

**DAVID Y. IGE**  
Governor

**JOSH GREEN**  
Lt. Governor



**DENISE ALBANO**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF DENISE ALBANO  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

**JANUARY 30, 2019  
9:00 A.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 312**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 144  
RELATING TO COFFEE LABELING**

Chairperson Creagan and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 144, relating to coffee labeling. This bill proposes to amend Section 486-120.6, Hawaii Revised Statutes by requiring the geographic origins of various Hawaii-grown coffee and coffees not grown in Hawaii to be listed on the front panel of the coffee blend label and increase the minimum percentage requirement from 10 percent to 51 percent by weight of a Hawaii-grown coffee in a coffee blend. The Department offers comments.

The original roasted coffee label law was enacted by Act 289, SLH 1991, which established a 10 percent minimum Kona coffee by weight. The minimum percentage was determined as a result of the coffee industry discussions and mutual agreement with the coffee industry on the 10 percent minimum Kona coffee allowance for a Kona coffee blend product. Act 258, SLH 2002, amended the roasted coffee labeling law to require the same minimum 10 percent coffee blend percentage for coffees grown in other recognized coffee production regions in the State. It was decided by industry consensus that "Truth in Labeling" for consumers was a better path than mandating an arbitrary percentage of Hawaiian coffee content required in the package.



Listing of the individual non-Hawaii grown coffee origins on a coffee blend label would place an extreme hardship on the blending industry. The individual blend coffee components may not be available, at all times due to logistics, crop size and pricing. If any one of the blend components were not available, it would make the packaging materials obsolete which would be very costly to a business.

In 2006, the department conducted a study, "Hawaii's Coffee Industry Structural Change and Its Effects on Farm Operations". The study revealed that blending pure Kona coffee with less expensive import varieties helps expand the market base for Kona coffee by overcoming the budget constraints of some consumers. The study also revealed that the quantity supplied of pure Kona coffee is reduced by the amount used for blending which, in effect, creates a positive pressure on the price of pure Kona coffee.

We respectfully request that the Section 2 on page 5 be amended as follows:

"(b) A listing of the geographic origins of the various, Hawaii-grown coffees and the regional origins of the various coffees not grown in Hawaii that are included in a blend may be shown on the label. If used, this list shall consist of the term "Contains:", followed by, in descending order of per cent by weigh and separated by commas, the respective geographic origin or regional origin of the various coffees in the blend. If a listing of the regional origins of the coffees not grown in Hawaii is not shown on the label, a statement consisting of the total per cent by weight of all coffees not grown in Hawaii followed by the words "non-Hawaii grown coffee" shall be shown on the label. The type size used for this list or statement shall not appear less than half that of the identity statement. This list or statement shall appear below the identity statement on the front panel of the label."

The department supports the Hawaii coffee industry and feels that the industry members should come together to resolve the blend percentage issue first before initiating any legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 | Honolulu, HI 96813  
P: 808-533-1292 | e: info@hawaiiifood.com

#### **Executive Officers**

**Toby Taniguchi**, KTA Superstores, *Chair*  
**Joe Carter**, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Vice Chair*  
**Charlie Gustafson**, Tamura Super Market, *Secretary/Treas.*  
**Lauren Zirbel**, HFIA, *Executive Director*  
**Beau Oshiro**, C&S Wholesale Grocers, *Past Chair*  
**Stan Brown**, Acosta Sales & Marketing, *Advisor*  
**Paul Kosasa**, ABC Stores, *Advisor*  
**Barry Taniguchi**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*  
**Derek Kurisu**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*

---

TO:  
Committee on Agriculture  
Representative Richard P. Creagan, Chair  
Representative Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: January 30  
TIME: 9am  
PLACE: Conference Room 312

RE: HB144 Relating to Coffee Labeling

Position: Oppose

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

We believe in encouraging and supporting local food and drink production. This law would make it harder for businesses selling Hawaii coffee to create labels that best suit their brand and make it harder to promote local coffee to consumers. The existing coffee label regulations are clear and provide ample information to customers about what type of coffee they are getting.

