

DAVID Y. IGE  
Governor

SHAN S. TSUTSUI  
Lt. Governor



State of Hawaii  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

SCOTT E. ENRIGHT  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER  
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

February 5, 2015  
8:30 A.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 312

**HOUSE BILL NO. 509  
RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TARO**

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 509 that requests the Department of Land and Natural Resources to identify and inventory lands qualifying as taro lands, amends Chapter 171 by establishing taro lands as a new class of public land in intensive agricultural use, and prohibiting the reclassification of this land. The Department of Agriculture supports the intent of this measure that seeks to support, protect, and return historic taro lands to use, but defers to the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

We note there may be inconsistencies in the bill as Section 1 references taro lands within the State's public conservation districts, however, in Section 2 of the bill this connection between taro lands within the conservation districts does not seem to be made clear.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.



DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

POST OFFICE BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of**  
**CARTY S. CHANG**  
**Interim Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on**  
**AGRICULTURE**

**Thursday, February 5, 2015**  
**8:30AM**  
**State Capitol, Room 312**

**In consideration of**  
**HOUSE BILL 509**  
**RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TARO**

House Bill 509 proposes to create a classification of agricultural public lands entitled “taro lands”, and appropriates funds to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (“Board”) to create an inventory of lands classified as taro lands. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (“Department”) appreciates the intent of the measure and offers the following comments.**

The measure requires the Board to classify qualifying public lands as fourth class intensive agricultural lands as “taro lands of no particular productivity determination but having cultural, social, economic, and food self-sufficiency value if preserved for wetland taro cultivation.” The measure prohibits a district boundary amendment for lands subject to this classification. In addition, the bill’s pre-amble makes numerous references to public conservation lands including a finding by the taro task force that “between five thousand and seven thousand acres of historic lo‘i lands may be found within **state conservation districts** based on maps developed by the office of Hawaiian affairs and department of land and natural resources during the 2014 legislative session, or less than 3 per cent of all department of land and natural resources lands.”

However, the measure contains no such language limiting taro land classifications to public lands in the Conservation District. Furthermore, the measure does not require that taro cultivation is feasible on classified taro lands. The Department respectfully suggests that the measure be amended to require that public lands classified as qualifying taro lands are: 1) Limited to lands in the Conservation District, and 2) Determined to be of a productivity level making taro cultivation feasible.

**CARTY S. CHANG**  
INTERIM CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**DANIEL S. QUINN**  
INTERIM FIRST DEPUTY

**W. ROY HARDY**  
ACTING 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  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

**COUNTY COUNCIL**

Mel Rapozo, Chair  
Ross Kagawa, Vice Chair  
Mason K. Chock  
Gary L. Hooser  
Arryl Kaneshiro  
KipuKai Kualii  
JoAnn A. Yukimura



**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK**

Ricky Watanabe, County Clerk  
Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, Deputy County Clerk

Telephone (808) 241-4188  
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**Council Services Division**  
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209  
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766

February 3, 2015

**TESTIMONY OF MASON K. CHOCK**  
**COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**ON**  
**HB 509, RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TARO**  
House Committee on Agriculture  
Thursday, February 5, 2015  
8:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 312

Dear Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 509, Relating to the Protection of Taro. My testimony is submitted in my capacity as an individual Councilmember of the Kaua'i County Council.

HB 509 creates a classification of agricultural public lands entitled "taro lands," and appropriates funds to the Board of Land and Natural Resources to create an inventory of lands classified as taro lands. Taro plays a critical role in food security for the State, and is the most culturally significant food plant in Hawai'i. Taro is also one of Hawai'i's highest yielding staple starch food crops, producing between 10,000 and 30,000 pounds per acre per annum under current wetland cultivation practices, and the demand for raw taro is expected to grow as we move towards greater local food self-sufficiency. The Taro Task Force, established under Act 211, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2008, recommended greater protections for wetland taro lands (*lo'i*) in its 2010 and 2014 reports to the Legislature as they found "no logical reason why we should continue to import any type of taro to meet local needs." The task force has also documented a strong and growing desire among Hawai'i's younger generation of farmers, potential farmers, and community groups to plant *kalo* and return to the *lo'i* on each island to grow food, care for their families, create places of education and renewal, and to perpetuate Hawaiian culture. Improved protections for wetland taro lands (*lo'i kalo*) and ancient wetland agricultural structures on undeveloped State-owned or -acquired conservation lands is an important factor towards ensuring Hawai'i's long-term future food security and well-being, as well as for improving taro and supporting taro farmer success.

Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committee  
RE: HB 509, Relating to the Protection of Taro  
February 3, 2015  
Page 2

For the reasons stated above, I strongly encourage the House Committee on Agriculture to support this measure. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mason K. Chock', with a stylized, overlapping loop at the end.

MASON K. CHOCK  
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AO:aa

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 10:15 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: stacy.crivello@mauicounty.us  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b>                  | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Councilmember Stacy<br>Helm Crivello | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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**Testimony of  
TARO SECURITY AND PURITY TASK FORCE**

**MARK ALAPAKI LUKE  
Chair**

**Before the House Committee on  
AGRICULTURE**

**Thursday, February 5, 2015, 8:30PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 312**

**In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 509  
RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TARO**

House Bill 774 creates a definition of “taro lands” as wetland taro lands in production prior to statehood. The bill also adds a fourth class taro lands to the list of classes of intensive agricultural use lands the Department of Land and Natural Resources under HRS171-10. The bill eliminates the need for a district boundary amendment for lands designated as fourth-class taro lands. Finally, the bill asks for an appropriation of funds to the Board of Land and Natural Resources to create an inventory of lands classified as taro lands. **The Taro Security and Purity Task Force strongly supports this bill.**

The Taro Security and Purity Task Force was created by the legislature under Act 211 in 2008 specifically to guide policy and research related to taro and taro farming, as well as to support the vitality, economic viability and perpetuation of taro and taro farming in the state. In bringing this bill to the legislature we are fulfilling a portion of the kuleana that this body was tasked with under Act 211.

The Task Force’s 2010 report to the legislature was the result of a yearlong community consultation and included 89 recommendations across seven key issues. Legislators received an update on task force progress in relation to the recommendations of that report at the start of the 2014 legislative session. Access to affordable lands to grow taro was of significant importance to young taro growers and organizations looking to create resilient options for food security in their communities as well as mentoring programs that develop new farmers. This represents a different sector than that of large acreage commercial taro growers. *Taro plays a significant role in addressing the need for staple starch production in Hawai‘i at a time when we are dependent on 85 percent of our food imported from outside Hawai‘i.*

The task force has worked closely with the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture over the past three years to refine the language of HB509 and address concerns relating to the broadness of applicability of the proposed legislation. HRS171 is specific to Public Lands. *This bill does not prevent or inhibit a private landowner from the sale or development of their private property to a private buyer, nor does it impact existing developed state-owned properties.*

Contact: Emily Kandagawa, Taro Task Force Coordinator (808) 754-7395 or [tsptfhi@gmail.com](mailto:tsptfhi@gmail.com)

*The bill creates a fourth class of taro lands specifically and only for undeveloped, unencumbered wetland taro growing systems on state (public) lands. These sites represent important traditional agricultural resources and features, centers for cultural practice, and places of tremendous food productivity. They are typically small in size, with clay soils prone to flooding, and fall within allowable uses of Conservation and Agriculture zones on public lands under HRS13-5. While taro lands have the potential to be designated as important agricultural lands (IAL), HRS 205-49.3 explicitly excludes “lands held in the conservation district” from the process of designation and adoption of IAL maps by the Land Use Commission.*

The task force finds that existing commercial and subsistence wetland taro farms are approximately 500-600 acres, less than one percent of all lands in agriculture. An estimated 30,000 acres of taro lands are needed to grow sufficient taro to feed Hawai‘i’s 1.3 million people, as just one portion of a basic set of starch crops necessary for residents’ wellbeing over the course of a single year. The state imports an estimated 2 million pounds of taro from other countries annually, to supplement the 4 million pounds grown in the islands, placing Hawaii and taro growers at high risk from invasive pests and pathogens not currently found within the state. The gap between existing and projected acreage, the narrow range of characteristics required for wetland taro production, the rapid loss of such lands to other uses in the private sector, and the rising cost of land and leases in the private sector necessitates the protection of such sites on public lands.

