

**SCR 129**

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 WATER, LAND, AND AGRICULTURE**

March 28, 2016  
3:00 P.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

**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 Gabbard 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.



P.O. Box 10644, Hilo, HI 96720 • [info@hawaiiteasociety.org](mailto:info@hawaiiteasociety.org)

March 26, 2016

Dear Senator Gabbard,

As President of the Hawaii Tea Society I would like to voice the support of your resolution SCR129. This resolution is very much aligned with HTS mission of supporting Hawaii Grown Tea and Hawaii tea farmers.

SCR129 has the full support of our 389 members and will be a key step in moving the expanding Hawaii tea industry forward.

Thank you for your support of the Hawaii tea industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Wood", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Alex Wood

President Hawaii Tea Society

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

Dear Hawaii State Water, Land, and Agriculture Committee,

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 by the Hawaii Department of Agriculture utilizing tea industry standards.

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](http://www.TOTUS1awards.com)

Hon. Senator Mike Gabbard, et al  
The Senate  
28<sup>th</sup> Legislature, 2016  
State of Hawaii

March 23, 2016

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

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**SCR129**

Submitted on: 3/26/2016

Testimony for WLA on Mar 28, 2016 15:00PM in Conference Room 224

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Ian Chun	MATCHA LATTE MEDIA KK	Comments Only	No

Comments: As the CEO of a tea company selling worldwide (and originally from Hawaii), I am fully in support of this measure. Tea leaves grown and produced in Hawaii need to be distinguished from teas that are themed using the image, culture, etc. of Hawaii. Such distinction will continue to allow "Hawaii-themed" teas to flourish, while encouraging the tea agriculture industry in Hawaii, and further enhancing the value of tea leaves grown in Hawaii.

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Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR129 on Mar 28, 2016 15:00PM  
Date: Sunday, March 27, 2016 11:54:52 AM

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## **SCR129**

Submitted on: 3/27/2016

Testimony for WLA on Mar 28, 2016 15:00PM in Conference Room 224

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Michael W. Longo	Onomea Tea Company	Support	No

Comments: Onomea Tea Company supports resolution SCR129. Tea could be an important crop for Hawaii and requiring proper labeling of geographical source is essential to the growth of the industry here. 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 even made in Hawaii), and maybe even throw in a handful of Hawaii Grown Tea 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 of higher quality 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 proven, over and over, to fall into the category of Specialty, Higher Quality, Teas and we can get a higher price for them. 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 our 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

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**SCR129**

Submitted on: 3/26/2016

Testimony for WLA on Mar 28, 2016 15:00PM in Conference Room 224

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
mike riley	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Please support Hawaii Senator Mike Gabbard in his efforts to protect Hawaii's good name.

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**SCR129**

Submitted on: 3/25/2016

Testimony for WLA on Mar 28, 2016 15:00PM in Conference Room 224

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Paul Freeman	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I would be very pleased to see the tremendous efforts of our state's tea growers rewarded by the establishment of these standards.

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**SCR129**

Submitted on: 3/26/2016

Testimony for WLA on Mar 28, 2016 15:00PM in Conference Room 224

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Bob Jacobson	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha 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. Many small producers and the local jobs they generate from the industry is a clear benefit to the people of this state. Please vote for SCR129. Mahalo, Bob

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**SCR129**

Submitted on: 3/26/2016

Testimony for WLA on Mar 28, 2016 15:00PM in Conference Room 224

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Cynthia Gold	Individual	Support	No

Comments: As a US based Tea Sommelier and Chef, I am pleased and proud that Hawaii has taken the lead in growing high quality teas within the United States. I have been impressed with the product that I have had the good fortune to sample, and have enjoyed serving it to my customers and guests. Just as with the finest wines, within the tea industry there have begun to be origin specific indicators to allow the public to know what they are purchasing. Darjeeling led the way, and now more and more regions are protecting the integrity and reputation of their fine products. I strongly believe that Hawaii should do the same. As more people become familiar with the beauty and quality of teas from Hawaii, that name will mean something very substantial in the industry. Teas from Hawaii are something that all Americans should be proud of and they deserve the recognition and protection that this designation can afford.

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**SCR129**

Submitted on: 3/25/2016

Testimony for WLA on Mar 28, 2016 15:00PM in Conference Room 224

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Karen Masaki	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am an amateur tea grower in Volcano and have watched as the Hawai'i tea industry has grown in sophistication and quality of product. The current resolution is an important step towards ensuring quality control of Hawai'i's unique product. I fully support this resolution.

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