Different ways of blending, roasting, and even brewing coffee create different products with different flavors and characteristics. Decisions about developing and marketing these different types of coffees should be left to coffee growers, blenders, roasters, brewers, and coffee drinkers. These are not the type of things that should be mandated by government bodies. For these reasons we ask that you hold this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**RE: Support for HB144**

RELATING TO COFFEE LABELING

Coffee Labeling; Blended Coffee; Percent of Coffee By Weight

Aloha Legislators,

The Kona Coffee Farmers Association requests and appreciates your support of this Bill. We represent over 200 farms in the Kona districts and our mission is to protect the economic interests of our growers.

The ten-percent minimum blend law has long been a drag on Kona's flagship crop. It dilutes and reduces the reputation of our coffee in the specialty marketplace. If there is a place in the market for blends, it is at the 51% level, where Kona (and Ka'u, Maui, Molokai or Kauai) can rightly take the top percentage on the bag.

For many years, the blenders have argued that we should "study" this issue. They testify that coffee prices would crash should they stop buying Kona for blends. But this is not economic reality. Over the last two decades the market for Hawaii coffee has changed drastically and many growers now sell out their entire crop online. The global demand for Kona far exceeds supply and the value of our crop is at record highs. Selling direct-to-market has made small farms financially viable.

To maintain these record prices, it's vital that the State protect our distinctive brand from those who wish to use the name simply for profit. Consumers who buy a Kona Blend often think they are getting a blend of different Kona coffees when in reality, they are drinking 90% foreign beans. The take-away impression from a blend's flavor can turn off buyers and permanently damage the status of Hawaiian coffees. We must protect our Hawaii-origin products.

My family has three generations who farm coffee and we support ourselves on 100% Kona. Thank you for your consideration of this bill. Your support makes a difference in the lives of hundreds of small farmers.

Mahalo nui loa!

Suzanne Shriner  
President

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 6:16:14 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Tim F Merriman	Kona Coffee Farmers Association	Support	No

Comments:

We own one of the many small Kona coffee farms in Captain Cook area of the Big Island. Kona coffee's brand identity is one of the best in the world, but it needs to be. The costs of buying land, raising coffee and processing it in this very expensive area demand that we get a good price for our product. When blending companies label their coffee as a Kona blend with only 10% Kona coffee, they are misleading the buyer, lowering pricing and diluting our brand identity. This law improves requirements for identifying a blend as including "Kona" coffee only if 51% or more. We need these protections for Kona coffee farmers. Many of us sell our coffee directly to the consumer at our farms and online. The integrity of the Kona brand is essential both economically and culturally. Help us do that by approving Bill HB144.

Tim Merriman, Co-owner with Lisa Brochu (wife)

Heartfelt Kona Coffee

<http://heartfeltkonacoffee.com>

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/26/2019 9:09:35 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jim Monk	Monk's Delight Kona Coffee	Support	No

## Comments:

I am a Kona coffee farmer and a member of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association and I support this bill. It is time Hawaii supports its farmers and enables us to sell our products at a reasonable profit. 10% blends of Kona coffee take money right out of my pocket and keep my revenue lower than it should be. Please pass this bill, HB144.

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/29/2019 12:06:03 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Roger Kaiwi	Kona Coffee Council	Oppose	Yes

Comments:

The Kona Coffee Council has always been aposed to this measure. The resteraunt and hotel industry have been long supporters of Kona Blends and it has had a positive effect on the Kona Coffee industry. I hubbly ask you to apose this.

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 6:30:54 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Sharlene Gee	Bea's Knees Farm	Support	No

Comments:

I am a Kona coffee farmer and a Kona Coffee Farmers Association member. Our farm is small, under five acres. My great-grandparents on down have been involved with growing Kona coffee.

