

SB2037

Testimony



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
Thursday, January 23, 2014
2:45 P.M.
Conference Room 229

SENATE BILL NO. 2037
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Nishihara and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2037. This bill would establish a statewide and island-specific farming technique mentor program within the Department of Agriculture (HDOA).

The Department supports the intent of this bill which would provide grants to educate farmers and farming organizations in the State regarding new and innovative farming techniques that encourage the reliance on locally sourced inputs with the comment that a mentor program currently exists within the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) through the Cooperative Extension Service (CES), created in 1914 and currently staffed by 65 dedicated county extension agents and specialists who are available for individual consultations statewide and can provide the specific farming techniques this bill stipulates.

The instruction to be provided through the bill includes those areas where the extension agents are qualified to mentor, including the Korean natural farming method, which was included in a CES workshop conducted in 2013, organic practices, integrated pest management, insect and microorganism issues and would be able to mentor in other areas such as soil management, aquaculture, aquaponics, water quality, and offer more expansive assistance to the farmers.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





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January 23, 2014

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON SB 2037
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Room 229
2:45 PM

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

I am Christopher Manfredi, Acting President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF). 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 interest of our diverse agricultural community.

HFBF supports the intent of SB 2037 and would like to offer our comments. We certainly believe that local agriculture should be supported and encouraged. While it is true that the vast majority of food consumed in the state is imported, there are many complex factors that underlie this reality. Imported farm inputs are an important factor.

The farm technique mentoring program, as described in this bill, may be useful to assist niche market producers who are already using "natural" techniques and local inputs or are willing to experiment in these methods. We are interested in learning more details about the program, including the following:

- Whether UH CTAHR, rather than HDOA is perhaps better suited to provide this type of farm training program
- Who would provide the training---what expertise would be required to be a "mentor"
- How would the monetary grants to farmers and farm organizations be administered
- Would the grants be administered to commercial farmers (those who make their living from farming) or non-profit organizations that may compete with local farmers
- How would the program benefit the largest number of farmers

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [AGL Testimony](#)
Cc: nredfeather@kohalacenter.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2037 on Jan 23, 2014 14:45PM
Date: Saturday, January 18, 2014 9:17:28 AM

SB2037

Submitted on: 1/18/2014

Testimony for AGL on Jan 23, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nancy Redfeather	Hawaii School Garden Network	Support	No

Comments: This is a practical and effective solution to the system problems facing new, young, or beginning farmers today. Place the experience on farm with the newcomer. Effective, efficient, and on-going.

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1768 Kalawi Place
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January 23, 2014

Email Testimony to:

The Honorable Clarence Nishihara
Chair Senate Agriculture Committee
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
sennishihara@capitol.hawaii.gov

Vincent Mina
President
Maui

Aloha Chairman Nishihara,

We regrettably inform you that we were unable to share with you the most recent version of the On Farm Mentoring program legislation

Simon Russell
Vice-President
Maui

Since the time we shared the language of SB 2037 with you on November 4, we had some help revising the former draft into it's current form, which is now considerably different than the old version. On November 21, we met with CTAHR's Dean Gallo to verify that the mentoring program can be administered through their offices (Whereas HDOA had been the vehicle for funding the program in the previous version). CTAHR's mission pertains to education, and On Farm Mentoring is educational in nature. Therefore we made the decision with colleagues and friends to change the language to empower CTAHR with this program. We also consulted with other legislators and the LRB to refine the language. The current revisions clarify some of the previously undefined terminology in the bill.

David Case
Secretary
Kona

So we are asking that you amend SB 2037 and replace the language with the exact language in SB 2563, which has a companion bill in the House under the title: HB 1989.

Ray Maki
Treasurer
Kauai

We take the blame completely for this mix-up, and attribute it to our being people of the soil and not the akamai legislative experts that we aspire to be eventually. We are still in the learning process, and if there is anything you can do to help increase our depth of knowledge with regards to this legislative process in support of local agriculture, surely, we would appreciate it. We hope that this has not caused you and your committee any inconvenience, and if it has, we apologize. Thank you for your time, we very much look forward to working with you this session.

