



Hydroponics Alternatives LLC
dba Hawaiian Hydroponics Vegetables

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April 14, 2016

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BY EMAIL & FAX TO 808-586-6679

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice-Chair
Hawai`i State Senate Committee on Water, Land & Agriculture
Hawai`i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: General Measure 792 - SUPPORTING Confirmation of
Ms. Denise Albano to the Agribusiness Development Corporation

Dear Senators Ruderman and Riviere and Agriculture Committee Members:

We are writing to enthusiastically **support** the confirmation of Ms. Denise Albano to the Board of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC). We strongly believe that the Agribusiness Development Corporation is a vital solution to assisting Hawaii's small farmers to reduce this demand on imported foods, and to keep Hawai`i's money in Hawai`i. Given that Hawai`i imports over 87% of its daily food supply, it is crucial that locally grown fruits and vegetables replace imported food items. Currently, Denise's work with the Hawai`i Department of Agriculture to ensure water for agriculture and farmers security enhances her mission to increase Hawai`i's local food production. Like Denise, we are also passionate about improving the sustainability of Hawai`i produce industry.

Denise is a co-founder of Feed the Hunger Foundation, a non-profit entity that strives to eliminate poverty and hunger both internationally and in Hawai`i via micro-finance as a platform for food security and economic development. Feed the Hunger's Hawai`i-based program, "Food for Thought," strongly supports Hawai`i farmers in their agricultural production efforts to increase overall food security throughout Hawai`i when small farmers may find it difficult to obtain traditional funding.

Since its creation, Feed the Hunger Foundation has made numerous loans to farmers and other entrepreneurs who are starting or expanding their small businesses – our farm included. With Denise's support, farmers in Kunia, Wai`anae, and the Waimea Homestead Association have all received loans. Denise has also spearheaded the efforts of Feed the Hunger Foundation to partner with others in establishing new markets in low-income senior housing complexes in West Loch, O`ahu that accepts food stamps. It also works with the Waimanalo Market Co-op to introduce a constant supply of fresh produce to this community. The Foundation has also invested in Hawai`i's cultural, educational and economic needs through its Kako`o`Oiwi program.

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After spending over 12 years overseas working with developing world farmers as agriculture consultants in such countries as Sri Lanka, India, Egypt, China, Croatia and most recently, Lebanon, like Denise, we returned home to Hawai`i in 2012 – to establish our own farm. Without Denise and Feed the Hunger Foundation’s involvement in our Wai`anae farm, we would never have achieved the level of success we’ve realized as we begin to harvest tomatoes from our shade house, construct our Packing House that will be food-safety-certified, AND prepare to construct greenhouses that will allow us to farm year-round unhampered by inclement weather as well assorted plant pests and diseases.

We are confident that Denise’s continued passion for advancing Hawai`i agriculture and reducing Hawai`i’s food imports will continue to serve as a valuable asset to the Agribusiness Development Corporation. Denise will be the voice of the small farmer in discussions regarding Hawaii’s agricultural development. Given her background in the support of small scale farmers, and for all of the above reasons, we respectfully urge your committee and the entire Senate to please confirm Denise Albano as soon as possible to the Board of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Thank you very much for your anticipated assistance with this request.

Warm aloha,



Nancy A. Jones
General Manager



Zebuel C. Jones
Director of Hydroponics Operations