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February 3, 2014

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON SB 530
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE KAMUELA
VACUUM COOLING PLANT

Room 414
2:45 PM

Aloha Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Riviere, 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 strongly supports SB 530 which appropriates funds for the planning and designing phase II renovations to the Kamuela vacuum cooling plant.

Effective post harvest handling of produce is critical for maintaining product integrity between the farm and markets. Vacuum cooling is a proven effective means to increase the shelf life of wide variety of produce. A centralized facility in conjunction with a consolidation, deconsolidation, inspection, biosecurity facility provides a centralized and efficient service center for produce farmers in the Kamuela region.

The Kamuela Vacuum Cooling Plant is in need of improvements. The plant is decades old and the cooling equipment requires replacement. The Waimea area is the major producer of Hawaii-grown leafy green vegetables and peppers. Improving this facility will enable the continued production and consolidation of agricultural commodities from the Waimea region of the island of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.