We believe that if a coffee blend is called Hawaii or other Hawaiian designation, over 51% of that product should be Hawaiian/Kona/etc. coffee. We think it's important that the other imported coffee in that blend be named.

There is a very large coffee business that has a Hawaiian blend with 10% Ka'u coffee, yet the packaging was Hawaiian-themed and the marketing copy was all about Ka'u. I looked all over the packaging to find out what the other 90% was. I had to ask and someone pointed out the tiny font, and it was from two different continents and non-specific. This Ka'u blend sold for under half of a 100% Ka'u coffee. This same branded coffee product name, a Hawaiian blend, used 10% Kona in previous years and not 10% Ka'u.

There should be more truth and transparency in labeling. The current requirements result in product that's confusing to consumers and cheapens our brand of 100% Hawaii-grown or other single geographic origin.



**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/29/2019 9:22:20 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Mark Shultise	LavaRock Farm	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 9:25:57 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lee Sugai	Sugaikonacoffee	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Lee Sugai and I am a Kona coffee farmer. I am also a member of KCFA. I strongly support the passage of HB144. If Kona coffee is going to be profited by blending it with imported, inferior coffee it should be at least 51% Kona coffee and not 10% as the law stands now.

Respectfully,

Lee Sugai

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/26/2019 2:29:52 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Sandra Scarr	Daily Fix Coffee	Support	No

Comments:

To the Agriculture Committee,

Coffee farmers are united in demanding that regional named coffee blends should taste at least mostly like the 100% regional coffee named on the bag. 10% blends are a consumer fraud. Blends should include at least 51% of the regional coffee whose name is used on the package.

Blends that use the Kona name with 10% Kona in the bag are causing enormous financial loss to Kona coffee growers. The loss is documented in a study with which the Committee is familiar.

Please pass HB144 to bring it to a vote on the House floor. Farmers need your support.

Aloha,

Sandra Scarr

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/29/2019 9:00:43 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melodie Aduja	O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 9:46:02 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
KATHLEEN DIXON	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Kathleen Dixon and I support HB144. I am a Kona Coffee farmer, manage a Kona coffee farm and am a member of KCFA. For way too many years coffee processors and bend houses have profited from using the trademarked name Kona to imply that what the consumer is buying is Kona coffee when in fact very little Kona coffee (10%) is in the product. The other 90% is inexpensive and inferior imported coffee. This practice is a blatant rip off of the consumer and has placed a huge financial burden on conscientious Kona Coffee farmers who strive to produce a high-quality product actually grown in Hawaii. If blended Kona coffee is going to be marketed and labeled using the works Kona Coffee then it must contain at least 51% of Kona coffee.

Thank You,

Kathleen Dixon

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/27/2019 2:45:34 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jean Orlovski	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a farmer of 100% Kona Coffee, it is important for me that our clients, tourists, coffee novice know what they are buying. I have so many times had questions about why there is cheap and expensive Kona coffee, questions why some coffee is not as good as others. I need to explain them the differences between the belends and the 100%.

Kona is one of th best coffee in the world, we work hard to keep it this way.

Transparency to our clients is key, not disclosing what is in a bag is just cheating the end client. It should be very easy for the belender to add what is in their bags.

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/27/2019 5:58:02 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Peter Goulding	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am a small coffee farmer living in Kailua-Kona, on the Big Island. I am a member of KCFA, Kona Coffee Farmers Association. I support HB144 because it will protect the brand equity Kona Coffee has established. When blenders are allowed to call their coffee Kona Coffee with only 10% Kona Coffee, it devalues the Kona Coffee brand, and reduces the price I can sell my 100% Kona Coffee for. This practice is robbing Kona Coffee farmers like me of having a better income and is not fair. It is also misleading to the consumer, and is devaluing the taste and reputation of world renowned Kona Coffee.