The Island of O‘ahu is dependent on the neighbor islands as its source of raw taro in the production of poi. An estimated 30 acres of commercial taro is currently recorded for an island with a population of almost 1 million residents. In the event of environmental disasters, such as floods or hurricanes on Kaua‘i, or earthquakes that disrupt large portions of O‘ahu, the island will suffer from extreme taro and poi shortages. Even the lowest estimates for sea level rise indicate that lowland areas like Hanalei, Kaua‘i, Ke‘anae-Wailuanui, Maui, Hālawā, Moloka‘i and Waipi‘o, Hawai‘i Island will be inundated with brackish water unsuitable for kalo production. The road to districts such as the taro-producing region of Windward, O‘ahu will be cut off from Honolulu. Having mauka wetland taro sites in each conservation district protected now for cultivation in the future will help ensure future food security in the midst of climate change. *Adoption of HB509 represents a foresighted and critical first step by the legislature in sea-level rise planning for our most vulnerable food-producing lands.*

There is a growing interest in taro farming, as well as the traditional Hawaiian taro cultivars, as indicated by the more than 200 signatures gathered by the taro task force from potential new farmers, and the distribution of almost a million huli (taro planting stock) of 40 traditional taro varieties since 2013. Many of these varieties are best suited to mid-elevation, cooler lo‘i sites that are found on Conservation zoned lands under DLNR jurisdiction. With additional growth in the demand for high-quality raw taro, particularly the hand-pounding pa‘i ‘ai market, along with value-added taro products is evidence of an untapped economic potential that this diversifying taro industry represents and is in need of support. *The passage of HB509 will create opportunities for small-scale and subsistence farmers to earn a living growing kalo and contribute to the health and well-*

Contact: Emily Kandagawa, Taro Task Force Coordinator (808) 754-7395 or [tsptfhi@gmail.com](mailto:tsptfhi@gmail.com)

*being of their communities.*

In addition, the task force notes that lo'i kalo retains wetland soil characteristics, whether they are active or have long been fallowed. The physical geographic character of such sites is a primary indicator for existing flooding and future flood potential. Functioning taro lands are known to assist in the absorption and control of floodwaters as well as runoff. The high costs of flood mitigation for the state and all counties are well documented. This includes where groundwater levels rise quickly and persistently in lowland areas, as the State and County have learned in such areas as the Mapunapuna industrial district, or where topography indicates locations are collection points for upstream surface water flows such as Mānoa, Pālolo, Kuli'ou'ou, and Punalu'u – all former lo'i kalo lands. The instability of wetland clay soils translates to increased costs and higher risks for long-term structural integrity. *HB509 provides state agencies with a measure of liability protection by prohibiting the development of such lands for other purposes.*

HB509 is prudent in relieving the State and the Counties of the expense and staff time involved in the boundary amendment process under HRS-171, where fourth-class taro lands designations are applied. It prevents abuse of the application of this new class by requiring that fourth-class lands be specified for wetland taro production. The DLNR retains authority over district boundaries for Conservation zoned lands (Chpt183C).

The task force agrees with the DLNR that existing rules may be sufficient to support the changes in statute created by these amendments. We note that suggestions in the previous legislative session to require attachment of a list of sites to the proposed statute would 1) require immense resources on the part of DLNR; 2) require DLNR to come before the legislature every year to add hundreds of sites to the statute as survey work progresses, a process that would negatively impact staff time and duties already stretched thin by budget cuts, as well as lengthening the proposed statute to the extreme; and 3) fails to recognize that these taro sites are located primarily within state Conservation lands, a zoning category for which DLNR has agency jurisdiction to define use through the HAR process.

We encourage full support from House committee members to steward this bill forward as a proactive measure in support of family farms and food security in Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui loa



Mark Alapaki Luke, Chair  
Taro Security and Purity Task Force



From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 11:04 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: legechair@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b>            | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Simon Russell       | Hawaii Farmers Union<br>United | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: Aloha Kakou, Mahalo for hearing this important piece of legislation. We the HFUU feel that importing taro to Hawaii threatens not only local markets, but has an additional threat of possibly introducing invasive species into our Kalo fields. Let's protect the Kalo lands please. Mahalo, e hana me ka ha'aha'a , Simon Russell Hawaii Farmers Union United Vice President and Legislative Committee Chairman

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*bringing severely degraded lands back...to places of ecological health and abundance*



## TESTIMONY

**HB509 Relating to the Protection of Taro**  
before the House Committee on Agriculture  
Thursday, 5 February 2015, Rm 312 8:30AM

### *Board of Directors*

Ana Zir, President

Michelle Cockett, VP

Deborah Ward, Secretary

Juenlee Brown, Treasurer

### *Project Coordinator*

Penny Levin

Aloha Honorable Chair and Committee Members;

E kūpaku ka 'āina – the Hawai'i Land Restoration Institute (EKKA) is in strong support of SB774.

