

LATE

# **SB 995**

## Testimony

**NEIL ABERCROMBIE**  
Governor



**RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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**TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON  
AGRICULTURE  
AND  
WATER AND LAND**

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

**SENATE BILL NO. 995  
RELATING TO IRRIGATION WATER DEVELOPMENT**

Chairs Nishihara and Solomon, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 995. The purpose of this bill is to allow for an engineering program administrator to oversee the responsibilities of irrigation water development. The department strongly supports this bill.

The agricultural resource management division was created within the department of agriculture in 1987 to focus on the creation and rehabilitation of large agricultural irrigation systems and the development and management of agricultural land. It began as a small division with three irrigation systems and four agricultural parks. Since then, they have added two more irrigation systems, one in Kahuku and the other along the Hamakua Coast, and are in the process of constructing a sixth in UpCountry Maui. They are also assisting with rehabilitation efforts for East Kauai, Kekaha, Kokee, Waiahole, and Kau irrigation systems. In addition, the division has added six more agricultural parks at Waianae, Kahuku, Kekaha, Hamakua, Molokai,



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AND WATER AND LAND  
SENATE BILL NO. 995  
PAGE 2

and Kalaeloa and is currently developing the Kunia Ag Park in the breadbasket of Oahu. Last, but not least, the division has added an entirely new land program in the Non-Agricultural Parks program that will potentially increase their land holdings over 30x, or over 3000%, from approximately 3,300 acres to over 100,000 acres.

In order to support these rapidly expanding programs, the capital improvement requirements for the division have also experienced massive growth, from an initial budget of a few million dollars, to over \$100 million in state and federal funds coordinated through all three levels of government. Staffing to meet these needs has grown this division to the second largest division in the department. The change from an engineering program manager to an engineering administrator reflects the importance of this division as it has matured and grown into a critical component of the State's move toward food security and sustained agricultural growth.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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

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January 31, 2013

LATE

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

TESTIMONY ON SB 995  
RELATING TO IRRIGATION WATER DEVELOPMENT

Room 229  
2:45 PM

Chair Nishihara, Chair Soloman, Vice Chair Kouchi, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, and Members of the Committees:

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 995 which allows an engineering program administrator to oversee the irrigation water development program.

Water and land are basic necessities for farmers and ranchers to maintain and expand their production. The reliability of water is a key factor for our farmers and ranchers when decided to expand their operations. Irrigation systems and agricultural parks are critical to the success of Hawaii's Agricultural Industry and their infrastructure needs to be constantly maintained by a team of well trained personnel.

HDOA's Agricultural Resource Management Division was created in 1987 to oversee the irrigation water development program. Since then, the program and responsibilities of the division have grown substantially. This increase in responsibilities and scope of the division merits the change from engineering program manager to engineering program administrator.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on this measure.