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/27/2019 11:45:43 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Koohan Paik	Individual	Support	No

Comments:



**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 7:36:01 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Barbara Hershey	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 8:46:07 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Deniz Tek	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for hearing my testimony. I grow, process and sell 100% Kona coffee on our small farm. The Kona appellation commands the highest regard worldwide. The integrity of the Kona appellation is vitally important to the survival of our business. We are proud of our coffee. If the name and reputation are harmed by large coffee companies selling lower quality coffee under that name, which has little or nothing to do with real Kona coffee, we and all of the other small coffee producers on the Island suffer. Please support this bill, and put a stop to the practice of false labeling, so that Kona coffee can maintain it's high standing in the world. Thank you.

Deniz Tek

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 10:41:09 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lawrence Ford	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

It is very important to have disclosures to identify what consumers are buying, such as percentage of any blend. Also, it is critical to identify the content origination. Please protect the hard won exclusivity of Kona coffee to consumers.

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 12:47:08 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
L.M. Holmes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Creagan and Committee members,

I strongly support HB144 to protect Hawaii's coffee farmers from the economic damage caused by the misleading labeling of "Hawaii coffee blends" containing as little as 10% Hawaii-grown coffee. The use of Hawaii regional names on packages of coffee blends is unreasonable unless more than half the coffee in the package is from that region, and the geographic origin of the remaining coffee is disclosed on the label. Hawaii's coffee farmers lose millions of dollars each year because consumers buying what they believe is Hawaii-grown coffee are in fact buying coffee that is 90% grown somewhere else. Hawaii needs fair labeling to protect Hawaii farmers in the way California protects Napa wine grape growers and Idaho protects its potato farmers and Vermont protects its maple syrup producers from misappropriation of regional names on agricultural products.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this very important bill.

Dr. Lorna Holmes, 215 N. King St. #910, Honolulu, HI 96817

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 2:08:44 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Representatives,

Please represent Kona small farm coffee growers and support HB-144 requiring 51% minimum genuine context in Hawaii coffee blends and identification on the label of the origin of imported coffee in the blend.

My husband and I own two small Kona coffee farms. Our special interest is premium, single-estate 100% Kona coffee. Our company grows, processes, roasts, and sells high-quality, single-estate 100% Kona coffee, with a focus on artisanal, premium brands to satisfy the interests of coffee connoisseurs. Our coffee fruit (cherry) comes from Cynthiana Farm (ca. 900 trees) in South Kona and Honalo Farm (ca. 3000 trees) in North Kona. The trees are dry-farmed (i.e., not irrigated). We have state-of-the-art coffee processing and roasting facilities at Honalo Farm, our corporate headquarters, and offer brands that represent the flavor profiles of specific terroirs. We exclusively custom-roast in small batches with a fluidized-bed air roaster. Our flagship brand is designated "Private Reserve", which is available from both farms. We work HARD and are proud of our KONA HAWAII products!

We thank you for your past support, especially with the CBB problems.

We work hard! We are proud of our 100% KONA coffee products.

Please continue to support small farms in Hawaii and support this bill.

We find it **offensive** to see coffee labeled “Kona coffee” and in small print CONTAINS 10% KONA COFFEE and no notation of what the 90% is.

We are member of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association.

**Please support HB-144 requiring 51% minimum genuine context in Hawaii coffee blends and identification on the label of the origin of imported coffee in the blend.**

Sincerely

Cynthia A Maryanoff

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/29/2019 9:22:20 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jeanne Kapela	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Creagan and Members of the Committee,

Local farmers are the heartbeat of West Hawai'i, where I grew up and where my family owns a small coffee farm. I am testifying in STRONG SUPPORT of HB144 to increase the amount of Kona Coffee to at least 51% in all "Kona Blend" packages. Kona coffee, is one of Hawai'i's most iconic treasures. Our farmers who grow these products provide economic security for our community. When farmers prosper, our economy thrives, our families are nourished, and our children grow strong.

