



LAND USE RESEARCH
FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

1100 Alakea Street, Suite 408
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
(808) 521-4717
www.lurf.org

February 20, 2013

Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
Senator Michele N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Testimony in Opposition to SB 937, SD1, Relating to Hawaii Food Resiliency (Develops a food resiliency initiative program, including a new branch in the Department of Agriculture [“DOA”]; a new Task Force and appropriations).

Thursday, February 21, 2013, 9:00 a.m., in CR 211

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers and a utility company. LURF’s mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii’s significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to provide its comments, concerns and **opposition to SB 937, SD1**, on behalf of its members, who defend the goals of viable agricultural operations and the conservation and protection of agriculture, including important agricultural lands (IAL) in Hawaii.

While LURF supports the broad intent of this bill, which is to establish a statewide food resiliency initiative which will develop a more sustainable and self-sufficient food supply system in Hawaii, which encourages production and consumption of locally grown food and bred food to decrease the reliance on imported food. However, LURF opposes this measure based on, among other things, the following:

- Another bill being considered by this Committee - **SB 524**, has the broad support of agricultural stakeholders and DOA. SB 524 establishes an agricultural development and food security program; establishes state planning objectives to increase production, demand and access to locally grown foods; and make appropriations to DOA,;
- SB 937 does not have the same broad support of the agricultural stakeholders and industry, and the DOA, Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation and the large agricultural stakeholders have not testified in support of this bill;

- SB 937 did not involve a collaborative process with a broad range of agricultural stakeholders, and this bill came as a complete surprise to many of the largest agricultural land owners in the State;
- According to DOA, creating a new branch within DOA is not necessary to achieve the state purpose of food resiliency. The DOA currently carries out the functions outlined in SB 937 through its existing branches and divisions;
- The proposed new Task Force is also problematic, because it could usurp or be duplicative with the role and functions of the current Board of Agriculture; and another major concern is that the appointed Task Force members are not required to have any background or experience in agriculture; and
- DOA would be able to coordinate and report back to the Legislature regarding their ongoing efforts as well as the matters outlined in the bill, if the other measure - SB 524 is approved and increased funding and revenues are provided to DOA and the Agricultural Development and Food Security Special Fund.

It is clear that SB 937, SD1 conveys the need for collaboration amongst diverse sectors of the community - business, government, and agricultural stakeholders - and the importance for them to work together cooperatively to improve food sustainability and the economic viability of the State's agricultural industry. **SB 524, which is supported by DOA, the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, the agricultural industry, and large agricultural landowners, is a much better measure to achieve these purposes.**

SB 937, SD1. This bill develops a new DOA food resiliency initiative program, including a new DOA branch, a task force, and provides for appropriations.

It is curious that while SB 937, SD1 proposes to "...Develop a plan, to be implemented from 2013 to 2030," it pays lip-service to, but basically ignores the DOA's ongoing research and development of food production metrics; requires the DOA to accept a new program, a new DOA branch and new task force without prior discussion and consensus with the broad agricultural stakeholder community; does not give major regard to the potential occurrence of natural disasters and other incidents beyond human control including droughts, floods and hurricanes, which would affect food production; and is completely oblivious to the fact that DOA's 2008 statistics show that Hawaii's agricultural exports comprised about 85% of Hawaii's farm and livestock sales (sugar cane, macadamia nuts, coffee, seed crops, floriculture, nursery products, cattle and calves), while local consumption amounted to about **15%** of sales.

Conclusion. It is LURF's position that in lieu of SB 937, SD1, alternative legislation, such as **SB 524**, which would better address issues relating to increasing local food production, should be considered and enacted. Legislation such as SB 524, would ideally support the existing or expanded agricultural development and/or food security program within the DOA, through which the DOA would develop and fund new and existing programs and facilities to promote the development of agriculture and food security and resiliency within the State. Such a measure would emphasize cooperation and cohesive industry strategies and planning; a holistic approach from farm to market; and active participation from all of the stakeholders in the agricultural industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to present comments, concerns and **opposition** regarding this measure.