

NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

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**Testimony of  
WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.  
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on  
WAYS AND MEANS**

**Tuesday, February 25, 2014  
9:10 A.M.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211**

**In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 2876, SENATE DRAFT 1  
PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE VII, SECTION 12, OF THE HAWAII  
STATE CONSTITUTION TO ASSIST DAM AND RESERVOIR OWNERS**

Senate Bill 2876, Senate Draft 1, proposes an amendment to the Hawaii State Constitution, to authorize the State to issue special purpose revenue bonds and use the proceeds from the bonds to assist dam and reservoir owners. **While the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports this Administration measure as it could assist dam and reservoir owners by providing an economic means to bring their facilities up to current safety standards, the Department respectfully requests the following revision:**

The Department requests that the Constitutional Amendment question in SECTION 3. be revised to the original form as stated Senate Bill 2876:

"Shall the State be authorized to issue special purpose revenue bonds and use the proceeds from the bonds to offer low interest loans to qualifying dam and reservoir owners to improve their facilities to protect public safety and provide significant benefits to the general public as important water sources?"

The Department believes that reinstatement of the originally proposed question will give voters a better indication of the intent and purpose of this measure.

Dams and reservoirs provide many public benefits as a potential resource for agriculture, water supply, recharge, flood control, hydropower and other beneficial uses. Dams are a critical part of our state infrastructure, providing benefits upon which our communities and industries depend on. One of the alternatives of bringing a dam into compliance would be to remove the structure entirely, which would preempt the many benefits that dams provide.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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

**ESTHER KIA'AINA**  
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  
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February 25, 2014

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAY AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON SB 2876, SD1  
PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE VII, SECTION 12, OF THE HAWAII  
STATE CONSTITUTION TO ASSIST DAM AND RESERVOIR OWNERS.

Room 211  
9:10 AM

Aloha Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

I am Christopher Manfredi, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB 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.

**HFB stands in strong support of SB 2876, SD1** which authorizes the State to issue special purpose revenue bonds and use the proceeds from the bonds to assist dam and reservoir owners.

While dam and reservoir safety rules represent an important public safety initiative, the rules codified in HRS chapter 179D will have an adverse effect by reducing water storage capacity across the state. At a time when changing weather patterns have demonstrated alternating periods of drought punctuated by significant storm events, coupled with the noble goal of achieving food security for our island state, water storage is more critical than ever. The new rules will discourage new dam and reservoir construction, and in many cases cause dam and reservoir owners and to minimize the capacity or decommission existing storage capability.

Many of the reservoirs – built in an era of plantation agriculture—no longer generate enough revenue to be economically sustainable. But they are needed in ways few people have yet imagined. The issue of how to pay for the upgrading and maintenance of this critical infrastructure is now gaining more attention as the state's budget comes into focus.

Dams and reservoirs are the key not just to a future of sustainable agricultural system in Hawaii, but to the entire water and environmental health of the State. In addition to the conventional benefits of storing and delivering reliable water for agriculture in dry times, flood control during large storms, erosion control and the reduction of sediment loading

on our near shore ocean reefs, reservoirs also ensure a supply of potable drinking water (after treatment).

Reservoirs also help recharge our ground water aquifers by capturing storm water (for later release) that would otherwise rush to the ocean. There is growing evidence is that there will be a pattern of fewer, but larger storms separated by longer intervals of drought. If the large rainfall flows are not captured, overall ground water recharge may be significantly reduced. Groundwater is our primary source of drinking water and demand is relentlessly rising. We already face declining groundwater recharge every time we place hard impermeable surfaces (e.g. concrete) over previously open ground (agriculture).

Recent Dam and Reservoir Safety rules will levy an additional burden on reservoir owners and Hawaii farmers. Fuel, labor, equipment, transportation, and other expenses are already higher in Hawaii than on the mainland, placing locally grown products at a competitive disadvantage. Inevitably, increased costs will be passed on to consumers and are counterproductive to efforts to grow more food in Hawaii. Some landowners will simply decommission their dams, abandon their reservoir systems and decide what to do with their now fallow lands when agriculture is no longer viable.

The issuance of Special Purpose Revenue Bonds will help owners and operators comply with the laws without placing undue burden on the state budget. The Constitutional Amendment proposed in this legislation is prerequisite to the issuance of these bonds.

**Please lend your support for SB 2876, SD1**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on very important measure.

**SB 2876 SD1**

**PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE VII, SECTION 12, OF THE HAWAII  
STATE CONSTITUTION TO ASSIST DAM AND RESERVOIR OWNERS**

**PAUL OSHIRO  
MANAGER – GOVERNMENT RELATIONS  
ALEXANDER & BALDWIN, INC.**

**FEBRUARY 25, 2014**

Chair Ige and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means:

I am Paul Oshiro, testifying on behalf of Alexander & Baldwin, Inc. (A&B) and Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Company (a division of A&B) on SB 2876 SD1, “PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE VII, SECTION 12, OF THE HAWAII STATE CONSTITUTION TO ASSIST DAM AND RESERVOIR OWNERS.” We support this bill.

Alexander & Baldwin and its agricultural company Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Company (HC&S) have 29 regulated reservoirs on Maui which are in active use by HC&S. Because these dams and reservoirs are a vital part of our agricultural operations, they are operated, monitored, and maintained on an on-going basis. These facilities enable the storage of water so that HC&S can better weather periods of drought. These facilities also enable us to make optimum use of water resources—by capturing waters during heavy rainfall periods, less has to be used from surface water sources and wells during other times. They are absolutely integral to our ability to continue to keep tens of thousands of acres in agriculture in this state.

In addition to serving as a valuable water resource for Hawaii's agricultural industry, dams and reservoirs also provide several other significant benefits to the general public. Many of these facilities also provide drinking water for residential communities, renewable energy by way of hydropower, and flood control and drainage for public safety.

This bill proposes an amendment to the State Constitution to authorize the issuance of special purpose revenue bonds and to use the proceeds from the bonds to assist dam and reservoir owners. We believe that this bill will greatly assist dam and reservoir owners as they grapple with financing the significant additional costs to upgrade their dams and reservoirs so that they can meet regulatory requirements. By providing dam owners with a financial incentive to improve their facilities, the likelihood that more of these facilities will be kept in continued operation, and fewer decommissioned due to the cost of complying with the new regulations, will be increased. We believe that with the assistance of these special purpose revenue bonds, dams and reservoirs can continue to serve as a valuable water resource for Hawaii's agricultural industry and its communities.

Based on the aforementioned, we respectfully request your favorable consideration on this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Tuesday, February 25, 2014 at 9:10 A.M.  
Conference Room 211, State Capitol**

**RE: SENATE BILL 2876, SD1 PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE  
VII, SECTION 12, OF THE HAWAII STATE CONSTITUTION TO ASSIST DAM  
AND RESERVOIR OWNERS**

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports** SB 2876, HD1 which authorizes the State to issue special purpose revenue bonds and use the proceeds from the bonds to assist dam and reservoir owners.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing over 1,000 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

Water storage is critical to achieve our island state's goal for food security. The new rules will discourage new dam and reservoir construction and cause dam and reservoir owners to minimize the capacity or decommission existing storage capability. These reservoirs are crucial to Hawaii's agricultural community, yet it is difficult to maintain due to high costs. Many of the reservoirs no longer generate enough revenue to be economically sustainable. The issue of how to pay for the upgrading and maintenance of this critical infrastructure is now gaining more attention as the state's budget comes into focus.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.