â€‹

We must support local coffee farmers by fighting to protect the Kona name from misuse by commercial exploitation! To call something "Kona Coffee" while 90% of the bags contents is grown on foreign soil is false advertising, plain and simple. It must stop and those who continue to mislead consumers must be held fully accountable for their lack of disclosure and abuse of Kona's hardworking local farmers.

Mahalo,

Jeanne Kapela

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 5:08:11 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Joseph Kohn MD	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

[www.WeAreOne.cc](http://www.WeAreOne.cc)



**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 7:47:45 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Howard Hill	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Once again I am writing to support proper labeling for products which benefit by using the name 'Kona Coffee'. In France, the local origin names of their famous wines are protected and not allowed to be used by unscrupulous wine producers.

The should be true of our wonderful Kona coffee, which is esteemed by all who have consumed it. It is time to raise the standard and not allow coffee 'blends' containing less than 50% Kona coffee to benefit from the Kona name.

I submit this testimony as a Kona coffee farmer and member of KCFA.

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 7:50:40 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
bruce corker	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Creagan and Committee Members:

On behalf of the more than 250 members of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association, I am writing in strong support of HB144.

Hawaii is the only region anywhere in the world that authorizes by law the use of its geographic origin names in the labeling of agricultural products with as little as 10% of the content actually grown in the named region.

The use of Hawaii regional names on packages of coffee blends is unreasonable and misleading unless (1) more than half the coffee in the package is from that region, and (2) the geographic origin of the remaining coffee disclosed on the label.

Hawaii farmers lose millions of dollars each year because consumers buying what they are led to believe is Hawaii-grown coffee are in fact buying coffee that is 90% grown somewhere else.

Hawaii needs fair labeling to protect Hawaii coffee farmers in the way California protects Napa wine grape growers and Idaho protects its potato growers and Vermont protects maple syrup producers from misleading and fraudulent marketing.

Please support Hawaii coffee farmers and enact HB144.

Mahalo,

Bruce Corker

Legislative Committee

Kona Coffee Farmers Association

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 9:41:49 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Colehour Bondera	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members:

Please accept my support for HB144 regarding coffee blend labeling.

As a farmer in Honaunau, Hawaii, my business involves direct sales to consumers of our Kona coffee. Therefore my experience with consumers is about what they want and helping them conclude that they want to purchase my coffee. There is open honesty that makes the most sense and therefore am revealing through the labels all of what they have in hand, with no deception.

For 17 years our family has run our coffee farm where we produce and sell all of our product directly to the consumer. For 10 or more of those years, my desire to help preserve the integrity of an important agricultural product means that communication is with others, it has meant that currently there is participation with Kona Coffee Farmers Association as a President emeritus and a current Board member. This means that there is understanding and efforts to protect other farmers, who are the other active members.

Since Kona coffee is but one of many U.S.A. products that are geographically identified, working with other groups around the country, it is important to deal with misleading labelling and marketing efforts at the national level as well, and for that reason play the present role as President of the Board of American Origin Products Association (AOPA). In this capacity, along with other product representatives, such as Idaho Potatoes, Napa Valley, California Wine, New Mexico Chile, Vermont Maple Syrup, we work to seek recognition and protection for national levels. Also, AOPA will be holding its' annual membership meeting in Washington, DC in April, 2019, and at this event we will further connect and communicate with each other but also with prospective members, and finally with legislators and staff and Program and Department representatives in order for them to be better informed and better willing to help keep geographically identified products protected at the national level.

Further, since this is all happening at the international level as well, and international legal bodies and agreements must also be made to work, and toward that means, serve as North American Vice President for oriGIn, which is based in Geneva, but works on behalf of groups and products from around the world. For things such as international

marketing and labelling rules and laws, it is important to incorporate such influence into all efforts. This is significantly important for products such as coffee, that are consumed around the world. Kona coffee is mailed directly by farmers to consumers worldwide. It all comes down to truth-in-labelling of said products, and the European Union being the lead part of the world who has already established international label criteria and a body to oversee and enforce the consumer recognition (through Public Relations and Education). For this reason, oriGIn is based in Geneva, Switzerland with other offices in place in other parts of the world as well.

