

NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
Governor



RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL KOKUBUN  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION AND  
COMMERCE  
MARCH 25, 2013  
Room 325

SENATE BILL NO. 482 SD 1 HD 1  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson McKelvey and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill No. 482 SD 1 HD 1. This measure proposes to encourage and support sustainable beekeeping in Hawaii by raising the allowances for home production of honey, and enabling beekeepers to sell honey to retail outlets and directly to consumers. Currently home honey production in Hawaii is allowed for 50 gallons or less. The Department of Agriculture supports this measure.

The recent arrival of devastating honey bee pests has put additional pressure and financial burdens on beekeepers statewide. It is well understood that pollinator success is linked to other agricultural productivity. Hawaii's annual Farm Gate Sales from bee-pollinated crops is valued at \$212.8 million. A single colony of honey bees will forage on plants within a 3-5 mile radius, so every colony can have significant impact on agriculture and ecosystems. Newly introduced pests and parasites have severely impacted feral colonies, making managed colonies even more critical for agricultural success. In nationally established surveys to monitor honey bee health since 2006, beekeepers are classified as BACKYARD (small) beekeepers if they have 50 colonies or less, SIDELINERS with 51-500 colonies or COMMERCIAL beekeepers with 500+



colonies. The vast majority of beekeepers in Hawaii have fewer than 500 colonies, although compared to all other states, Hawaii is consistently ranked near the midpoint for number of colonies statewide, and in the top 10<sup>th</sup> percentile for honey yield per colony. Honey yields and price per pound fluctuate annually, but using National Agricultural Statistic Service averages for the last 10 years of Hawaiian honey production, 50 gallons of honey would be produced by only 6 colonies making average honey crops. Production exceeding that level currently requires a certified food production establishment. This low limit disables most small beekeepers from selling their honey crop in compliance with state regulations. A higher allowance is desirable to encourage sustainable beekeeping and industry growth.

Other states such as Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin (all with many more managed colonies than Hawaii) require no permit or license for honey production, just proper labeling. Florida and Michigan (again with many more managed colonies than Hawaii) cap home production allowances at sales below \$15,000. If we apply this standard in Hawaii, using 10 year low and high prices per pound, this would allow a beekeeper to sell approximately 265-1126 gallons of honey, which is an appropriate range for an operation with less than 50 colonies.

We ask the committee to consider adopting a standard which would allow Hawaii beekeepers below COMMERCIAL production levels greater latitude to produce and sell their honey, up to 500 gallons, which will encourage sustainable beekeeping and agricultural growth throughout the state. We also are agreeable to the amendments made in the bill as proposed by the Department of Health.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide our testimony on this measure.

**kawakami2 - Rise**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 24, 2013 11:15 PM  
**To:** CPCtestimony  
**Cc:** bees@maui.net  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SB482 on Mar 25, 2013 15:00PM



**SB482**

Submitted on: 3/24/2013

Testimony for CPC on Mar 25, 2013 15:00PM in Conference Room 325

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jonathan Starr	Maui Natural Bee, LLC	Support	No

Comments: Please move SB482 HD1 forward. It will allow us and other small scale beekeepers in remote areas to sell our home produced honey; and it will make it possible for us to be able to afford to continue and expand our beekeeping. I apologize for not being able to attend the hearing in CPC; it became impossible to make it to the hearing from Kaupo, East Maui. Mahalo for taking the time to hear it and hopefully move it forward. Best Aloha, Jonathan Starr

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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