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

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

February 18, 2016
9:00 a.m.
CONFERENCE ROOM 312

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2274
RELATING TO THE AGRICULTURAL LOAN REVOLVING FUND**

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 2274. The Department strongly supports this administration bill. This bill seeks to expand the Department's Agricultural Loan Program by providing additional funds. Hawaii's agriculture industry is facing severe challenges as evidenced by the shutdown of sugar production on Maui and two well-known, long time farming operations announcing their intent to shut down operations. Challenges include high input and transportation costs, limited agricultural labor and food safety issues. It is anticipated that funding will be necessary to assist existing farms to meet these challenges.

While these factors are challenging, as good quality larger scale farm lands such as the Galbraith lands on Oahu and eventually the sugar lands on Maui become available, farmers will be able to take advantage of prime agricultural lands to mechanize production, utilize new technologies and achieve greater economies of scale. Access to affordable capital will be vital in helping these new operations to develop.

The department believes the agricultural loan program is the best avenue to provide access to affordable capital for our agricultural community. The agricultural loan program has been successful over the years and will continue to preserve and expand agriculture production throughout the islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 15, 2016 9:16 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: dale@hicattle.org
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2274 on Feb 18, 2016 09:00AM*

HB2274

Submitted on: 2/15/2016

Testimony for AGR on Feb 18, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dale Sandlin	Hawaii Cattlemens Council	Support	No

Comments:

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February 18, 2016

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON HB 2274
RELATING TO THE AGRICULTURAL LOAN REVOLVING FUND

Room 312
8:30 AM

Aloha Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Onishi, and Members of the Committee:

I am Randy Cabral, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,900 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 supports HB 2274, which appropriates \$4,000,000 for the agricultural loan program to increase the State's food sustainability.

Food security, food self-sufficiency and growing agriculture are popular concepts seen in many of the measures before the legislature this year. This Legislative Session, there have been many bills introduced that support of Hawaii's Agricultural Industry. This year, HFB has introduced a package of measures addressing the real needs of our farmers and ranchers all associated with increasing farm and ranch viability. These include infrastructure needs, agricultural education, Food Safety, invasive species control, and regulatory assistance.

This measure supports the growth of Hawaii's agricultural industry by providing additional funding to HDOA to assist Hawaii in growing its agriculture sector.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

**Testimony to the House Committee on Agriculture
Thursday, February 18, 2016 at 9:00 A.M.
Conference Room 312, State Capitol**

**RE: HOUSE BILL 2274 RELATING TO THE AGRICULTURAL LOAN
REVOLVING FUND**

Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Onishi, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports** HB 2274, which appropriates \$4,000,000 for the agricultural loan program to increase the State's food sustainability.

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 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.

The Chamber supports HB 2274, which establishes an agricultural loan program to provide affordable capital to farmers to start or expand certain farming activities. The decrease in direct Federal appropriations for agriculture has resulted in an increased level of dependence on alternative resources such as grants or loans. The loan program proposed in HB 2274 can result in increased capacity, new business opportunities, increase employment opportunities and address Hawaii's goals of increased self-sufficiency and sustainability.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.