

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor
SHAN S. TSUTSUI
Lt. Governor



SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture
PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
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TESTIMONY OF SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

February 19, 2015
8:30 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 312

HOUSE BILL NO. 439
RELATING TO LAND USE PLANNING

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 439 that would require the Department of Agriculture to implement and operate a program to provide conservation plans online that will be developed in partnership with non-governmental organizations. The Department supports the intent of the bill and offers the following comments.

Conservation plans are an important tool for farmers to use in order to maximize soil retention by implementing erosion and sediment control best management practices. Having the ability to create a preliminary conservation plan online, will assist small farmers to comply with government regulations and increase productivity of the farm.

The Department agrees that there is need for more conservation planning. The Department recently entered into a memorandum of understanding with DLNR to fund Hawaii Association of Conservation District (HACD) conservation planners to develop conservation plans and implement best management practices. For FY14, DOA



committed \$210,000 to this effort. Subject to availability of funds, we will continue to fund the conservation planners in this manner until HACD finds other funding.

House Bill No. 439 mentions an earlier effort to develop and establish a Hawaii One program based on the Idaho experience. This effort came to an end when DOA and DLNR were unable to find a permanent "host" server. Discussions with our Information Technology specialist confirm that we still do not have this capacity. Operation for the Hawaii One program also requires regular updates for Geographic Information System data, NRCS conservation program and rule updates, and updates to the assignment of management practices to resource concerns. The Department is of the opinion that it is not capable of implementing and operating the Hawaii One program given our current resources and staffing.

The Department has been made aware of a grant-in-aid application being submitted by the Oahu Resource Conservation and Development Council (Oahu RC&D) for the development of a "Hawaii One" platform that mirrors the program outlined in this bill. The Department has been in conversation with Executive Director Jean Brokish of Oahu RC&D and would support the funding of this grant-in-aid as a way to start the Hawaii One program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Testimony in Strong Support of HB 439 Appropriating Funds to Develop a Hawaii One Program That Provides Conservation Plans for Farmers

Good morning Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committee on Agriculture,

I am Karen Ah Mai, chair of the South Oahu Soil and Water Conservation District and representing the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts, made up of 16 districts across the state.

From Department of Agriculture statistics, there has been a 29% increase in the market value of agricultural products in the state in the 5-year period between 2007 and 2012. The economic value has grown from \$512 million to \$660 million. The trends indicate that the number of small farms is increasing, with many immigrant and first-generation producers.

With the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service and county engineers, we provide technical assistance to farmers on erosion control; nutrient, pest, and waste management; water quality and wetlands; air quality; endangered species; and cultural/historical concerns. This is accomplished through personal interaction by limited staffing, resulting in conservation plans that cover the myriad of concerns above.

We note, that on Oahu, the opening of new farmlands from the former Dole and Del Monte plantations has created more opportunities for sustainable agriculture. The pattern is similar on the Neighbor Islands. The demand for plans that address best agricultural practices and regulatory requirements far exceeds to capability to provide them. The waiting lists for assistance is already years long.

The Hawaii One program would streamline and simplify the process for the growing population of farmers, increase their efficiency, maintain the viability of agricultural lands, and, ultimately, contribute toward the economic viability of the state.

We strongly urge you to pass HB 439.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

onishi3 - Timothy

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2015 8:34 AM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: danandsheryll@live.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB439 on Feb 19, 2015 08:30AM*

HB439

Submitted on: 2/18/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 19, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dan Clegg	Vice Chair- Central Maui Soil and Water Conservation District	Support	No

Comments:

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
Thursday, February 19, 2015 – 8:30 a.m. – Room 312

Ulupono Initiative Strongly Supports HB 439 with an Amendment, Relating to Agriculture

Dear Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Riviere, Chair Thielen, Vice Chair Galuteria and Members of the Committees:

My name is Brandon Lee and I am the policy and public-private partnership associate 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 439 with an Amendment, which appropriates \$70,000 for the development of an online “Hawai'i One” program that helps to provide conservation plans for our local farmers and ranchers.