Pamela Boyer
Member
Oahu

Mahalo nui loa,
Simon Russell
Vice President and Legislative Chairman
Hawaii Farmers Union United
www.hawaiifarmersunionunited.org
PH (808) 269 8162

David Fisher
Member
Maui

January 22, 2014

Comments

SB2037 Establishes the farming technique mentor program within the DOA; Appropriates funds.



Senate Agriculture Committee

January 23, 2014

Room 229 2:45 PM

Aloha Honorable Chair and Senators,

Mahalo for hearing this bill which aims to progress local farmer knowledge of natural and organic farming techniques. We are in need of many of the positive potential benefits of this bill and our greatest concern with this legislation could be easily amended. We need to make sure that this mentorship program for Korean Natural Farming and local, sustainable agriculture uses the most natural and organic components aligned with the intent of the bill. We request that you clarify a few stipulations in order to protect the soil from potentially unintended consequences.

We simply need to assure the microbes and microorganisms fostered through this program do not include genetically engineered insects, microorganisms and microbes. Perhaps some simple housekeeping amendments to clarify in order to protect our soil from further devastation and unknown effects.

Due to the highest level of open air genetic contamination worldwide occurring in the Hawaiian islands, our agricultural genetic material and soil microorganisms are already at risk of genetic contamination due to more than 5,000 open air genetic experiments performed by the chemical industry, the fragile eco system of Hawaii is already at risk. Years of plantation farming involving heavy petrochemical use and monocropping is compounded by the agrochemical industry operations of pesticide companies operating widely in Hawaii. Recent findings expose that Kauai is being sprayed 250-360 days a year, often numerous times per day. Similar operations and test fields for pesticide promoting genetically engineered test crops are also transpiring on Maui, Oahu, Molokai. Our soil is already being weakened and we need to ensure new biohazards are not introduced into the ecosystem via this program through potential legal loopholes.

We suggest the following clarifications to SB2037:

Page 2, line 19

2) culturing indigenous microorganism shall not be intended to include genetically modified microorganisms.

Page 2 line 22

4) integrated pest management shall not be intended to include genetically modified organisms; and

Page 3 Line 1

(6) Breeding and releasing beneficial insects shall not be intended to include genetically modified insects.

We prefer section 2.(c) be amended to include a third item after page 3 line 22:

(3) Existing organic farms.

We absolutely must practice the precautionary principle, we are already considered the endangered species capital of the world, our soil cannot risk genetically engineered microbes, there is absolutely no retracting genetically modified open releases of anything. Period. We cannot risk, through any wide language, the release of genetically engineered microorganisms. We must not appropriate funding to this program without simply ensuring it will not be intended to include the release, development, use or release of any genetically modified organisms which are the subject of much scientific controversy.

Contrary to popular chemical company lobbyist rhetoric, there is no scientific consensus on the safety of genetically modified organisms. Their released statement “strongly reject claims by GM seed developers and some scientists, commentators, and journalists that there is a “scientific consensus” on GMO safety.”

(1) There are hundreds of extremely well qualified scientists around the world refuting the claims of the chemical industry which may stand to profit from the release of uncontrollable GMO microorganisms, microbes and insects.

“Commenting on the statement, one of the signatories, Prof Ernst-Ulrich von Weizsäcker, Co-Chair of the International Resource Panel (UNEP) and Co-President of The Club of Rome, said: “The future of food and agriculture is one of the great challenges of humankind of the 21st century. The claim of scientific consensus on GMO safety is misleading and misrepresents diverse and inconclusive scientific evidence. The full range of scientific research needs to be taken into account, in open, transparent and honest debates which involve the broader society, when decisions of global concern are being made. This is a responsibility of scientists and science.” (2)

We must protect our soil and agricultural prospects by ensuring there is no loophole for the chemical companies engineering crops to promote the sale and use of their own manufactured pesticides, release GMO insects, microorganisms and microbes.

