

SCR129

Measure Title: ENCOURAGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ADOPT STANDARDS ESTABLISHED BY THE TEA INDUSTRY TO DEFINE GEOGRAPHICAL REGION DESIGNATIONS FOR TEA GROWN IN THE STATE.

Report Title: Department of Agriculture; Tea Industry; Geographical Region Designations

Description:

Companion:

Package: None

Current Referral: WLA, CPH

Introducer(s): GABBARD, ESPERO, RUDERMAN, Kidani, Nishihara, Taniguchi, Wakai

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

SHAN S. TSUTSUI
Lt. Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION,
AND HEALTH**

April 4, 2016
10:15 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 229

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 129
ENCOURAGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ADOPT STANDARDS
ESTABLISHED BY THE TEA INDUSTRY TO DEFINE GEOGRAPHICAL REGION
DESIGNATIONS FOR TEA GROWN IN THE STATE**

Chairperson Baker and Members of the Committee:

Thank for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 129, encouraging the department to adopt standards established by the tea industry to define geographical region designations for tea grown in the state. The department supports the intent and offers comments.

“Geographic indications” are defined by the World Trade Organization (WTO) as originating in the region or locality in that territory where a given quality, reputation or other characteristics of the good is essentially attributable to its geographic origin, such as “Idaho” for potatoes. Geographic indications can be considered as a subset of trademarks. A geographic name alone is not registerable as a trademark. However when used with an acquired distinctiveness it can be registered as a certification mark under the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). The certification mark is used to inform purchasers that the goods meet certain qualifications or standards. Placing of the mark on goods constitutes a certification by someone other than the producer that the prescribed characteristics or qualifications of the certified for those good have been met.

Tea is not currently defined as an agricultural commodity under Chapter 147, Hawaii Revised Statutes. If the intent is to adopt standards to define geographic region, as a certification mark, similar to Hawaii-grown coffee, the department currently does not have the authority to do so.



We applaud the legislature's efforts in assisting the tea industry. The department looks forward in working with the tea industry to achieve this goal.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Cc: soilculture@aol.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR129 on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM
Date: Sunday, April 03, 2016 2:57:42 PM

SCR129

Submitted on: 4/3/2016

Testimony for CPH on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bob Shaffer	Soil Culture Consulting	Support	No

Comments: As an agronomist working with Wine, Coffee and Tea internationally for many decades and seeing the benefits when clearly defined laws protect the identity and origin of farm crops.....i urge you to support fully SCR 129 and the efforts of the Hawaii Tea Society to absolutely and honestly identify and label the origin of Tea grown in Hawaii. Thank you. Aloha Nui

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Tea of the United States
TOTUS

In consideration of:

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION S.C.R NO 129

ENCOURAGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ADOPT
STANDARDS ESTABLISHED BY THE TEA INDUSTRY TO DEFINE
GEOGRAPHICAL REGION DESIGNATIONS FOR TEA GROWN IN THE STATE

To: Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health Committee,

Dear Committee Chair Rosalyn Baker,

On behalf of the TOTUS - Tea Of The United States - Awards, competing tea farms and industry professionals we support Resolution Bill SCR 129.

The 2015 TOTUS Awards was the first national tea competition for US grown tea hosted in Hawaii. Ten states participated and seventy-eight teas were entered, juried by a panel of six international tea industry professionals.

Hawaii took the majority of the TOTUS awards giving rise to the fact that Hawaii has established itself as a leading producer of unique quality products in domestic tea production.

Now that Hawaii grown tea has made great stride in branding the state of Hawaii as a significant contributor in US tea agriculture it is imperative that consumers are assured in identifying genuine Hawaii grown tea with geographic indicators established.

SCR129 will help Hawaii tea growers engaged in international trade and encourage the farming community producing and marketing genuine origin tea. It will provide opportunities to gain public trust supporting local agriculture identified by geographic indicators contributing to the statewide economy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eva Lee

TOTUS Awards Executive Director

Hawaii Tea Farmer

PO Box 362 Volcano, Hawaii USA 96785
www.TOTUS1awards.com

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Cc: Oldhawaiiitea@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR129 on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM
Date: Sunday, April 03, 2016 6:42:51 AM

SCR129

Submitted on: 4/3/2016

Testimony for CPH on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Judy Howard	Old Hawaii Tea Company, LLC	Support	No

Comments: I believe that Hawaii grown tea is unique and very valuable. In my experience, it is worlds apart from and superior to the sort of tea one typically would purchase either in the supermarket or at a restaurant. This fledgling industry may one day be a small but important contributor to the State's economic health, and it should be carefully nurtured and protected for that reason. Respectfully, Judy Howard.