EKKA is a Maui-based, registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is *bringing severely degraded lands back to places of ecological health and abundance*. We are dedicated to fostering an economy of abundance through the critical business of land restoration and the art of traditional cultural practice. We do so by assisting agencies, organizations, landowners and communities to develop practical skills and affordable strategies for degraded lands and native ecosystems recovery and agriculture fit to the land - because if the 'āina is not well, neither are we.

Along with habitat restoration, EKKA has been engaged in taro lands revitalization projects and the recovery of the Hawaiian kalo varieties in partnership with many individuals and organizations since its formation in 2004. During the course of our work, we have given away thousands of huli to new taro farmers and families ready to grow kalo on a broader scale than their backyards. We have also observed the stone walls, terraces and 'auwai of numerous ancient lo'i kalo sites still present on state lands throughout the islands, particularly on the Island of Maui; many well-suited to rehabilitation.

In the last several years, we have provided mentorship for interns, students and individuals whose interest is in learning how to grow kalo, from the building of lo'i to caring for the soil, from planting to harvest to plate. Our challenge has been to connect these future growers to affordable lands where they can begin their own practice as new farmers. In the last two years, at least a dozen individuals and families have become successful members of the taro farming community in Maui; most under the age of 35, half the age of the average farmer in Hawai'i.

House bill 509 provides the next generation with the opportunity to grow taro in the communities they live by creating a fourth class of agricultural land use specifically for wetland taro lands found within the jurisdiction of the state public lands. Based on our own observations, historic record, and the modeling of Ladefoged and Gon (2009, 2010), we note the total acreage of wetland taro lands that might be found on public lands will likely remain small, between 5-7,000 acres. A significant number of these sites are found in mid-elevation uplands, dominated by invasive species and zoned as Conservation or Forest Reserve. As

the loss of ancient lo'i kalo increases on private lands, it is essential that these rare sites retain their fourth class taro lands status.

As the first, and most intensely productive, agricultural crop in Hawai'i, kalo supported a thriving population. In the late 1800's, and well after significant declines in cultivation had occurred, wetland taro lands were still estimated at 30,000 acres and described as some of the richest food producing lands in the islands. This is not much different than a predicted need for taro lands as part of statewide food security efforts, today. Yet, we currently farm just 1.7 percent of the acreage necessary to fulfill those needs.

Our dependence on imported foods (85%), including 30 percent of taro consumed in the state, demands that we consider the implications of this lack of food security in the face of events that might sever our import streams, interisland and intra-island food distribution networks. It can happen in an instant. An earthquake, hurricane, tsunami or an act of war could cut our line. At this level, the issue of protecting taro lands becomes one of homeland security and disaster planning. We urge the legislature to actively support the necessary steps that will increase our food security and capacity to create local food abundance.

Global warming is a second and undeniable factor in future food security planning in Hawai'i. Even at the lowest projected levels (1-2 meters), sea-level rise will have significant impact on our most vulnerable low-land taro growing places. We are beginning to plan for climate change impacts in conservation but not in agriculture, nor for the continuity of cultural practice. This bill provides us with a collective opportunity to implement pro-active solutions to ecological changes we know are coming.

For quite some time, we have been making decisions based on old data sets and industry models, conventional practices, and what a retiring generation of farmers and legislators believed was the trend in agriculture. The landscape is shifting from large farms to small, to a growing generation of subsistence farmers concerned with family-based and local food security, with Hawaiian traditions calling thousands of students back to the lo'i. It is no longer our choice. Our young farmers, our keiki and mo'opuna are telling us to preserve these lands for them for their future.

We encourage the members of the Committee on Agriculture to vote YES on HB509!

Mahalo,



Penny Levin  
Project Coordinator

onishi3 - Timothy

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 2:42 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: peter.sullenberger@gmail.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Peter Sullenberger  | Three Roads Farm    | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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onishi3 - Timothy

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 9:25 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: mealaaloha@aol.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Daniel Bishop       | Individual          | Support                   | Yes                       |

Comments: In strong support

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onishi3 - Timothy

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 5:39 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: kuau77@gmail.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| D Brothers          | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 10:47 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: kiloanui@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Leonard Hall        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: I am a farmer and looking into saving my Native Hawaiian culture by supporting this bill to help and preserve what is left of my Hawaiian rights as a lineal descendent of my native people, and rightful Hawaiian government. I don't need to vote, I just want people to here our voices. I am a Native Hawaiian subject. Mahalo.

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onishi3 - Timothy

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 12:22 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: ihemphi@live.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Denise Key          | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 2:36 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: wkenkoike@hotmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| W. Ken Koike        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: I am in definite SUPPORT of this bill! As written in the report titled, "INCREASED FOOD SECURITY AND FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY" a State Strategic/Functional Plan prepared in accordance with HRS Chapter 226, the Hawaii State Plan and the Hawaii Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy by the Office of Planning, Hawaii Dept. of Business Economic Development & Tourism, in cooperation with the Hawaii Dept. of Agriculture and prepared under an Award from the U.S. Dept. of Commerce Economic Development Administration on Oct. 2012, Section VI: Objectives, Policies and Actions, page 23 states: "Objective: Increase Production of Locally Grown Foods;" [which includes taro and taro leaf] and "Policy: Provide Suitable Public Lands at Reasonable Cost and with Long-Term Tenure for Commercial Agricultural Purposes." [which would include wetland and dryland taro cultivation]; page 24 states: "Action: Complete the Transfer of Lands from DLNR to DOA under the Non-Agricultural Parks Program and Actively Manage these Lands [such as the 300+ acres of unrestored wetland taro terraces on Mt. Ka'ala under DLNR jurisdiction] and "Action: Review and Comment on Land Use Planning and Permitting Related Documents to Ensure the Availability of Agriculturally Suitable Lands and Promote Diversified Agriculture" [of which taro, pa'i'ai, poi and taro leaf production should become a larger part of] and "Policy: Maintain and Repair State Agriculture Irrigation Systems" [of which the wetland fields, canals, inlets and outlets to the streams are a significant part in need of restoration so it can be established that by doing so will increase the rate of recharge of the aquifer and therefore increase the total amount available in the water table.] Please move us one step closer to accomplishing food self-sufficiency for Oahu, Hawaii's greatest challenge!

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onishi3 - Timothy

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 10:31 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: sharedpleasures@hawaii.rr.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| vicki levin         | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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onishi3 - Timothy

---

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 6:54 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: MSMatson@Hawaii.rr.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Michelle Matson     | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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## Support for HB509

Aloha,

I am in support of HB509 which would create a classification of agricultural public lands entitled "taro lands". HB509 would appropriate funds to the board of land and natural resources to create an inventory of lands classified as taro lands.

Taro production lands need to be protected from unhealthy practices. Taro is culturally significant to Hawaii and should be given the respect it deserves from outside harmful influences. Creating "taro lands" will help provide additional protection.

Mahalo,

Donna Mitts  
PO Box 344  
Pa'auilo, HI 96776

onishi3 - Timothy

---

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Monday, February 02, 2015 11:55 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: autumnness@yahoo.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/2/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| autumn ness         | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 10:59 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: molivit@yahoo.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Isabelle Olivit     | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 10:39 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: mpahukoa@gmail.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mary Ann Pahukoa    | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 11:50 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: rittew@hotmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Walter Ritte        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: Strong support. Taro is an answer to our food security problem.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 12:04 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: ohialani@gmail.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Katie Romanchuk     | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 2:11 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: mpshaw10@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mark Shaw           | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: Please pass this important bill to facilitate greater production of this valuable food for all of Hawaii. Mahalo Mark

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 12:06 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: kellensmith@placeshawaii.org  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Kellen Smith        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: Aloha, I support the preservation and cultivation of taro lands for the purpose of cultural reverence and food security. Please allow the people of Hawai'i to farm their food staple on a large scale once again. Mahalo. Kellen Smith

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 3:34 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: randy.umetsu@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Randy Umetsu        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: I am writing in strong support of HB509. We must do everything possible to protect taro lands for Hawaii's food security, the perpetuation of our cultural roots, and the preservation of Hawaii's natural environment. We can only benefit by protecting these lands for the current and future generations.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 10:40 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: kauaihale@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Louisa Wooton       | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: Yes, Yes, and Yes to HB509.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 6:24 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: ealoi@hawaii.edu  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Edward Aloii        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 3:12 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: ambrosenterprises@yahoo.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b>   | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jacqueline S. Ambrose | Individual          | Comments Only             | No                        |

Comments: I support HB509

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 10:56 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: alikamaui@hotmail.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Alika Atay          | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 11:34 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: mauileab@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Gaylene L Barron    | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: Passing this bill will insure that the existing taro lands, along with lands that were once taro lands, be protected. These resources will continue its productivity, for the much needed food staple, benefiting the future of Hawaii, in clean water and organic lands, and increased food production. Mahalo.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 8:58 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: begoniabarry@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Barbara Barry       | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: I support this measure to improve Food Security on the islands. I hope you do the same.  
Mahalo, Ms. Barbara Barry

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 7:54 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: mauifaith@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Faith Ewbank        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: I strongly SUPPORT HB 509 and represent several young lineage taro farmers that can write not yet. Please consider my testimony as a Grandmother that of the quantity of five. Please note mothers that also testify represent a minimum of three. Speaking for the next generation, Please SUPPORT HB 509. Thank you for your time and attention, Faith Ewbank

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 10:09 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: foodsovereignty@gmail.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mitsuko Hayakawa    | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 8:50 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: wrokinslow@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| R. Kinslow          | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: Support this bill. Comment: "The board of land and natural resources, in conjunction with the taro security and purity task force, may create an inventory under chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, identifying lands classified as fourth class taro lands." should read, The board of land and natural resources, in conjunction with the taro security and purity task force, SHALL create an inventory under chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, identifying lands classified as fourth class taro lands.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 4:25 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: lynhowe1946@yahoo.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lyn Howe            | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 8:46 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: hokuokekai50@msn.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mary Lacques        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB509 because I feel it is vitally important that the Department of Land and Natural Resources create a fourth class of state agricultural land specifically for the protection of taro lands which would streamline the leasing process for present and future generations of taro farmers. Knowing that Hawaii was food self sufficient ten decades ago, I find it ludicrous that Hawaii imports fifty percent of the taro that is consumed today. Increasing food self sufficiency, especially with a crop that ensures high productivity and carries the incomparable cultural significance as taro, is a key component of the Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan which defines sustainability as: respecting the culture, character, beauty and history of Hawaiian communities; striking a balance among economic, social and community and environmental priorities and meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. I am not a farmer but am a strong supporter of farmers that are dedicated to growing the food that sustains us in such geographically and politically challenging conditions. Mahalo for supporting HB509 which will safeguard and benefit future generations.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 8:11 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: pennysfh@hawaii.rr.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| George Kahumoku     | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: Aloha Please submit for me. Thx GK Testimony for HB# 509 To whom this may concern: Aloha from Kahakuloa Maui 2-4-15 My name is George Kahumoku Jr. Besides being a musician & a retired School teacher from Lahainaluna HS where I taught for over 20 years and the the retired Director of the UHMC Institute of Hawaiian Music where I taught for over 6 years, I come from a family of Native Planters who have been planting Kalo for over 2000 years. I come from Kealia S Kona where we plant Kalo Mala or dry land style. I practice Mala style Farming on my current farm at the Cliffs of Kahakuloa where I now live where we have no stream running through our land. If this bill passes , it will reserve our Kalo lo'i lands around our water sources such as Kahakuloa, Waihee , Waiehu, & Waikapu, Oluwalu Honokowai , Ukumehame , Kauaula, Honokohau, and many other water sources located on the West Maui mountains as well as Lo'i lands across the State of Hawaii . I have been a mentor for many of the Haumana & students who are the next generation interested in Kalo Lo'i farming. Another reason for saving our Kalo lands is because the Kalo is part of our Hawaiian Geneology . Our Hawaiian words for family , "Ohana," come from the word "Oha" or young off shoots of the Kalo plant and "Na" meaning many young off shoots of the "Na Makua," the Hawaiian word for parents. The young Kalo plants are also called "Keiki" , the Hawaiian word for Children, & the Kalo that has been consumed is our "Na Kupuna" or the Hawaiian word for our Grandparents. Please help us to preserve our Hawaiian Geneology and families or Ohana by preserving our Kalo Lo'i lands. On our current farm at the Cliffs at Kahakuloa ,we are blessed to grow over 80 varieties of Kalo on our aina or land. Though I do sell a percentage of my Kalo corms leaves & stems towards commercial sales though "Local Harvest "our farm broker located in Napili and Kahului ( we also sell Kapoho Sunrise Non GMO papaya, Hawaiian herbal teas, local Herbs, celery, Okinawan . Korean, and New Zealand Spinach , over 40 varieties of Bananas , 30 varieties of Sweet Potatoe, 6 varieties of breadfruit, 35 varieties of citrus , goats, sheep , cattle, ducks & chickens, eggs ) We grow most of our Kalo to share with family & friends for Pa'ina celebrations or rights of passage events such as 1 year baby party, graduations , weddings, birthdays, house or canoe warmings, funerals & 1 year after death celebrations. I feel that it is more important to reserve these Lo'i lands for subsistence farming and Pa'ina celebrations for our families & generations yet unborn. Please help us preserve these lo'i lands for our future generations. To me every Hawaiian Family should be growing their own kalo to provide for their family and their friends. It is the Hawaiian thing to do, Call or email me if you have any questions regarding our interest in reserving our Lo'i lands for Kalo farming . Mahalo Nui loa George Kahumoku Jr. Hawaiian Native Planter for over 63 years, Mentor, retired teacher, and musician C: 808-280-9948 E: Georgekahumoku@me.com Mail: POB 12804 Lahaina Hi 96761 Farm



