

HB1916

[HB1916](#)



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Measure Title: MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS.

Report Title: Appropriation; Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts

Description: Appropriates funds for the Hawaii association of conservation districts to assist with its staffing and operating costs. Effective 07/01/2014.

Companion:

Package: None

Current Referral: WTL, WAM

Introducer(s): WOOLEY, BROWER, MIZUNO, ONISHI, Hashem

Sort by Date		Status Text
2/28/2014	S	Received from House (Hse. Com. No. 68).
2/28/2014	S	Passed First Reading.
3/6/2014	S	Referred to WTL, WAM.
3/10/2014	S	The committee(s) on WTL has scheduled a public hearing on 03-17-14 1:15PM in conference room 225.

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of
WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
WATER AND LAND

Monday, March 17, 2014
1:15 P.M.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1916
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO
THE HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

House Bill 1916 proposes to appropriate an unspecified amount of general revenues in Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-2015 for staffing and operating costs of the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts (HACD). **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget request.**

The purpose of the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Program is to educate, construct, maintain, and assist in the development of conservation plans to protect soil and water resources. Each SWCD is operated by a five-member volunteer board. HACD is an umbrella organization formed by the 16 SWCDs under Chapters 180 and 180C, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and administratively attached to the Department. HACD and the SWCDs will receive a total of \$76,000 in FY 2013-2014 toward their operating expenses through the LNR 141 Program. Other required funds for their operation and implementation of projects must be sought in the form of grants from other agencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

JESSE K. SOUKI
FIRST DEPUTY

WILLIAM M. TAM
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor



SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

KEN H. KAKESAKO
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WATER AND LAND**

**MONDAY, MARCH 17 2014, 1:15 P.M.
ROOM 225**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1916
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION
DISTRICTS**

Chair Solomon and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1916. This bill appropriates funds to the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts (HACD) to assist with its staffing and operating costs to provide time for the districts to develop sustainable funding mechanisms.

Proper conservation practices are essential to a farmer's success. HACD can provide farmers with the technical expertise needed to create their own conservation plans. With an approved conservation plan, farmers will be able to attain necessary permissions prior to clearing and grading their land to prepare it for planting and to put new lands into production. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture supports this bill, but defers to the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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To: [WTLTestimony](#)
Cc: gottlieb@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1916 on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM*
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2014 8:38:57 AM

HB1916

Submitted on: 3/11/2014

Testimony for WTL on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alan Gottlieb	Hawaii Cattlemen's Council	Support	No

Comments:

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Cc: brenda@kaucoffeemill.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1916 on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM
Date: Sunday, March 16, 2014 9:16:01 AM

HB1916

Submitted on: 3/16/2014

Testimony for WTL on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Brenda Iokepa-Moses	HACD	Support	No

Comments: Aloha, I am the current president of HACD for the Big Island. All my time as well as the other board members time is voluntary. This passage of this bill SB1916 funding position that are vital in ensuring we have personnel resources available to guide and assist our farmers to ensure the land is being protected while the farmer is able to produce in a responsible manner. Let's put some dollars investing into our agricultural future here on the Big Island. "buy local it matters!"

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P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

March 17, 2014

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

TESTIMONY ON HB 1916
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Room 225
1:15P.M.

Aloha Chair Solomon, Vice Chair Galuteria and Members of the Committee:

I am Christopher Manfredi, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFBF is comprised of 1,832 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

HFB strongly supports HB 1916, which seeks an appropriation for the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts to assist with its staffing of Conservation Specialists.

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) are mandated by HRS §180. The SWCD is comprised of volunteer directors that are closely tied to Island communities. Many of these SWCD directors are also farmers, ranchers and members of HFB. They understand the issues related to land use, stewardship, resource management and agriculture.

The 16 SWCDs assist the agricultural communities throughout the entire State. They help farmers and ranchers develop and process conservation plans and address issues relating to erosion, water quality, agricultural water, and grading and grubbing plan reviews.

State of Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) has historically funded districts \$207,000 annually, for the staffing of Conservation Specialists. Effective December 31, 2013, DOH totally eliminated these funds and has not provided any replacement funding. Thus there is a backlog of conservation plans throughout parts of the State (particularly Oahu).

Under tough economic times, the SWCDs funding continues to get squeezed at the State, County and Federal levels. The requested funds, while nominal are vitally important for farmers, ranchers, agricultural landowners, birds and animals, the environment and the present and future citizens of the State of Hawaii.

Since many SWCD Directors are volunteers, SWCDs take pressure off county planning departments, alleviating backlogs. In working through public-private partnerships SWCDs provide free engineering services for low-impact projects. These cost savings are reflected in lower food and foliage production costs that are ultimately saved by consumers and make Hawaii's producers more competitive in the marketplace.

HFBF considers the SWCDs a vital partner in Hawaii's agricultural Industry and our Island communities.

Please pass HB 1916.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure of critical importance.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WTLTestimony](#)
Cc: john@olsontrust.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1916 on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM
Date: Sunday, March 16, 2014 1:57:57 PM

HB1916

Submitted on: 3/16/2014

Testimony for WTL on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
John C. Cross	Edmund C. Olson Trust II	Support	No

Comments: The edmund C. Olson Trust II supports this bill. The Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts is very helpful to the farmers and ranchers of Hawaii.

