

SB524

Testimony

LATE



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

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LATE

January 29, 2013

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON SB 524
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Room 229
2:45 PM

Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Kouchi, 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 supports SB 524 which seeks to implement the recommendations of the "Increased Food Security and Food Self-sufficiency Strategy" by establishing an agricultural development and food security program. It also seeks to establish state planning and policy objectives for the economy of increased demand for and access to locally grown foods and increased production of locally grown foods.

Food security and food self-sufficiency and growing agriculture are popular concepts seen in many of the measures before the legislature this year. This Legislative Session, there have been many bills introduced that support of Hawaii's Agricultural Industry. This year, HFBF has introduced a package of measures addressing the real needs of our farmers and ranchers all associated with increasing farm and ranch viability. These include infrastructure needs, permitting, and regulatory assistance.

This measure supports the growth of Hawaii's agricultural industry by establishing an agricultural development and food security program in the HDOA. This measure provides the process needed to implement the recommendations of the "Increase Food Security and Food Self-sufficiency Strategy".

HFBF respectfully requests that sufficient funding be provided to HDOA to implement these recommendations.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our testimony on this important matter.



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SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

January 29, 2013, 2:45 P.M.
(Testimony is 1 page long)

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 524

Aloha Chair Nishihara and Members of the Committee:

The Sierra Club, Hawaii Chapter, with over 10,000 dues paying members and supporters statewide, respectfully *supports* SB 524. This measure establishes state planning objectives to increase demand and access to locally grown foods and appropriates funds.

The overall purpose of this measure deserves broad-level support and furthers our Constitution, which requires the state to “conserve and protect agricultural lands, promote diversified agriculture, [and] increase self-sufficiency”

We have some question, however, about the nitty-gritty details of the proposed state planning goals. For example, it's not clear that Hawaii suffers from a demand problem -- most experts have noted that there are many willing purchasers for locally grown food. The greater challenge has been addressing Hawaii's supply of locally grown food.

As to the supply goals, there may be missing issues. For example, experts have noted the availability of low-cost land is an obstacle to increasing the amount of locally-grown food. There is nothing in the proposed goals to address or examine this problem.

We suggest moving forward with this measure, but note that it might be worthwhile to look at measure like SB 1284, which would give the department the resources to do a more detailed examination of the obstacles to growing and selling more locally-grown food. With this research, it may be possible to establish more tailored proposals that would advance our self-sufficiency goals.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.