

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 AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT**

**FEBRUARY 2, 2018  
1:15 P.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2846  
RELATING TO IRRIGATION**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2846 relating to irrigation. This bill transfers operation authority over the portions of the east Kauai irrigation system to the Department of Agriculture, establishes positions, and makes an appropriation. The Department supports this measure and recommends the following amendments.

Change the first two sentences of SECTION 1(b) to read "The portions of the east Kauai Irrigation system operated and maintained by the east Kauai water users' cooperative as of July 1, 2018, shall be placed under the operational authority of the department of agriculture until such time that [upon] adoption of rules pursuant to chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes are completed, or a determination is made that the system can be appropriately operated and maintained within Chapters 167 and 168 Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) [to implement this section]. Until the system is transferred to the appropriate program, [T]he operational authority shall not be governed by chapter 167 or 168, HRS [Hawaii Revised Statutes], for acreage assessment or water delivery fees.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





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February 2, 2018

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2846**  
RELATING TO IRRIGATION

Room 224  
1:15 pm

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Riviere, 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 strongly supports SB 2846**, which transfers operational authority over the portions of the east Kauai irrigation system operated and maintained by the east Kauai water users' cooperative to the department of agriculture, establishes positions within the agricultural resource management division, and authorizes GO bonds to with plans, designs, land acquisition, and equipment.

Since the demise of plantation operations across the islands, we have seen the erosion of irrigation systems. Ditches that carried water fell into disrepair with major leaks in the system, and in cases such as Kau, cracks in tunnels created enough losses that there is no longer significant flow of water. The Legislature continues to advocate for increased self-sufficiency and sustainability. Agriculture must play a key role in the process and for there to be agriculture, water is important.

The East Kauai Irrigation System services more than 12,500 acres of agricultural land on Kauai. The repair and maintenance of this 21-mile irrigation systems are critical for Kauai's farmers who depend on the East Kauai Irrigation System for their operations. Water availability is a basic necessity needed by farmers and ranchers to maintain and expand their production, particularly in times of drought. Having a reliable water supply is a key factor when Hawaii's farmers and ranchers are making decisions to start new or to expand existing operations.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this important matter.



From: John R. Gordines  
Tropical Flowers Express  
Owner / grower  
6721 Kawaihau Road  
Kapaa, Hawaii 96746

To: Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Gil Riviere, Vice Chair

RE: Testimony on SB 2846 Relating to Irrigation  
February 2, 2018 Conference Room 224

Chairpersons Gabbard and Riviere and Members of the Committee:

My name is Johnny Gordines owner and grower of Tropical Flowers Express Farm on Kauai for the past 28 years.

Our flower farm is adjacent to the Upper Kapahi Reservoir and actually Senator Gabbard has visited our farm this past year. We have been members of the East Kauai Water Users' Cooperative for the past 16 years and see the value in having this resource managed by the Hawaii Department of Agriculture a state agency that is well equipped to oversee and continue to provide nearly 300 acres of farms on Kauai. This is the best long term, permanent fix to manage the system.

**We strongly support SB 2846**

Respectfully,

*John R. Gordines*

John R. Gordines



Hartung Brothers, Inc.

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January 30, 2018

Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Gil Riviere, Vice Chair  
State of Hawaii Legislature  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill No. 2846 Relating to Irrigation

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Riviere and Committee members:

On behalf of Hartung Brothers, and as a private citizen raised in agriculture on Kauai, this is to provide testimony in **strong support** of SB2846, relating to irrigation.

As we all know, access to water is vital to the health and productivity of our farmlands, and functioning irrigation systems are critical, irreplaceable resources that must be preserved for the benefit of present and future generations.

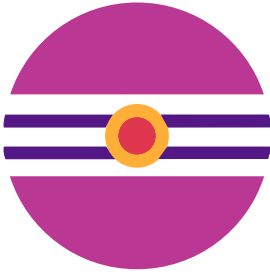
The transfer of the operational authority over the East Kauai Irrigation System to the Department of Agriculture, along with the resources necessary to properly manage the system, will ensure the long-term viability of the system and subsequently the farmlands served by the system, and is critical to securing the livelihood of a great many farmers on east Kauai.

