

HB823

RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL THEFT.

Establishes a two-year Agricultural Theft Pilot Project in the Department of Agriculture to focus on investigating and prosecuting agricultural theft or agricultural vandalism in the County of Hawaii. Appropriates funds. (HB823 HD1)

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 823, HD 1

A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Sen. Russell E. Ruderman, Chair

Sen. Gil Riviere, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR

Sen. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair

Sen. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 24, 2015, 2:45 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 414

Honorable Chairs Ruderman and Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chairs Riviere and Shimabukuro, and Members of the Committees on Agriculture and Judiciary and Labor, the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Hawai'i submits the following testimony in support of House Bill No. 823, HD 1.

This measure establishes a two-year agricultural theft pilot project to investigate the effectiveness of a dedicated enforcement officer focused specifically on prosecuting agricultural theft and agricultural vandalism in the county of Hawai'i.

Agricultural theft and vandalism in the county of Hawai'i is not only an impediment to running a successful and profitable farming operation, but can also prove harmful to consumers. In 2011, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) halted the importation of all Mexican-sourced papayas into the United States. The FDA found salmonella in about 16% of imported papayas from Mexico and the finding of this human pathogen in papayas caused the FDA to stop the importation of a food-source from the entire country of Mexico. At the time, 65% of all U.S. imported papayas came from Mexico.

Hawai'i county is the breadbasket of the State. Having the ability to identify and track the sources of agricultural products from field to table is crucial in the event a contamination is found to exist. This pilot project would provide an enforcement officer within the county of Hawai'i with the ability to focus on investigating and prosecuting these agricultural issues, as our over-tasked police department does not have the ability to provide a permanent officer to investigate agricultural crimes.

We would have the ability to:

1. Protect our agricultural industry – the economic engine of Hawai‘i county;
2. Ensure our products do not go the way of the Mexican papaya; and
3. Allow our farmers and growers to continue to be world-wide competitors with Hawai‘i-grown products.

This pilot project has the capability to increase the safety and sustainability of our farming and agricultural industry by allowing farmers to focus less on the security of their crops and more on high-quality products and safe farming techniques. By having a committed investigator when crime, vandalism, or contamination of our agricultural products occur, we will be able to act swiftly and decisively to tackle the issue.

The Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Hawai‘i supports the passage of House Bill No. 823, HD 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



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March 24, 2015

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & LABOR

TESTIMONY ON HB 823 HD 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL THEFT

Room 414
2:45 PM

Aloha Chair Ruderman, Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committees:

I am Christopher Manfredi, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFBF 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 interests of our diverse agricultural community.

HFB strongly supports HB 823 HD 1, which would establish a two-year agricultural theft pilot project to work with the county of Hawaii to hire an enforcement officer within the county of Hawaii to focus on investigating and prosecuting agricultural theft.

Agricultural theft and vandalism are persistent problems facing agriculture. Weather, drought, pests, weeds, disease, activists, unstable markets, transportation and labor issues, and a changing climate all contribute to uncertainty for farmers and ranchers. Few businesses face such challenges, yet we are charged with producing food, fiber, fuel and flowers for the 99% of non-farmers. Add in the constant threat and impacts of trespass, theft and vandalism, and it's a wonder farms and ranches remain viable.

In working with our members, HDOA, and law enforcement, we have collectively concluded that a dedicated enforcement officer housed in the county prosecutor's office would be a giant step forward in minimizing agricultural crimes and enhancing public safety. Too often a farmer or rancher has sweated, worried, and worked to the bone to produce a crop, only to wake up one morning to find that an opportunistic criminal has helped himself to the harvest. Farmers and ranchers are fed up with this activity and frankly, deserve better. We understand that law enforcement resources are often prioritized for public health and safety. Is the health, safety and livelihood of a farmer and his family any less important? We think not.

Thank you for passing HB 823 HD 1.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [AGL Testimony](#)
Cc: darakawa@lurf.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB823 on Mar 24, 2015 14:45PM
Date: Monday, March 23, 2015 11:37:53 AM

HB823

Submitted on: 3/23/2015

Testimony for AGL/JDL on Mar 24, 2015 14:45PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Z. Arakawa	Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii	Support	No

Comments: The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii SUPPORTS HB 823, HD1, Relating to Agricultural Theft, which establishes a two-year Agricultural Theft Pilot Project in the Department of Agriculture to focus on investigating and prosecuting agricultural theft or agricultural vandalism in the County of Hawaii; and appropriates funds. (HB 823 HD1)

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB823 on Mar 24, 2015 14:45PM*
Date: Saturday, March 21, 2015 7:34:49 AM

HB823

Submitted on: 3/21/2015

Testimony for AGL/JDL on Mar 24, 2015 14:45PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alan Gottlieb	Hawaii Cattlemen's Council	Support	No

Comments:

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Hawaii Crop Improvement Association

Growing the Future of Worldwide Agriculture in Hawaii

In Strong support of HB 823
Relating to Agricultural Theft

JOINT HEARING

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

March 24, 2015, 2:45 pm in Senate conference room 414

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Aloha Chair Rudderman, Chair Keith-Agaran and members of the Agriculture and Judiciary Committees,

My name is Bennette Misalucha, Executive Director of the Hawaii Crop Improvement Association and we are in full support of the intent of HB 823.

We recognize that there are many challenges that confront today's farmers: weather, pests, soil conditions, among many. Unfortunately, for some, there is also the issue of agricultural theft and vandalism. It is a serious ongoing problem with reports of thefts of crops, machinery and tools, animals and the vandalism of property, fences and gates or equipment.

We have seen these instances particularly on the Big Island with papaya farms indiscriminately victimized. We assert that there needs to be additional focus on this crime since the perpetuation of these acts have increased the cost of production and stymied agriculture.

With the provision for a dedicated enforcement officer for agricultural theft within the prosecuting attorney's office in the County of Hawaii, this bill will definitely be a step in the right direction of seeing justice appropriately served.

We humbly ask for the Committees' support of HB 823.

Mahalo for your kind consideration.

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Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB823 on Mar 24, 2015 14:45PM*
Date: Sunday, March 22, 2015 7:10:48 PM

HB823

Submitted on: 3/22/2015

Testimony for AGL/JDL on Mar 24, 2015 14:45PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
penny levin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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