A conservation plan is similar to a business or strategic plan that helps land users (e.g. farmers) manage land profitably while protecting natural resources. Developing a conservation plan requires careful evaluation of site conditions, and then recommending activities to mitigate any negative impacts. For example, a farm may have a steep slope that experiences soil erosion during heavy rains. A conservation plan would document the existing conditions and recommend one or more of the following conservation practices: a diversion to direct water away from the exposed slope, cover crops to cover and protect the soil, planting across the slope, or a grassed channel to convey runoff safely down the slope. The actual practice(s) recommended are based on the farmer's input and related site constraints.

A conservation plan ensures long-term productivity and profitability, supports compliance with local regulations, and may provide access to federal cost-share programs. Conservation planning also helps landowners, communities, and agricultural professionals (government and private sector) work together to identify resources and accomplish multiple objectives that are best for the land, water, and people.

The funding will resolve a critical bottleneck that is preventing our farmers from accessing much needed federal funding for the USDA Soil Conservation Service. Farmers are required to have an approved Conservation Plan in order to access federal Farm Bill funds and to be in compliance with local grading/grubbing ordinances. However, the number of people

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i

qualified to write conservation plans in Hawai'i is not sufficient to meet the need. This leaves many Hawai'i farmers, who may have relatively small operations, waiting 2-4 years to receive a conservation plan. Without an approved conservation plan, farmers are technically out of compliance with local regulations, leaving them subject to significant penalties if those rules are enforced.

The development of an online interface for farmers and other agricultural professionals to input much of the data for a conservation plan will save both time and money for all parties involved. The State of Idaho developed an online program for conservation plans called Idaho One Plan. Through offering a similar tool to Hawai'i's farmers, this online program will help the roughly 87.5% of Hawai'i farmers, and 60% of agricultural land, who do not have a conservation plan to obtain one. The local version of the online conservation planning tool will be modeled on successful tenets of the Idaho One Plan and is tentatively known as "Hawai'i One."

In 2008, realizing the need for a better process to help farmers obtain conservation plans, the Department of Agriculture and Department of Land and Natural Resources collaborated to develop an online conservation plan application. However, the departments were unsuccessful due to insufficient server space and the subsequent recession, which forced funding cuts to both departments, including 40% for the Department of Agriculture. While past challenges plagued an important project, today is a different story. Due to the recent technological upgrades by the State, there is sufficient server space within the Department of Agriculture, if necessary. Wanting to help solve a problem for farmers, many organizations have stepped up to help make Hawai'i One a reality.

In 2013, Ulupono Initiative granted \$111,500 to train more conservation plan analysts, build industry support for a Hawai'i One program, and provide partial funding for the Hawai'i One program buildout. Of the Ulupono grant funds, \$30,000 is allocated for the Hawai'i One buildout. At this time, an additional \$12,500 has been pledged from the Department of Health – Clean Water Branch, \$2,800 from Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and \$11,000 has been tentatively pledged from the City and County of Honolulu's Office of Economic Development to build out the Hawai'i One program. Furthermore, there is also political support from farmers, agricultural organizations, government agencies, University of Hawai'i's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, and local soil and water conservation districts. The total cost for the build-out and implementation of a Hawai'i One program is ~\$125,300. Therefore, this bill requests the State of Hawai'i allocate \$70,000 (56% of the buildout cost for the Hawai'i One program) to pay for the remaining expenditures. An investment by the State would provide an excellent public-private partnership for this much-needed program that can provide customized information to farmers about how to improve their operations economically and environmentally.

HB 439, as currently written, provides \$70,000 in both fiscal year 2015 – 2016 and fiscal year 2016 – 2017 for a total of \$140,000 over two years. However, only the \$70,000 for



fiscal year 2015 – 2016 is necessary to complete the projected costs of the Hawai'i One buildout.

