

HB502

Testimony

Appropriates moneys to the DOA to create positions within the department to monitor local food production. Requires the issuance of an RFP for the establishment of a food sufficiency baseline that determines the percentage of food locally produced and consumed. Effective July 1, 2050.



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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TESTIMONY OF SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE

MARCH 11, 2014, 2:45 P.M.
ROOM 229

HOUSE BILL NO. 502 HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Chairperson Nishihara and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill No. 502 HD1. The purpose of this measure is to create positions within the department to monitor local food production and to require the issuance of an RFP for the establishment of a food sufficiency baseline. The Department of Agriculture supports the intent of this measure but feels it may be unnecessary as the Department has already been pursuing efforts in this regard.

The Department understands the importance of moving towards greater food self-sufficiency. The recent "Increased Food Security and Food Self-Sufficiency Strategy" published by the Office of Planning in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture further highlights the State's desire for food self-sufficiency. As such, the Department has secured a grant from Ulupono Initiative to develop food security baseline metrics and is currently in the process of developing these food security baseline metrics in collaboration with Sustain Hawaii.

Furthermore, there are already requests in the proposed supplemental budget for the Department for statisticians who would be in charge of monitoring agricultural production, and we would instead request support for this budgetary ask.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide our testimony on this measure.





SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
Tuesday, March 11, 2014 – 2:45 p.m. – Room 229

Ulupono Initiative Strongly Supports HB 502 HD 1, Relating to Agriculture

Dear Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Kouchi and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kyle Datta and I am general partner of the Ulupono Initiative, a Hawai'i-based impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life for the people of Hawai'i by working toward solutions that create more locally grown food, increase renewable energy, and reduce/recycle waste. Ulupono invests in projects that have the potential to create large-scale, innovative change.

Ulupono strongly supports HB 502 HD 1, which appropriates funding to the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture to create positions to monitor local food production. For agricultural investors like Ulupono and the farming and ranching community to dedicate money into a project, we need to have accurate numbers to drive and validate our funding decisions. At Ulupono, we are constantly searching for accurate data around food production. Yet, there are many missing or incomplete data sets that need to be filled. In our private sector experience and even within the Legislature, a general rule is what gets tracked, gets funded. Therefore, it is imperative, if the Legislature feels agriculture is an important long-term industry to the state, to provide funding for greater data collection and analysis within DOA.

Ulupono felt this was such a critical leverage point that we decided to grant \$250,000 to DOA to look into agricultural metrics. However, to continue this work, DOA will need funding for staff to continuously update their data collection and analysis.

We are also hoping the re-launch of DOA's market news service branch is successful. This division within DOA previously released excellent pricing data that farmers and ranchers used to make better strategic decisions. This was one of the clear examples where a publicly supported program helped to stimulate private sector projects. The funding in this bill will help DOA to create more useful information for farmers and ranchers in the future.

In addition, the general public wants to see a successful and responsive Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (DOA). Given their 40% reduction in funding during the recession, the DOA has naturally had to be more reactive to situations while also focusing on rebuilding their efforts. By obtaining more quantitative figures via the funding from this bill, DOA will be in a better position to conduct strategic planning. This will make them more efficient and effective in serving the local agriculture community.

We believe that working together we can help produce more local food, support an economically strong homegrown agriculture industry, which strengthens our community with fresh, healthy food. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

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March 7, 2014

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Senator Ronald D. Kouchi, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture

Comments and Concerns Regarding HB 502, HD1, Relating to Food (Appropriates moneys to the Department of Agriculture to create positions to monitor local food production; and requires the issuance of an RFP for the establishment of a food sufficiency baseline.)

Tuesday, March 11, 2014, 2:45 p.m., in Conference Room 229

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. One of LURF's missions 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 regarding **HB 502, HD1**, 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. This bill is based on similar, prior bills which did not involve any discussions, assistance, or input from the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBB), agricultural landowners and stakeholders; and which reportedly screened a hidden agenda and ulterior motive to impose a moratorium on land use approvals. This bill thus demonstrates the critical need for collaboration amongst diverse sectors of the community - business, government, and agricultural stakeholders - and the importance of them working together cooperatively to improve food sustainability and the economic viability of the State's agricultural industry.

HB 502, HD1. This bill directs the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to create positions to monitor local food production and to issue a request for proposals for the establishment of a food sufficiency baseline that determines the percentage of food locally produced and consumed to promote local food production and increase agricultural self-sufficiency. LURF believes, however, that if HB 502, HD1 and other similar measures were truly intended to promote local food production, such bills would necessarily address and focus upon certain key issues such as the cost of land; water availability; labor costs and availability; transportation costs; invasive species; and marketing, all of which must be

taken into consideration in order to establish realistic food production and sustainability standards.

It is interesting to note that the actual, original, and sole intent of similar bills previously introduced, was to stop further reclassification of agricultural lands by setting an unrealistic standard for local food production, and then “punishing” landowners when that standard was not met by the State through the imposition of unfair and arbitrary moratoriums on land use reclassification of agricultural land.