These issues were further considered and studied as completing my Master of Science in International Agricultural Development from the University of California at Davis in 1997. In this regard it was easy to see and understand how labels in markets drive sales and therefore, a label that is not honest with content will affect the sales of direct sales efforts as we sell all of our coffee, and therefore impact the price received, which means less money staying in Hawaii and instead being received by other sources, such as those who provided non-Hawaiian coffee and/or companies outside of Hawaii that are using the names of Counties or regions, without providing the appropriate labelling information so that the consumer in question knows what they are receiving in their purchase.

Having been raised on a farm in Oregon, where we had Jersey cows and drank their milk, it was basic for myself as one of the family members who milked the cows to understand that when, in the 1970's and early 1980's, we sold extra milk to neighbors, that they understood it to be directly and exclusively from our farm. Were this not the case (for example it were coming fully OR in part from a neighbor farm, or another source altogether), simply integrity means that our family would so share said information BEFORE a sale being completed. From this experience it was clear to me that consumers (ie, neighbors) can and should be treated just as we, ourselves, would like to be treated, and that means not being mis-informed or mislead simply to be taken advantage of, rather than being lived next to as equals.

This is already a compromise, since for me 100% of Kona coffee can and should be required to be sold as 100% Kona coffee, as we do with ours. However from my marketing experiences through my life, it is clear that some consumers have other interests (be that financial savings, or a range of coffees) than my customers. Yet one thing stands true and clear across the range of consumers, and that is that they all want to know what they are getting for their decisions, which means truth-in-labelling.

Honesty and openness and full information sharing result in respect and a healthier more complete relationship. Please help Hawaii and help coffee in Hawaii and help Kona coffee, by providing your due endorsement of this piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Colehour Bondera

KANALANI OHANA FARM

Honaunau, HI

**LATE**

**HB-144**

Submitted on: 1/29/2019 1:30:10 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/30/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jesse	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Other industries such as gas stations and hotels have used Kona blends for quite some time. Its been good for the industry. It allows certain companies to pay a premium price for coffee cherry that the average farmer might not receive from other companies.



**LATE**

PO Box 168, Kealahou, HI 96750  
808-929-9550

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, January 30, 2019  
9:00 AM  
Conference Room 312

**RE: Testimony in Opposition of HB 144**

Aloha Chair Creagan, Vice Chair DeCoite and members of the Committee,

I am Chris Manfredi, President of Hawaii Coffee Association.

The Hawaii Coffee Association's (HCA) mission is to represent all sectors of the Hawaiian coffee industry, including growers, millers, wholesalers, roasters and retailers located throughout the State of Hawaii. The HCA's primary objective is to increase awareness and consumption of Hawaiian coffees. A major component of HCA's work is the continuing education of members and consumers.

**The HCA opposes HB 144 for the following reasons:**

First, no one can accurately predict what will happen if the minimum blend ratio were to suddenly increase. The ability of the market to absorb a higher average price remains an open question. This will almost assuredly result in decreased demand, at least initially, and is likely to result in a decreased price paid to growers.

Moreover, enforcement of our current labeling laws and grade standards could certainly be improved. It would be helpful to know if an increase in the minimum blend ratio would be coupled with additional resources to root out cheaters and counterfeiters.

The HCA also believes that indicating the non-Hawaiian portion of coffee used to make a blend is overly burdensome. Not only are these formulas proprietary, but they often change based on a number of factors. Reprinting labels each time a blend is changed results in increased cost to be passed on to the consumer, and further erodes Hawaii's competitiveness in the retail market.

Again we ask if the state will allocate additional resources toward enforcement of existing laws, particularly false labeling of Hawaiian coffee.

**Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 144.**