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The Senate
28th Legislature, 2016
State of Hawaii

April 1, 2016

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION S.C.R NO 129

To: Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health Committee,
Dear Committee Chair Rosalyn Baker,

Aloha and mahalo nui loa for your support of Hawaii's tea industry! As a beginning tea farmer in the Hilo area, I want to add my enthusiastic support for SCR No. 129.

This measure will significantly increase the capability of Hawaii tea producers to capitalize on the "Grown in Hawaii" branding advantage to advance their products in national and international markets, and restrict producers in other tea producing areas from unfairly utilizing this advantage in competition with Hawaii-origin tea products.

I urge all legislators to support this important resolution to enhance the growing tea industry in Hawaii.

Aloha,

David MacKenzie
Aloha Food Forest, LLC
PO Box 392
Hilo, HI 96721

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Cc: ian@mlatte.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR129 on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM
Date: Saturday, April 02, 2016 8:51:40 PM
Attachments: [testimonial 2016.txt](#)

SCR129

Submitted on: 4/2/2016

Testimony for CPH on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ian Chun	MATCHA LATTE MEDIA KK	Support	No

Comments: Testimonial in support of a Hawaii tea true origin indicator. As a company based in Japan selling tea, we believe that Hawaii-grown tea has great potential as a premium product in the Japanese market as well as around the world. However, we also see Hawaii-themed teas—inexpensive flavored teas in particular—dominate the market in Hawaii, something which influences the perception of tea from Hawaii among Japanese tourists, and thus the Japanese market in general. A true origin indicator would help to remove confusion from the market and give greater value to Hawaii-grown tea.

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Onomea Tea Company
P.O. Box 28
Papaikou, HI 96781

In consideration of:

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION S.C.R NO 129

To: Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health Committee,

Dear Committee Chair Rosalyn Baker,

Onomea Tea Company supports resolution SCR129.

Whereas Tea has great potential to become an important crop for Hawaii, requiring proper labeling of geographical source is essential to the growth of the industry.

Currently, companies can buy tons of low quality tea that is grown outside of Hawaii, and very cheaply. They can blend it with fruit or fragrance (not necessarily even made in Hawaii), and perhaps throw in a handful of Hawaii Grown Tea in it and then call it 'Hawaiian'. This practice is not only deceitful but it also diminishes both the value and quality of the Hawaii Label.

The Hawaii Tea Industry is only possible because of the advent of 'Specialty Teas', which are higher quality teas than commodity teas. The consumer interest in these higher quality specialty teas is growing every year.

The cost of farming in Hawaii is very high. We cannot compete in the commodity Tea Market because of labor and other costs here which are significantly higher than many other countries where tea is grown. However, Hawaii Teas have been shown to be of superior quality and they fall into the category of Specialty, Higher Quality, Teas. We can get a higher price for Hawaii Tea which allows us to pay for the higher cost of production. Hawaii can compete in the Specialty Tea market.

The only way for the Hawaii Tea Industry to grow is to legislate rules that require true and accurate labeling of where the Tea is grown. At the very least it must be required that if the Hawaii, or Hawaiian, label is on the packaging that the tea is, in fact, grown in Hawaii.

Using 'Hawaii' or 'Hawaiian' on the label adds value in the minds of the consumer to the product. Hawaii tea growers want to encourage this perception by actually producing high quality Tea. If we allow cheaper, 'flavored' teas, to use the Hawaii labels, then this could damage the perception not only for Hawaii Tea, but also for all Hawaii products.

Please support Hawaii Tea Farms and encourage more potential growers to be committed to producing high quality teas. The words Hawaii or Hawaiian on Tea labels should be reserved strictly for Tea that is actually grown in Hawaii.

Above all it is a matter of honesty. The public is never happy about being deceived.

Please support this resolution.