Sincerely,

Joshua Uyehara  
Vice President – General Manager, Hawaii Operations

Hartung  
BROTHERS  
HAWAII

A Family Owned Seed Company



## **Saiva Siddhanta Church**

Kauai's Hindu Monastery  
107 Kaholalele Road  
Kapaa, Hawaii 96746-9304•USA  
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February 1, 2018

### **COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair**

**Senator Gil Riviere, Vice Chair**

#### **Testimony on SB 2846 Relating to Irrigation February 2, 2018, Conference Room 224**

Chairpersons Gabbard and Riviere and Members of the Committees:

We **strongly support** SB2846. We are a founder member of the East Kauai Water Users' Cooperative Board of Directors which maintains 22 miles of ditch and several reservoirs in and around Kapaa. It also service more than 1,000 acres of State lands located in Kalepa and potentially could service nearly the entire 6,500 acres of Kalepa.

It is not economically practical for our local Coop to fulfill the requirements for a water license from DLNR for this State-owned system. The logical department to manage it is the Department of Agriculture, who are willing to do so.

This will ensure the long-term preservation of this valuable system—estimated by State consultants to be worth “more than two hundred million dollars”—in service of local farmers and ranchers.

Saiva Siddhanta Church

*Acharya Arumuganathaswami*

Acharya Arumuganathaswami  
Farm Manager



**East Kauai  
Water Users' Cooperative**

4334 Rice Street, Suite 202  
Lihue, Kauai Hawaii 96766  
Phone: 808-246-6962  
Fax: 808-245-3277

February 1, 2018

TO: COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Gil Riviere, Vice Chair

RE: **Testimony on SB 2846 Relating to Irrigation  
February 2, 2018, Conference Room 224**

Chairpersons Gabbard and Riviere and Members of the Committees:

My name is Jerry Ornellas and **I strongly support SB 2846**. I am the president of the East Kauai Water Users' Cooperative which has managed the State-owned reservoir and ditch system in the Kapaa/Kalepa area for the past 17 years under a year-to-year revocable permit from DLNR. On September 20, 2016, the Coop was informed by DLNR it would have to seek a long-term water lease. We were given three years to complete the application process which includes an Environmental Impact Statement that is beyond our monetary resources to pay for. As well, it is likely other aspects of the water lease process and agreement are beyond our means.

We are therefore in favor of SB 2846 allowing the East Kauai system be taken over by the Department of Agriculture. Our system includes two reservoirs and 22 miles of ditch which has historically serviced thousands of acres of State and private lands. In particular, it services more than 1,000 acres of the State Kalepa lands located between Kapaa and Lihue. When first taken out of sugar cane in 2001, these had gone into pasture, but in the last few years, through the good action of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, nearly 300 acres has been leased to farmers who are actively developing their crops, including ginger and sweet potatoes. This is only possible because the Coop can provide these farms with water.

Aside from the State lands, the Coop system can service thousands of acres of so-called "marginal lands"—those not taken by the cane companies and now privately owned. These are located throughout Kapaa and are or could be productive agricultural lands, such as my own farm.

The Department of Agriculture is the natural State agency to manage this public water system, as is the pattern in most other states in the country. It is also the only long-term, permanent way to manage the system.

I respectfully ask that you pass this bill.

**East Kauai Water Users' Cooperative**

Jerry Ornellas, President



**Kalepa Koalition**

5868 Kini Place  
Kapaa, Hawaii 96746  
Phone/Fax: 808-639-0152

February 1, 2018

TO: COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Gil Riviere, Vice Chair

**RE: Testimony on SB 2846 Relating to Irrigation  
February 2, 2018, Conference Room 224**

Chairpersons Gabbard and Riviere and Members of the Committees:

My name is Les Milnes and I support SB2846. I am the president of the Kalepa Koalition, an Hawaii agricultural cooperative of the farmers and ranchers who hold long-term licenses on 6,500 acres of State land behind Kalepa Ridge on Kauai and under the administration of ADC.

The East Kauai Water Users Cooperative System can presently service more than 1,000 acres of the Kalepa lands. In just the last few years, ADC has converted nearly 300 acres of irrigable land from ranching to farming, and has more prospective farmers under consideration.

We believe the Department of Agriculture is the logical agency to manage this State-owned system.

I respectfully request that this bill be passed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Les Milnes".

Leslie P. Milnes, President  
Kalepa Koalition

**SB-2846**

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 5:31:36 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2018 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
J Ashman		Support	No

Comments:



**SB-2846**

Submitted on: 2/1/2018 10:21:37 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2018 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Dale Sandlin	Hawaii Cattlemens Council	Support	No

Comments: