

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

DOUGLAS S. CHIN
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JAMES J. NAKATANI
Executive Director

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LATE

TESTIMONY OF JAMES J. NAKATANI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Friday, February 23, 2018
11:00 a.m.

SENATE BILL NO. 2894 SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

My name is James Nakatani, Executive Director of the Agribusiness Development Corporation ("ADC"). The ADC supports Senate Bill No. 2894 SD1 that requires the Department of Agriculture, in coordination with the Agribusiness Development Corporation and University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources; to conduct crop performance testing trials on state agricultural lands of Hawaii's most highly imported food crops. Makes an appropriation.

The ADC believes that crop selection is a crucial component for agriculture success. Matching the suitable crop to the environmental characteristics of the farm parcel will position the farmer to be profitable. A standardized program for crop testing will provide the agriculture industry the much-needed information about appropriate crops and will be a resource to farmers for decision-making.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and for your consideration of this bill.



LATE

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February 23, 2018

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON SB 2894, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

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 Hawai'i 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 interest of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau supports of SB 2894, SD1, which requires the department of agriculture, in coordination with the agribusiness development corporation and University of Hawaii college of tropical agriculture and human resources, to conduct crop performance testing trials on state agricultural lands of Hawaii's most highly imported food crops.

Hawaii's agricultural industry has undergone a great change. Hawaii's agriculture industry once dominated by sugarcane and pineapple, has transitioned to a more diversified agricultural model. With much of the food consumed in Hawaii produced elsewhere, there is growing concern about the state's high dependency upon outside sources. Hawaii is located approximately 2,500 miles from the continental United States. As the most geographically isolated state in the country, Hawaii imports approximately ninety-two per cent of its food. While interest in local food production is growing, Hawaii farmers face keen competition from imports abroad. Today, the vast majority of the food consumed in the Islands is supplied by the U.S. Mainland, which is Hawaii's chief source of competition.

Currently, Hawaii has an inventory of fresh produce that would supply consumers for no more than ten days. Ninety per cent of the beef, sixty-seven per cent of the fresh vegetables, sixty-five per cent of the fresh fruits, and eighty per cent of all milk purchased in the State are imported.

Import replacement is a huge opportunity for our farmers. In a global market place, new products give our local farmers an edge. In turn, replacing high risk imports will mean less risk for invasive species introduction. The high rate of new pests into the islands is a challenge to not only agriculture but the environment. We need to focus on import replacement. What do people buy every day? Can we grow it? More importantly, can we grow it competitively and profitably? Trials by HDOA, ADC and CTAHR on Hawaii's most highly imported food crops can help identify the best crops for Hawaii's farmers to produce.

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