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,

Brandon Lee
Policy and Public-Private Partnership Associate

Email: communications@ulupono.com

**LARRY JEFTS FARMS, LLC
PO BOX 27
KUNIA, HAWAII 96759
(808) 688-2892**

HB 439, Relating to Land Use Planning
House AGR Committee
Thursday, February 19, 2015
8:30 am
Conference Room 312

Testimony by: Larry Jeffs
Position: Support

Chair Tsuji, and Members of the House AGR Committee:

I am Larry Jeffs, owner and operator of Larry Jeffs Farms, LLC, which is part of our family-run business of farms on Oahu and Molokai, under the administrative umbrella of Sugarland Growers, Inc. We have more than 35 years of Hawaii farm experience on Molokai and Oahu. I am a volunteer director for the West Oahu Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

Your support of the Hawaii One Program is urged. There has been much talk and support of improving Hawaii's capacity to grow food for local consumption. Within that discussion, concerns about preservation of our natural resources are often expressed.

The Hawaii One Program is a modest tool that will go far toward increasing the capacity of Hawaii farmers. Establishing the Hawaii One Program will help more of the 7,000 farms obtain basic conservation plans and better manage soil erosion, thus further protecting land and water resources. Future incremental development to the Hawaii One Plan could address wildlife and pesticide management.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2015 9:54 AM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: alan.takemoto@monsanto.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB439 on Feb 19, 2015 08:30AM

HB439

Submitted on: 2/18/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 19, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alan Takemoto	Monsanto Hawaii	Support	Yes

Comments: Monsanto Hawaii supports HB 439 to help provide resource for the Hawaii One program. Soil and water conservation is an important aspect of a productive farm. We hope that this will make it easier for farmers and ranchers to develop a conservation plan faster and quicker. Thank you.

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House Committee on Agriculture

Thursday, February 19, 2015 – 8:30am – Room 312

Support for HB439, Relating to Land Use Planning

Dear Chair Tsuji, Vice-Chair Onishi, and members of the committee,

The Oahu Resource Conservation and Development Council (Oahu RC&D) is a non-profit organization that works with farmers to improve management of soil and water resources. We strongly support the development and delivery of the “Hawaii One” on-line conservation planning tool that will improve the way farmers, land managers and agricultural professionals access conservation planning services.

Each county in Hawaii outlines permit requirements for grading, grubbing and stockpiling activities. Language exempting agricultural lands from the permit requirement is included in each County’s charter, provided that activities on the land are in accordance with a conservation program (conservation plan) acceptable to the local soil and water conservation district board.

For many years conservation plans have been developed by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Recent budget cuts and shifts in priorities have led to a 20% reduction in work force among local offices, leaving NRCS unable to meet the demand for conservation plans that are not tied directly to a Farm Bill Program. FY13 data from NRCS indicate that just 170 new conservation plans were developed by NRCS for farm operations across the state (roughly 2.5% of Hawaii’s 7000 farms).

Hawaii One utilizes NRCS’s science and standards, and provides a user-friendly on-line method for farmers, land managers and agricultural professionals to identify resource concerns using guided questions and a built-in map, and then allows them to select conservation practices from a list of appropriate solutions. A farmer or agricultural professional using Hawaii One to develop a conservation plan will find it focused and efficient, and will have a conservation plan ready for review by the soil and water conservation district in just a few hours, as opposed to waiting weeks, months or ever years.

Hawaii One can feasibly double (perhaps even triple) the number of farms under conservation plan within five years, dramatically increasing the number of people with access to conservation information, and increasing the opportunities for small farmers who typically have other employment, and are therefore unable to meet with NRCS during normal business hours. Furthermore, an on-line tool can readily integrate other internet-based resources that assist farmers in reaching their productivity goals.

The total cost for the build-out and implementation of a Hawai‘i One program is ~\$125,000. More than \$45,000 in private and public funds have been secured. This bill requests the State of Hawai‘i allocate \$70,000 (56% of the buildout cost for the Hawai‘i One program). The State’s contribution will strengthen this public-private partnership and support Hawaii agriculture through better conservation planning.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully,



Jean Brokish, Executive Director



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

P O Box 437199 Kamuela HI 96743
Phone (808) 885-5599 • Fax (808) 887-1607
e-mail: HCattlemens@hawaii.rr.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
Thursday February 19, 2015 8:30 p.m. Room 312

HB 439 **RELATING TO LAND USE PLANNING**

Appropriates funds to develop a Hawaii One program that provides conservation plans for farmers.

