

**SR 114**

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 RESOLUTION NO. 114  
RECOGNIZING THE WHITMORE PROJECT'S MISSION TO REVITALIZE HAWAII'S  
LOCAL AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY AND REQUESTING THE AGRIBUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION TO CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO ACQUIRE LAND  
AND PROVIDE LOCAL FARMERS WITH LONG-TERM LEASES**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SR114. This resolution requests the Legislature to recognize the Whitmore Project mission to enhance the agricultural industry in Hawaii and request the Agribusiness Development Corporation to continue acquiring land and provide local farmers with long-term leases. The Department supports this resolution.

The Agribusiness Development Corporation serves as the development arm of the Hawaii Department of Agriculture and their important work with the Whitmore Project will enhance capabilities to expand Hawaii's agricultural economy and provide opportunities for local farmers to obtain long term leases.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.



**DAVID Y. IGE**  
Governor

**SHAN S. TSUTSUI**  
Lt. Governor



**JAMES J. NAKATANI**  
Executive Director

STATE OF HAWAII  
**AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

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**TESTIMONY OF JAMES J. NAKATANI**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AND AGRICULTURE**

**Monday, March 28, 2016**  
**3:00 P.M.**

**SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 114**  
**RECOGNIZING THE WHITMORE PROJECT'S MISSION TO REVITALIZE**  
**HAWAII'S LOCAL AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY AND REQUESTING THE**  
**AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION TO CONTINUE ITS**  
**EFFORTS TO ACQUIRE LAND AND PROVIDE LOCAL FARMERS WITH LONG**  
**TERM LEASES.**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

My name is James Nakatani, Executive Director of the Agribusiness Development Corporation ("ADC"). The ADC strongly supports Senate Resolution No. 114 which recognizes the Whitmore Project's ("Project") mission to revitalize Hawaii's local agricultural industry and requests the ADC to continue its efforts to acquire land and provide local farmers with long term leases.

A number of obstacles contribute to the ongoing decline in local agriculture and prevent many small local farms from becoming a successful commercial operation. These obstacles include, but is not limited to, obtaining a long-term agreement from a landowner; costly food safety requirements and improvements; competition from overseas markets; access to land to achieve

critical mass; high overhead and shipping cost; and the lack of affordable workforce housing for farm employees. Despite these mounting challenges, the agriculture industry continues to persevere.

The industry has been on a steady decline since the pineapple and sugar companies decided to significantly downsize, and in many cases, shut down its operations resulting in the loss of hundreds of local jobs. Today, many of these former plantation lands either remain fallow, or have been reclassified to accommodate other needs.

Unlike the larger monocrop plantations of the past that were generally operated by a private land owner, modern and future agricultural operations are diversified, have smaller footprints, and is far more complex which require greater government coordination and intervention. This new way of farming presents a new set of challenges which the Project seeks to address by employing the statutory powers of multiple State corporations and agencies to collectively promote agriculture. The concept of combining powers and expertise is a huge paradigm shift in the way State projects are developed. This new approach allows the Project to incorporate various components such as, education, technology, and affordable housing that a typical project developed by a single agency or corporations, could not accomplish on its own.

The ADC is committed to continuing its efforts to carry out its objectives as described in this Project. Although the Project is only part of a broad revitalization strategy for the Central Oahu community, the groundwork will serve a template to revitalize other rural areas in the State not only promote local agriculture, but to

help spur economic development in other communities who are struggling to preserve their rural identity and “sense of place.” For these reasons we support this resolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**LARRY JEFTS FARMS, LLC  
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SR114, RECOGNIZING THE WHITMORE PROJECT'S MISSION TO REVITALIZE HAWAII'S LOCAL AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY AND REQUESTING THE AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION TO CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO ACQUIRE LAND AND PROVIDE LOCAL FARMERS WITH LONG-TERM LEASES.

Sen WLA Hearing – Mon. March 28, 2016 – 3:00 pm  
Written Testimony by: Larry Jeffs  
Position: Support

Chair Gabbard and Members of the Senate WAL Committee:

I am Larry Jeffs, owner and operator of Larry Jeffs Farms, LLC, which is part of our family-run business of farms on Oahu and Molokai, under the administrative umbrella of Sugarland Growers, Inc. We have more than 35 years of Hawaii farm experience on Molokai and Oahu.

Appreciation is offered for SR114 which expresses recognition of the Whitmore Project and the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) efforts to revitalize Hawaii's local agricultural industry. The Whitmore Project has created a framework for partnerships that increase local food production, jobs and workforce housing. Through ADC, the State acquisition of agricultural land will preserve such land in perpetuity as well as provide long-term leases for experienced farmers.

Both endeavors are to be commended and supported because they each have created models for increasing food production and supporting the growth of farms in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.