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HB1916, Making An Appropriation To The Hawaii Association of Conservation
Districts (HACD)
Senate WTL Committee
Monday, March 17, 2014
1:15 pm
Conference Room 225

Testimony by: Larry Jefts
Position: Support

Chair Solomon and Members of the Senate WTL Committee:

I am Larry Jefts, co-owner of Sugarland Growers, Inc., a family run farm with more than 35 years experience of Hawaii farm experience on Molokai and Oahu. I am a volunteer director for the West Oahu Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

The SWCD framework and authority were created through HRS 180. It helps farmers and ranchers with conservation plan development as well as assist respective County governments' with grading permit and plan reviews. Throughout the State, 80 volunteer directors in 16 SWCD work with local area partners to accomplish its work that includes conservation and environmental education outreach.

Your support of this funding request will go far toward strengthening environmental stewardship of agriculture soil and water use, particularly as Hawaii welcomes many new farmers and ranchers. It will also facilitate eligibility of farmers and ranchers for federal and state programs that require conservation plans and its implementation at the farm or ranch level.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony. I can be reached at (808) 688-2892 if there are any questions.

Sugarland Growers Inc.
P.O. Box 27, Kunia, Hawaii 96759
Tel: (808) 688-2982 Fax: (808) 682-2894

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WTLTestimony](#)
Cc: warrenmcfb@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1916 on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM*
Date: Friday, March 14, 2014 1:14:43 PM

HB1916

Submitted on: 3/14/2014

Testimony for WTL on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Warren Watanabe	Maui County Farm Bureau	Support	No

Comments:

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Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1916 on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM*
Date: Friday, March 14, 2014 9:28:40 AM

HB1916

Submitted on: 3/14/2014

Testimony for WTL on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Warren M. Wong	South Oahu Soil & Water Conservation District	Support	No

Comments:

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Date: Sunday, March 16, 2014 10:43:11 PM

HB1916

Submitted on: 3/16/2014

Testimony for WTL on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Wesley M Nohara	Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts	Support	Yes

Comments: My testimony submitted earlier was on behalf of Hawaii Association of Conservation District (HACD). I will be present to testify.

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Date: Sunday, March 16, 2014 1:07:46 PM

HB1916

Submitted on: 3/16/2014

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Amy E Bugado	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Cc: Mchughj001@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1916 on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM
Date: Sunday, March 16, 2014 5:00:30 PM

HB1916

Submitted on: 3/16/2014

Testimony for WTL on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
John McHugh	Individual	Support	No

Comments: The Soil and Water Conservation Districts serve an extremely important role in the community. They work with farmers and government agencies to create conservation plans that address responsible use of soil and water resources on farms and ranches. The funding request for this bill will assist the Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the hiring of Conservation Specialists who work with the District Cooperators (usually farmers and ranchers) to assure that Best Management Practices for soil and water management are in place. I urge you to fund this modest request.

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Cc: kanoe.malani@hi.nacdnet.net
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1916 on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM
Date: Monday, March 17, 2014 8:05:44 AM

HB1916

Submitted on: 3/17/2014

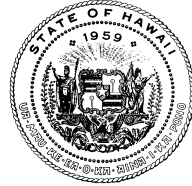
Testimony for WTL on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kanoe Malani	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Funding these additional Conservation Specialist positions means more assistance for our agricultural producers in protecting the natural resources of our lands. This is an investment in our future, to help our farmers produce healthy food for the people of Hawaii, and to provide our lands with the care it needs as we positively move towards increasing the sustainability of our island communities and environment. Please support HB1916.

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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:
File:

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

HB 1916, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

**Testimony of Linda Rosen, M.D., M.P.H.
Director of Health**

**March 17, 2014
1:15 p.m.**

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health supports the intent of this bill and would like to
2 offer some suggestions.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** This bill proposes to appropriate an unspecified amount of funds from the general
4 revenues of the State of Hawaii for the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts.

5 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of this bill is to protect Hawaii's natural environment by
6 providing funding to the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts to support conservation projects
7 and programs, and services to farmers and ranchers. The department supports this bill's environmental
8 protection purpose, but offers the following suggestions.

9 The projects and programs carried out by the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts
10 complement the efforts of the department by helping to improve water quality and address pollution
11 sources. In addition, information collected by the districts included in conservation plans, if provided to
12 the department, would assist in implementing the statutorily mandated Total Maximum Daily Load and
13 Polluted Runoff Control programs. Therefore, the department supports the proposed appropriation for
14 the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts, but suggests that amendments be added to this bill to

1 include methods for the conservation plans to be evaluated for overall effectiveness. Specifically, the
2 department suggests an amendment that would require the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts
3 to provide conservation plans to the department, upon request. Ideally, the results of their work should
4 be shared with the department and other affected agencies to help maximize statewide efforts to reduce
5 pollution and improve water quality.