An internationally recognized Colonel (Ret.) scientist and prior Associate Director of the Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center retired from over 41 years is the current APS coordinator of the USDA National Plant Disease Recovery System (NPDRS) is a gentleman named Dr. Don Huber, Professor Emeritus of Plant Pathology at Purdue University. Don Huber, B.S., M.S., Ph-D functioned as a Cereal Pathologist at the University of Idaho and then the Department of Botany & Plant Pathology at Purdue University and consults for the agricultural industry, academia and the United States Government as well as numerous other countries. He specializes in microbial ecology among other things.

If for any reason you are not clear on whether or not we need to ensure that genetically engineered

microorganisms, microbes and insects are not funded, developed, cultivated or released within this proposed program, I think you need to speak with Dr. Huber regarding microbes in the soil. I will send you his email address and this excerpt is from a statement he wrote in 2012:

“Genetic engineering is more like a virus infection than a normal breeding process and results in a multitude of mutations and epigenetic effects as genetic integrity in the plant is disrupted. These 'foreign' bacterial genes are highly promiscuous and easily transferred by wind or insects to other plants; to soil microorganisms during plant residue decomposition, or to intestinal microflora during food digestion where they continue to direct the production of toxins and allergenic proteins. Epigenetic effects are manifest in GMO plants as a yield drag, poor nutrient efficiency, increased disease, and reduced stress tolerance.” (3)

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) found viral gene fragments, CaMV 35S promoters of the Cauliflower Mosaic Virus (CaMV) detected in 54 of 86 approved GMO crops in the United States. (4)

After declaring antibiotic resistance a ‘significant challenge to human health’ on the rise globally, *A survey of drug resistance bla genes originating from synthetic plasmid vectors in six Chinese rivers.* (5) found antibiotic resistant genes from a genetically engineered “artificial recombinant DNA sequences with high expression of antibiotic resistance genes presents an unknown risk beyond the laboratory setting. Contamination of environmental microbes with synthetic plasmid vector-sourced antibiotic resistance genes may represent a yet unrecognized source of antibiotic resistance.”

Please protect our soil and amend this bill to clarify that there will be no increased genetically engineered risks accompanying the timely passage of this bill.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns. I will separately send you the contact information of two professional contacts who specialize in soil and plant pathology and I would suggest you consult with them on agricultural matters including this one.

Best Regards,

--

Nomi Carmona
President
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(1) <http://www.ensser.org/increasing-public-information/no-scientific-consensus-on-gmo-safety/>

(2) <http://www.cornucopia.org/2013/10/scientists-state-scientific-consensus-gmo-safety/>

#babesagainstbiotech

- (3) <http://www.gmwatch.org/latest-listing/51-2012/14164-glyphosate-and-gmos-impact-on-crops-soils-animals-and-man-dr-don-huber>
- (4) <http://www.independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/regulators-discover-a-hidden-viral-gene-in-commercial-gmo-crops/>
- (5) <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23215020>

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [AGL Testimony](#)
Cc: farmfreshhawaii@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2037 on Jan 23, 2014 14:45PM
Date: Thursday, January 23, 2014 1:49:57 AM

SB2037

Submitted on: 1/23/2014

Testimony for AGL on Jan 23, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Juanita Kawamoto Brown	Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hi	Support	Yes

Comments: The Environmental caucus of the DPH is in strong support of this bill and the efforts to promote natural, organic and bio dynamic farming methods in the state of Hawaii.

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To: [AGL Testimony](#)
Cc: mauibrad@hotmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2037 on Jan 23, 2014 14:45PM
Date: Friday, January 17, 2014 3:41:14 PM

SB2037

Submitted on: 1/17/2014

Testimony for AGL on Jan 23, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Brad Parsons	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: Senators: Generally support this bill SB2037. Believe these types of programs may be needed to get Hawaii back to sustainable production of it's own edible food. Believe though that other factors, such as how the state and large land holding agencies allow their land to be used will have a greater determining affect on sustainable farming in Hawaii. Do not believe that this program should be narrowly limited to, "Existing farms that are certified to teach Korean natural farming techniques." Believe that techniques such as Permaculture should be equally assisted. The program described in this bill is fairly modest, but could be a positive step forward if prospective farmers know to take advantage of it. Do not support this bill for anything other than it's originally stated intent, save for the above recommended change. Mahalo, Brad Parsons Aloha Analytics