Michael Longo
Onomea Tea Company

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Cc: jacobs@hawaiianisp.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR129 on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM
Date: Saturday, April 02, 2016 11:00:10 AM

SCR129

Submitted on: 4/2/2016

Testimony for CPH on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bob Jacobson	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha I resubmit this previous testimony also. Please vote for SCR129. I am a tea farmer, former president of the Hawaii Tea Society, Retired Hawaii County Councilmember and retired nurse. Helping this fledgling niche industry will allow more people to benefit from the very healthy product Hawaii tea farmers work hard to produce. Giving recognition to our superior tea by designating it Establishing Hawaii Grown labeling and standards will help ensure that tea farmers are not undercut by foreign tea being treated as locally grown. Our unique climate and labor situation dictates that we must produce a better tea than elsewhere or we cannot compete successfully. The local jobs generated by this industry is a clear benefit to the people of this state. Please vote for SCR129. Mahalo, Bob Jacobson

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To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Cc: ctoda@aol.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR129 on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM
Date: Sunday, April 03, 2016 9:18:00 AM

SCR129

Submitted on: 4/3/2016

Testimony for CPH on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cathy Toda	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: I am in support of the SCR129 legislation as an active commercial tea grower on Maui.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Cc: gjrbarr@mac.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SCR129 on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM*
Date: Sunday, April 03, 2016 9:52:24 PM

SCR129

Submitted on: 4/3/2016

Testimony for CPH on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Gary Barr	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Cc: karenmsk8@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR129 on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM
Date: Sunday, April 03, 2016 10:27:50 AM

SCR129

Submitted on: 4/3/2016

Testimony for CPH on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Karen Masaki	Individual	Support	No

Comments: In consideration of: SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION S.C.R NO 129 To: Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health Committee Dear Committee Chair Baker and Committee Members: I am an amateur tea grower living in Volcano on Hawaii Island. The growing sophistication and knowledge-base of the Hawaii tea industry has resulted in a product of high quality and increasing renown. Protection for this niche industry would ensure that Hawaii-grown tea will be an important and meaningful designation of quality.

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Montréal March 28th, 2016.

To:

Hawaii State Legislature
RESOLUTION BILL SCR 129

ENCOURAGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ADOPT STANDARDS ESTABLISHED BY THE TEA INDUSTRY TO DEFINE GEOGRAPHICAL REGION DESIGNATIONS FOR TEA GROWN IN THE STATE.

With the market for speciality teas exploding around the World the market for new terroir specific teas has never been so strong or relevant. Tea stores, tea houses and online catalogues around the world will be needing good examples of teas from every growing region. This is a new scenario that did not exist 10 or even 5 years ago.

Hawaii's naturally rich soils, exceptional weather conditions, lack of pests and hours of sunshine are could not be a more ideal scenario. Add to that a league of small scale passionate tea farmers with an artisanal approach perfect for the quality of the speciality market place, everything is in place for the right things to happen.

Having been a taster in the TOTUS Awards last November, after 25 years in the business, I can say without hesitation that potential is not the question here. Tapping into that potential, nurturing and nourishing it with the necessary training and incentives is essential at this crucial moment in this burgeoning industry's development. To retain the inertia of initial enthusiasm, create a structure for growth and the stability of the product.

Aside from educational programs, association and incentives the other concern will be the creation of a Hawaii Grown brand to promote the product so that it becomes associated with superior quality and is not confused with inferior products of Hawaii brand that have little or no connection to the islands.

Kevin Gascoyne:

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Cc: freemanp001@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR129 on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM
Date: Friday, April 01, 2016 3:44:05 PM

SCR129

Submitted on: 4/1/2016

Testimony for CPH on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Paul Freeman	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I fully support the establishment of standards to assist our tea farmers.
Thank you.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Cc: Rnunally@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR129 on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM
Date: Sunday, April 03, 2016 9:15:01 AM

SCR129

Submitted on: 4/3/2016

Testimony for CPH on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Robert Nunally	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am writing to support legislation to have tea, camellia sinensis/assamica as a recognized unique crop to Hawaii and as such support legislation that will restrict any other tea based product that has anything other than 100% Hawaii grown tea as an ingredient be restricted from labeling that might suggest Hawaii grown tea. Any tea that does not contain 100% Hawaii grown tea may not have Hawaii or Hawaiian as part of its company name or ingredient list.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [CPH Testimony](#)
Cc: dylanarm@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SCR129 on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM*
Date: Saturday, April 02, 2016 9:59:33 PM

SCR129

Submitted on: 4/2/2016

Testimony for CPH on Apr 4, 2016 10:15AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dylan Armstrong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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