Address: 555 Kaukini loop The Clifts of Kahakuloa Ag Subdivision Wailuku Hi 96793

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 8:23 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: debbie.leejackson@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Debbie Lee-Jackson  | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: As a decendant of several generations of taro farmers, and as a taro farmer myself, I know this practice is crucial to provide physical, mental and cultural nourishment. New and young taro farmers should not have to compete with other land uses. I support this bill. Please support this bill.

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onishi3 - Timothy

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 8:29 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: zenkekoa@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Zen Powers          | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: Aloha 'āina!

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onishi3 - Timothy

---

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 9:16 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: 2kalkout@gmail.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Kenneth A Likotu    | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 5:58 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: sethraabe@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Seth Raabe          | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: Aloha Honorable Representatives, I am 33 years old and live in East Maui with my wife, who is expecting our first child very soon. I work daily with young local boys at our community farm in Hana. They have an intense desire to connect with their Hawaiian culture through agriculture, including traditional methods and crops like kalo. This bill will recognize taro lands as something distinct and valuable, and will in turn create opportunities for local boys to become local farmers. Please vote for this bill. Mahalo

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 8:52 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: sunnysavage@gmail.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sunny Savage-Luskin | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 9:55 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: makena42@gmail.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Courtney Turner     | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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Carl I. Evensen  
45-744 Ko St.  
Kaneohe, Hi. 96744

## LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

### Personal Testimony Presented before the House Committee on Agriculture

#### **HB 509 RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TARO**

*Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Onishi, and Committee Members*

My name is Carl Evensen and I serve as the Interim Director of Lyon Arboretum, a botanic garden and research unit of the University of Hawaii. I am pleased to provide personal testimony **in support of HB 509**. This testimony does not represent the position of the University of Hawaii or Lyon Arboretum. I am a crop and soil scientist by training and have a special interest in the cultivation of taro. I also serve as a member of the Hawaii Taro Security and Purity Task Force and my testimony supports the position of this Task Force.

The purpose of HB 509 is to establish in the statutes pertaining to the use of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources public lands a fourth class of intensive agriculture use designation to protect existing and historic wetland taro lands within public conservation districts. HB 509 also establishes a statutory definition of taro lands as lands in wetland taro cultivation prior to statehood, or any traditional taro lands that retain historic structural evidence of *lo'i kalo*, such as *'auwai* irrigation ditches, terraces or walls.

Wetland taro lands have very special characteristics, including rich soils which can retain impounded water and have position in the landscape where irrigation can be provided by gravity flow of water from streams and springs. These lands were among the most productive and valuable agricultural lands in ancient Hawaiian times, but have been treated as wastelands in modern times due to their propensity for flooding. This characteristic of being prone to flooding makes these lands unsuitable for other uses, such as residential or commercial development. Conversely, the protection and future use of these lands for *lo'i kalo* would provide many benefits such as increased food production, cultural preservation, and a wide variety of ecosystem services like wetland habitat, flood mitigation, and water quality improvement.

HB 509 acknowledges the value and helps to preserve these culturally and environmentally important lands for potential use by future generations. Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to support this important bill.



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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 10:21 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: brimohi@msn.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Brian Emmons        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 12:36 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: afkauaigr1086@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ann M. Fontes       | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: I support this bill. It is important to protect our wetlands for the production of taro. Not enough is being produced at present. Growing enough locally will reduce the risk of introducing new taro pests and disease introductions from raw taro imports. Thank you for the opportunity of sharing my views.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 11:17 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: kiele.aloha@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Keiko Gonzalez      | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: Poi (made from the root of the kalo/taro plant) is known to have many health benefits. The New York Times reports, "It is a superfood, for one thing: a fat-free, high-fiber, low-sodium, gluten-free source of vitamin B, calcium and phosphorus." Researchers believe it has potential use as a probiotic (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1482315/>). It was the staple of our people and sustained a healthy race. And Hawai'i's streams and land are perfect for growing it. Therefore, I support this bill and ask that you do the same.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 2:34 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: olindaorganicfarm@hawaiiantel.net  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jeff Lind           | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 12:25 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: aa44ce7e@opayq.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| James Land          | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 2:32 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: caveguy@hawaiiantel.net  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lars Lind           | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 2:40 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: mauimartha@hawaiiantel.net  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Martha Lind         | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: Please protect our taro lands and preserve Hawaii's history and culture.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 1:43 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: tammylynn.ross@yahoo.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Tammy Lynn Ross     | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 10:46 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: tulsi@mauiishome.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Tulsi               | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Thursday, February 05, 2015 5:57 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: 79dd984d@opayq.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