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

My name is Alan Gottlieb, and I am a rancher and the Government Affairs Chairperson for the Hawaii Cattlemen's Council. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc. (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the five county level Cattlemen's Associations. Our 130+ member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of approximately 25% of the State's total land mass.

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council supports HB 439.

The preamble of the bill very accurately points out the dilemma for conservation plans; they are very important for conservation of our resources, but they are very hard to come by for many small farmers and ranchers.

While an on-line system like the Proposed Hawaii One is not a silver bullet, it can be a tool that many land users can utilize to help prepare a conservation plan. Funds requested in this bill will help to leverage funds already raised and committed to implement a system similar to one which works very well for Idaho.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on this important matter.



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 19, 2015

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON HB 439
RELATING TO LAND USE PLANNING

Room 312
8:30 AM

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

I am Christopher Manfredi, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,932 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 HB 439.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau understands the importance of protecting our soil and water for the benefit of Hawaii's agriculture industry and the people of Hawaii. We support efforts to develop the on-line conservation planning tool known as Hawaii One.

The Hawaii One plan will lower cost and wait-times, and increase the number of agricultural producers who undertake conservation planning for the long-term success of their farms and the health of the environment, including watersheds.

There is a backlog of requests for technical assistance and there are a limited number of conservation planners, largely due to Federal and State budget cuts. The Hawaii One plan will provide an efficient tool that farmers can use to help create a preliminary plan that will significantly reduce the amount of time necessary to complete conservation plans.

We believe that one of the greatest benefits of the Hawaii One plan is that it will increase the number of farmers complying with local ordinances governing grubbing and grading activities. We also believe that as more farmers develop and implement conservation plans, they will become more efficient and productive.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 16, 2015 10:19 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: skaye@hawaii.edu
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB439 on Feb 19, 2015 08:30AM

HB439

Submitted on: 2/16/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 19, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Springer Kaye	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I strongly support this measure, which connects farmers to responsible conservation plans, and thereby makes farmers eligible for a suite of federal assistance programs. Among these is the CREP program, which can pay farmers to create invasive species buffers as a form of conservation easement between their productive areas and neighboring undeveloped land. In addition, a number of loans, grants, and disaster relief programs become available. This is the kind of infrastructural investment that produces real value and longevity for the farmer and generates revenue back to the state. Thank you for your consideration.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2015 6:13 AM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: taylor.kellerman@monsanto.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB439 on Feb 19, 2015 08:30AM

HB439

Submitted on: 2/18/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 19, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Taylor Kellerman	Individual	Support	No

Comments: As a West Oahu Soil and Water Conservation Board member I support HB439. This is would provide a tremendous asset to Hawaii's agricultural community moving forward in making the island more sustainable in an environmentally friendly manner.

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onishi3 - Timothy

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Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2015 9:38 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: amybrinker@mac.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB439 on Feb 19, 2015 08:30AM*

HB439

Submitted on: 2/18/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 19, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Amy Brinker	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
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To: AGRtestimony
Cc: Mchughj001@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB439 on Feb 19, 2015 08:30AM



HB439

Submitted on: 2/18/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 19, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
John McHugh	Individual	Support	No

Comments: This bill is urgently needed to provide farmers and ranchers a tool for developing a conservation plan. The back log of farmers and ranchers awaiting plans is in the hundreds. In a time when agriculture is under pressure from many directions natural resource conservation is a priority. I urge you to pass this bill.

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onishi3 - Timothy

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2015 9:57 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: warrenmcfb@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB439 on Feb 19, 2015 08:30AM*

LATE

HB439

Submitted on: 2/18/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 19, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Warren Watanabe	Maui County Farm Bureau	Support	No

Comments:

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