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Date: Friday, January 17, 2014

To: Committee on Agriculture
Senator Clarence Nishihara, Chair
Senator Ronald Kouchi, Vice Chair

From: **Terri Cabrerros & Peter Cabrerros** - Born and raised on the Big Island, currently residing in Hawaiian Paradise Park, Keaau

Jeremy & Amanda Tekurio and daughter, **Tehani** - Born and raised on the Big Island, currently residing in Hilo

Chelsey Cabrerros - Born and raised on the Big Island, currently residing in Hawaiian Paradise Park, Keaau

Kelsey Cabrerros - Born and raised on the Big Island, currently residing in Hilo

We are in support of SB 2037.

As locals born and raised in these islands, we are naturally concerned about the use of anything toxic to our soils. The pesticides, insecticides, herbicides are destroying the living organisms in the soils and will not continue to withstand the constant bombardment of poisons.

Please, never forget that we are islands in the middle of the ocean. With severe weather conditions affecting our world as well as earthquakes and unusual international geopolitical changes upon us, being cut off from the mainland and everyone else is a very real possibility.

How are we going to keep sustainability going and feed our people if our soils are dead and unable to produce food?

Exploring good, healthy, organic soil enriching alternatives ARE our only option. Working with our organic farmers and implementing proven Natural Korean Farming techniques is the way to go...it's the only way to insure our survival.

Thank you!

Written Testimony to the

Senate Committee on Agriculture

Thursday, January 23, 2014; 2:45 pm

By

J. Kenneth Grace

SB 2037 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Kouchi, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 2037, which proposes to establish an on-farm mentoring program to be developed and managed by the Hawaii Department of Agriculture.

My name is J. Kenneth Grace, and I am Interim Associate Dean and Associate Director for Research in the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am providing personal testimony today on SB 2037, and my testimony does not represent the position of either CTAHR or the University of Hawaii.

While I appreciate and strongly support the intent of SB 2037 to support agriculture and local food production in Hawaii, and train farmers in good agricultural practices, I do not believe that establishing an entirely new program of grants to private contractors on each island to serve as trainers and mentors is the most effective method of accomplishing these goals. I believe that support for existing training systems and structures, and enhanced funding for them when this is possible and appropriate, is a better approach. The Cooperative Extension Service directed by CTAHR has been assisting and training farmers in Hawaii for 100 years, and instructional programs within the University of Hawaii System, provide formal training in the skills needed to succeed in Hawaii's agricultural and food industries. In addition, other well-established sources of agricultural training also exist in Hawaii. Fiscal support for new and ongoing agricultural training programs within these well-established systems, including support for temporary and permanent staff positions, will pay greater dividends than attempting to develop a brand new system of state-funding to private contractors.

So, although I appreciate the intent of SB 2037 to support agriculture in Hawaii, I must recommend against approval of this bill. I would prefer to see the State of Hawaii support the proven and effective agriculture training structures that are already in place, rather than attempt to develop a new system of private contractors.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [AGL Testimony](#)
Cc: unmanib@maui.net
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2037 on Jan 23, 2014 14:45PM
Date: Thursday, January 23, 2014 1:50:37 AM

SB2037

Submitted on: 1/23/2014

Testimony for AGL on Jan 23, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Unmani Cynthia Groves	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Regenerative farming as a practice will serve our islands in the way this bill is set up. It should be noted that many farmers have expressed that they can not or will not go into the college or sign up for innovative practices through the college due to distance as well as a number of other reasons. While colleges have their place, we need mentoring on farm sites for them to learn that are not dependent on the university. This bill serves a niche different from a similar bill that sets up the mentoring farm up to be run through the University. Farmers need to be reached close to where they are with the opportunity to then incubate.

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Cc: ihemphi@live.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2037 on Jan 23, 2014 14:45PM
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SB2037

Submitted on: 1/23/2014

Testimony for AGL on Jan 23, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Denise Key	Individual	Support	No

Comments: We must do all we can to help our farmers, continue and make a living on our island!

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SB2037

Submitted on: 1/23/2014

Testimony for AGL on Jan 23, 2014 14:45PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Susan Douglas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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