

LATE

SB 1358

Testimony

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

LATE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES
ON AGRICULTURE AND
WATER AND LAND

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 2013
2:45 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 229

SENATE BILL NO. 1358
RELATING TO IRRIGATION

Chairpersons Nishihara and Solomon and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 1358. The purpose of this bill is to provide additional funding for improvements to the Molokai Irrigation System. The Department supports the intent of this bill provided it does not impact the priorities identified in our Executive Biennium budget.

The Molokai Irrigation System (MIS) is the State's most productive system, providing reliable water to approximately 2,700 acres of farm land. Previous appropriations enabled the Department to make significant upgrades to major components of the system. However, other portions of the MIS are still in need of improvements such as replacement of a deteriorating concrete flume, structural stabilization of an access bridge, and relocation of above-ground water meters into below-ground concrete meter boxes. These funds are necessary to implement such improvements which will help provide a safer working environment, control operational costs, and extend the life of the MIS for many decades to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





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

2343 Rose Street • Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Phone: (808) 848-2074 • Neighbor-Islands: (800) 482-1272
Fax: (808) 848-1921 • Email: info@hfbf.org
www.hfbf.org

January 31, 2013

LATE

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON HB 1358
RELATING TO IRRIGATION

Room 229
2:45 PM

Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Koichi, and Members of the Committee:

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.

HFBF strongly supports SB 1358 which appropriates funds for repair to the Molokai Irrigation System (MIS).

The Molokai Irrigation System is in need of significant repair to simply achieve its meant capacity. This resultant loss of needed revenue as well as reduced acres planted is a big concern to Molokai's farmers. The inability of the only agricultural water source on Molokai to use its actual capacity is an earnest reason to fund its much needed repairs.

Moreover, there is potential to increase agricultural production on Molokai by further developing the MIS. If improvements can be made to support increased acreage, Molokai could increase employment in the Agricultural sector as well as create additional revenue for the system itself, which could be used for maintenance and improvements making the MIS less dependent on State funding. None of this can be accomplished until we address the basic needed repairs.

We appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.