While the current bill does not include any “punishment provisions,” it nevertheless appears to be infused with the underlying intent of the prior bills, as it ignores the DOA’s ongoing efforts including research and development of food production metrics; and is completely oblivious to the fact that DOA’s 2008 statistics show that agricultural exports comprised approximately eighty-five percent (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 only to approximately fifteen percent (15%) of sales.

LURF’s Position. Over the years, LURF has consistently and strongly supported agriculture, agricultural development, the IAL law, and water for agriculture. While LURF also supports food security and food self-sufficiency, it is seriously concerned with HB 502, HD1, for the following reasons:

- 1. Questionable intent and purpose of HB 502, HD1.** Contrary to what would necessarily be considered appropriate for, and required as part of the proposed bill given the significance of its subject matter, HB 502, HD1 does **not** include support for any agricultural programs; does **not** address any issues which would increase local food production; and does **not** involve the collaboration of agricultural stakeholders to support the effort to increase local food production. Thus, the underlying purpose and desired outcome of HB 502, HD1 is questionable, and appears only to be to direct the DOA to collect information and data (which has been, and will likely continue to be ignored), then to create an arbitrary, unrealistic food sufficiency baseline or standards with which the State may not be able to comply, in order that in the future, opponents of land use reclassifications and zone changes may potentially use such information either to oppose such land use approvals, or to lobby for legislation imposing sanctions against landowners based on the State’s failure to meet the arbitrary baseline or standards.
- 2. Must trust the experts on food production, security and sustainability.** LURF questions the informational and factual basis upon which HB 502, HD1 attempts to establish the proposed arbitrary baseline (a report by an unknown contracted entity); and whether the drafters of this bill are knowledgeable and experienced in agricultural production.
 - a. HB 502, HD1 ignores the DOA’s metrics research and data collected regarding food production.** This bill is premised on the unreasonable belief that increased agricultural production can be attained simply by setting an arbitrary baseline. The DOA, however, understands that successful and viable agriculture is very complex and involves many issues, including agricultural infrastructure, labor, biosecurity, food safety, market development, research and development, agricultural lands, water and water treatment, pest management, and food safety – all of which are not addressed by this measure.

- b. **The DOA should retain its authority to establish its own food production and sustainability metrics or standards.** The DOA and its experts in agricultural food production have already been, and are currently working on developing metrics to determine the current levels of agriculture within the State. The DOA should be allowed to complete these metrics as a necessary step prior to determining if and when any food sustainability standard or other sustainability standards should be established. Variables which should necessarily be considered as part of the establishment of said standards include: land costs; water availability; labor costs and availability; transportation costs; invasive species; marketing costs; and the long term economic viability of farms, ranches, and other agricultural facilities and programs.
 - c. **HB 502, HD1 is exclusionary; usurps DOA's authority; ignores DOA's expertise relating to food production; and is divisive.** Efforts to develop a food sufficiency baseline have not heretofore included the participation of the DOA, HFBF, large agricultural landowners, or other agricultural stakeholders. This type of collaborative effort is crucial, especially because of the possibility that those same landowners could possibly face obstacles, or future penalties or sanctions if the baseline is not met.
 - d. **LURF would be in support of DOA's collection, compilation, analysis and presentation of in-shipment data.** LURF would encourage and support the DOA's collection, compilation, analysis and presentation of data and other information relating to imports and exports to support the establishment of an appropriate food sufficiency baseline, however, would be unable to defend the creation of an arbitrary standard by unknown authorities based on unsubstantiated data.
- 3. DOA staff must be retained to implement programs related to this measure.** LURF supports the creation and hiring of necessary DOA positions and funding for DOA staff necessary to collect, compile and analyze in-shipment data; to work collaboratively with the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources at the University of Hawaii at Manoa to develop a system to gather and analyze relevant data; to prepare DOA metrics relating to the levels of agriculture in the State; and to present findings to the community. LURF respectfully recommends that the DOA, the State Administration, and the Legislature explore funding alternatives necessary for programs implemented pursuant to this bill.

It is LURF's position that in lieu of efforts to create an arbitrary food sufficiency baseline, alternative legislation which would better address issues relating to increased local food production should be considered and enacted. Such legislation would ideally authorize the creation of an 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 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 and concerns regarding this measure.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
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Cc: gottlieb@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB502 on Mar 11, 2014 14:45PM*
Date: Monday, March 10, 2014 7:02:14 PM

HB502

Submitted on: 3/10/2014

Testimony for AGL on Mar 11, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 229

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

Comments:

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Cc: legechair@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB502 on Mar 11, 2014 14:45PM
Date: Monday, March 10, 2014 9:40:50 PM

HB502

Submitted on: 3/10/2014

Testimony for AGL on Mar 11, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Simon Russell	Hawaii Farmers Union United	Support	No

Comments: Mahalo for advancing this important measure relating to gathering data pertaining to our local food production.

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Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB502 on Mar 11, 2014 14:45PM*
Date: Friday, March 07, 2014 3:00:03 PM

HB502

Submitted on: 3/7/2014

Testimony for AGL on Mar 11, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lyn Howe	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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