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LATE

February 23, 2018

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON SB 2573
RELATING TO NUTRIENT CYCLING

Room 211
11:00 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

I am Randy Cabral, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,900 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.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau provides comments SB 2573, appropriating funds for a nutrient recycling program on Maui.

HFB strongly supports the concept of building soil structure and nutrient capacity. Caring for the soil is a cornerstone to having multigenerational farms that continue to provide for the people of Hawaii. Many of our farms add compost made off site as well as utilize short term fallow between crop cycles to increase organic content in their soils. Federal programs such as EQIP from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, (NRCS) provide funds to offset costs to farmers who voluntarily implement these programs. Here are links to NRCS standards. Farmers implementing these practices will qualify for federal cost share using the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) program.

Composting facility

https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/HI/317_PI_Standard.pdf

Nutrient management

https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/HI/590_PI_Standard.pdf

Farmers need to determine practices that work for them. For example a farmer may institute short term cover crops and this practice too qualifies for cost share using EQIP. The standard that needs to be followed is:

https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/HI/340_PI_Standard.pdf

There are various funding mechanisms available that should be considered and incorporated to reach the ultimate goal as envisioned in this measure.

HFB will be happy to continue conversations in this matter. USDA-NRCS has a wealth of information and is a valuable resource. One of the mission goals of Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts, parent organization of the various Soil and Water Conservation Districts (HACD) that partners with NRCS is the delivery of these services. HACD funding will enhance the capacity of the organization to deliver federal funding opportunities to our farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this measure.