I’d like to take this opportunity to offer comments for your consideration regarding the fish labeling issue with respect to the following:

◆ Identity of Fish Species: The proper identity of fish species is already regulated and enforced by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (“FDA”). UFA identifies and labels each species sold through UFA.

◆ Country of Origin: The fishes “country of origin” is already covered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) and the industry is largely in compliance due to current enforcement as well as more significantly the continual demand for transparency and third party audit certification on “country of origin” labeling by large organizations such as Whole Foods, Costco, Wal-Mart and big restaurant chains that purchase from the vast majority of wholesale seafood distributors.

◆ Wild or Farm Raised: Again this is already covered and enforced by the FDA labeling laws and has been in force since the 2008 Farm Bill. Most of the pelagic (open ocean) and all of the benthe-pelagic (deep sea bottomfish) sold at UFA are wild & line caught. A limited amount of pelagic, long line caught species are frozen at sea. These species do not have extended shelf life as other species and this helps prevent discards.

The marketing system at UFA documents and provides the following information:

- Name of fishing vessel;
- Date of off loading & sale;
- All species are properly identified;
- Each purchaser is identified;
- All pertinent information regarding the fish sold are provided to buyers.

Requiring the purveyors to label all seafood relative to the parameters presented in HCR 79 will result in significant costs to the purveyors and ultimately to consumers.

In the “further resolved” clause, proper definitions will be required for “net caught”, “open waters”, “wild”, and “Hawaiian”.

Additional concerns are:

- Who will administer the program?
- Who will monitor and what methods will be applied to monitor?
- Who will enforce and how will it be enforced?
- What are the costs for this kind of labeling program?

Lastly, the resolution calls for UFA to have a seat on the task force and we humbly request to be **excluded** since we do not want to sit in judgment of the wholesalers and retailers with whom we have long standing business relationships.

Mahalo for allowing us to share our comments.

- Well-informed consumers can enhance fishery management processes with responsible market choices.
- Link responsible fishery management to responsible fish consumption.
- Free Trade and Globalization Effects favor imported seafood.
- Today, over 80% of seafood in the US is imported. Local competitiveness is down!
- But, foreign fisheries are less intensively regulated, with questionable seafood safety.
- Consumers need help distinguishing “costs” of domestic versus imported seafood.
- COOL Rule (Country of Origin Labeling)
 - New USDA requirement for labeling
 - Distinguishes wild vs. farmed fish
- Sustainable, local food production is important!
- Industry is important to Hawaii’s diversified economy.
- Fresh Island fishery products are important to Hawaii’s culture and heritage.

onishi1-Jerry

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2013 8:10 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: mjellings@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR79 on Mar 25, 2013 11:15AM

HCR79

Submitted on: 3/21/2013

Testimony for AGR/EDB on Mar 25, 2013 11:15AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carl Pao Jellings Sr/ FV Henry J II	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Honorable House Of Representative's In Strong Support Carl P Jellings Sr

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.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2013 2:44 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: lynhowe1946@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR79 on Mar 25, 2013 11:15AM

HCR79

Submitted on: 3/21/2013

Testimony for AGR/EDB on Mar 25, 2013 11:15AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lyn Howe	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I strongly support this bill

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2013 9:32 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: j.michaelhowell@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR79 on Mar 25, 2013 11:15AM

HCR79

Submitted on: 3/21/2013

Testimony for AGR/EDB on Mar 25, 2013 11:15AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michael Howell	Individual	Support	No

Comments: This resolution is critical to ensuring that Hawaii fishermen get fair market prices for their fish. Considering the semi-recent events in Japan (tsunami) and the concern with "tainted" marine resources in that area, it is important that we distinguish "Hawaiian caught" fish from "pacific caught" fish. I strongly urge the committees on AGR and EDB to pass this resolution as it is a potential means for the fish caught in Hawaiian waters to fetch a higher than average market price.

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onishi1-Jerry

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2013 10:01 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: Tanaka.ross@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HCR79 on Mar 25, 2013 11:15AM*

HCR79

Submitted on: 3/21/2013

Testimony for AGR/EDB on Mar 25, 2013 11:15AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ross K Tanaka	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2013

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NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Monday, March 25, 2013
TIME: 11:15 A.M.
PLACE: Conference Room 312
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

A G E N D A

HCR 79
Status

REQUESTING THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE ON FISH LABELING. AGR/EDB, CPC

Chairs Wooley and Tsuji, Vice Chairs Onishi and Ward, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Committee on Economic Development and Business:

I support HCR79 as it serves to recognize the importance of the State's 3,691 commercial fishermen and the fleet of Hawaii vessels that bring fresh, wild caught island fish to our markets, following the rigorous HAACP safety standards, their economic importance, and the need to protect the fishermen and consumers from fish products that we have no idea of their country of origin or their practices of fish care and processing,

I applaud this resolution as it is a necessary step in bringing safe fish products to Hawaii's markets and family tables. Mahalo a nui loa.

Respectfully Submitted,
Roy N. Morioka – Commercial Fisherman
96821