Follow Up Flag: Follow up  
Flag Status: Completed

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/5/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| sophia bowart       | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 10:55 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: Sylvia@Kolealea.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sylvia Cenzano      | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 4:11 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: leimomikekina@gmail.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Leimomi Dierks      | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 6:10 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: waioli2@hawaiiantel.net  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| chris kobayashi     | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: Aloha to Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Onishi and members of the AGR committee, I am a commercial taro farmer in Hanalei and i strongly support HB509. I know of many young farmers who want and need lo`i to grow kalo. I also know multicultural families who would malama lo`i for their families and their community but don't have access to the land or water. For these and other reasons like food security and sea level rise, this bill will help to protect and perpetuate kalo and the culture. Mahalo for your support!

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 6:30 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: klasell1@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Katharine Lasell    | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: Taro is an essential member of the Hawaiian family and as such it's cultivation should be encouraged and protected by the state. This is a bill that supports culture, heritage and community and I strongly support it.!

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 6:23 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: dm1aloha@gmail.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Donna Maltz         | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments: Strongly Support!

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 9:23 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: permaculturejourney@gmail.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Michael Menchetti   | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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**HB509**  
**RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TARO**  
House Committee on Agriculture

February 5, 2015

8:30 a.m.

Room 312

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment will recommend to the Board of Trustees a position of COMMENT on HB509, which seeks to classify and protect undeveloped, historic “taro lands” and infrastructure from land use district boundary amendments that would otherwise facilitate their destruction.

The traditional mo’olelo of Wākea and Papahānaumoku explains that the first kalo plant, Hāloanakalaukapalili, is the elder brother of Native Hawaiians. As the elder sibling, Hāloa provides sustenance to Native Hawaiians and, in return, we as the younger siblings care for Hāloa by ensuring that kalo flourishes. The bond that connects Native Hawaiians to kalo remains a sacred one, and it is our kuleana to preserve it. As the plant that has sustained the people of Hawai’i since time immemorial, kalo is not only integral to the identity of Native Hawaiians, but also to the State of Hawai’i as a whole.

The Legislature created the Taro Security and Purity Task Force (Taro Task Force) to explore ways to strengthen state policy to restore our once-flourishing kalo economy. Act 211, Reg. Sess. 2008. In their 2010 report to the legislature, the Taro Task Force’s primary recommendation was for the state to take an active role in remedying the severe reduction in the amount of and access to kalo-growing lands. **The Taro Task Force found that rapid development in the last 20 years has led to a catastrophic loss of lands with the unique set of natural conditions necessary for kalo growth, and the dismantling of ancient structures most efficient for fostering thriving kalo production.** Recognizing the importance of these lands and structures will help to ensure that they remain available to support our present and future kalo needs, and may facilitate our return to a more traditional, self-sufficient, and sustainable model of local food production.

Much of Hawai’i’s resident population still relies on kalo as a staple starch, and our tourism industry requires a high volume of kalo to create a more authentic cultural imprint upon our visitors. However, Hawai’i imports millions of pounds of kalo every year. **Accordingly, this bill would help to increase our local production of kalo, while improving our state’s food self-sufficiency.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

onishi3 - Timothy

---

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 6:16 PM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: nredfeather@kohalacenter.org  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/4/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Nancy Redfeather    | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Thursday, February 05, 2015 6:30 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: paul.massey@ribg.org  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/5/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b>                                | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Paul Massey         | Regenerations<br>International Botanical<br>Garden | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Thursday, February 05, 2015 12:18 AM  
To: AGRtestimony  
Cc: angelavideotron@gmail.com  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB509 on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM\*

**HB509**

Submitted on: 2/5/2015

Testimony for AGR on Feb 5, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 312

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Angela Breene       | Waihuena Farm       | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

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