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

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February 21, 2013

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON SB 757, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Room 211
9:00 AM

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, 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 is in strong support of SB 757, SD1 which provides funds to allow qualified beef cattle, dairy, hog, and poultry farms to apply for funds for their farm's feed expenses.

Hawaii's livestock industry faces numerous challenges. One of their biggest challenges is the rising cost of feed for livestock production. These costs have been a contributing factor to the decline of the state's livestock industry.

In 2007, there were 5 dairies and 6 egg farms in Hawaii. Since then, 3 those dairies and 4 off those egg farms have gone out of business. The remaining egg farms and another dairy are currently threatened with closure, due to rising production costs. Primarily due to feed costs.

SB 757, SD1 seeks to revitalize Hawaii's livestock industries by reimbursing qualified livestock producers up to sixty percent of their farm's feed expenses. This bill will help keep fresh, locally produced milk, eggs, beef, pork, poultry, sheep, lamb, fish and crustaceans available to the residents of Hawaii and will help to revitalize our dwindling livestock industry. A decrease or absence of livestock production increases the State's reliance on the importation of food and threatens the State's food security.

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