6 The department believes that increased funding to the Hawaii Association of Conservation
7 Districts can help multiple agencies meet their objectives, and allow for greater coordination among
8 environmental programs and more efficient use of State resources.

9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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Cc: mnakahata@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1916 on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM*
Date: Saturday, March 15, 2014 11:21:44 PM

HB1916

Submitted on: 3/15/2014

Testimony for WTL on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mae Nakahata	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Date: Friday, March 14, 2014 9:27:02 AM

HB1916

Submitted on: 3/14/2014

Testimony for WTL on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Napualani Wong	Individual	Support	No

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HB1916

Submitted on: 3/16/2014

Testimony for WTL on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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HB1916

Submitted on: 3/16/2014

Testimony for WTL on Mar 17, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Watson	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am in support of this bill, which would not only assist the agricultural community, but all in our communities.

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Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts
P O Box 1411
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

February 16, 2014

Testimony in Support of HB 1916

Aloha Chair Solomon, Vice Chair Galuteria, and fellow WTL Committee Members

My name is Wes Nohara. I am here to testify in strong support of HB 1916. I am here representing the 16 Soil & Water Conservation Districts that make up the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts (HACD).

The funding request in HB 1916 is very important to the people of Hawaii. When the State Dept of Health cut our funds on December 31, 2013, the Soil & Water Conservation Districts in the State of Hawaii lost its funding for key Conservation Specialist (CS) staff positions.

Hawaii law Chapter 180-13, authorizes and requires the SWCDs to develop erosion control programs and conservation plans to protect the resources of Hawaii. Our current funding from the State is not enough to hire appropriate staffing to do this work. Thus when DOH cut our funds, we lost our trained staff on Oahu and Big Island. On Kauai and Maui were able to find temporary funding. However, when these funds dry up, those positions are also at risk to be lost.

The CS position is a great value for the people of Hawaii. We provide conservation plans, technical support, and guidance for our land owners and tenants. We assist with conservation, environmental education and public safety projects statewide. We do this at a minimal cost to State govt, because we cost share with our partners at the Federal and County govt. With the exception of Honolulu, all of our other counties provide financial support to the SWCDs. The USDA – NRCS provides us with office space, office equipment, computers, IT support, technical training, vehicles, and field equipment, valued at over \$200,000 per year.

Our 80 SWCD directors (5 directors/ district) are all volunteers and provide technical support, guidance and supervision at no cost.

The CS position is a fulltime job, requiring specific training and skills. Without proper funding, we will not be able to provide the key services to the people of Hawaii as authorized under Chapter 180.

Thanks you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Wes Nohara
Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts

Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) were formed as a result of the great dust bowl of the Early 1930s. Congress passed an emergency act forming the Soil Erosion Service, what is known today as the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS-USDA). While the Federal program was technically sound, the conservation practices were not successful at the local level. Thus in 1936 congress passed the “Standard District Act” encouraging States to form Conservation Districts to help implement best management practices at the local level. Hawaii enacted Chapter 180 in 1945 enabling the formation of Hawaii’s 16 SWCDs.

Today there are about 3,000 SWCDs throughout the United States that effectively implement and promote conservation practices in partnerships with Federal Govt, State Govt, County Govt and their local communities.

It is the SWCDs “grass roots” structure, true integrated partnerships, and streamlined programs that make us effective. We operate by bringing the various entities (Federal, State, County and the communities) together to implement conservation practices that conserve and protect our natural resources, help agriculture, improve the environment and protect people’s lives and property. We are effective at what congress asked us to do; that is to implement local programs that protect our natural resources and our people.

Unfortunately, it is that same grass roots structure that gets us very little appreciation and respect at the State level. I am here today to testify in support of HB 1916, which if passed, will fund our need for technical staff support. Prior to December 31, 2013; we had four (4) State wide job positions titled: Conservation Specialist (CS).

Page 2

Wes Nohara Testimony in Support of SB2295

The SWCDs believe in the strength of partnerships. We believe that by working together we can accomplish a lot more (quicker, cheaper and more effectively). We believe that we represent the interest of our entire State, and serve our people via our knowledge, commitment and expertise at the local level.

Our Conservation Specialist positions are entry level (untrained). In the spirit of partnerships, we receive training and technical support from NRCS. Our Federal NRCS partners provide office space, computers, telephone, field transportation vehicles, office and technical equipment. The SWCD’s provide supervision, technical guidance and management support. Some of the County Govts provide funding for administrative /technical staff and operational costs (for County grading and grubbing permits).

In return, our SWCD volunteers and staff work to serve the people of Hawaii. We try not to get bogged down with barriers between our partners, but instead focus on the best interest of our local communities and our people.

Over the years we have lost significant funding support from the State of Hawaii, due to budget constraints. Yet over the years we have continued to receive millions of dollars from Federal and County programs to improve our communities. This recent cut by DOH I believe is a result of an internal determination of what is best for my department and not seeing the bigger picture of what is best for the people of Hawaii.

In the meantime, the SWCDs are left to find the money and resources to get the job done. I am here today to ask for your support for HB 1916 and to help us serve our people of Hawaii.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Wesley M. Nohara
Legislative Chair
Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts