

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
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 PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE

**JANUARY 29, 2020
8:30 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 312**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1886
RELATING TO COFFEE LABELING**

Chairperson Creagan and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1886, 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.



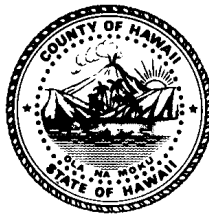
Listing of the individual non-Hawaii grown coffee origins on a coffee blend label would place an extreme hardship on the blending industry. The individual blend coffee components may not be available, at all times due to logistics, crop size and pricing. If any one of the blend components were not available,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

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. As an alternative, it would serve industry to come together in a taskforce or working group to discuss important issues that continue to come before the legislature. This group could discuss issues like blend percentage, mandatory certification, and origin identification testing.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

REBECCA VILLEGAS
Council Member
District 7, Central Kona



PHONE: (808) 323-4267
FAX: (808) 323-4786
EMAIL: Rebecca.villegas@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

*West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740*

January 24, 2020

TESTIMONY OF REBECCA VILLEGAS
COUNCIL MEMBER, HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL
ON HB 1886, RELATING TO COFFEE LABELING
Committee on Agriculture
Wednesday, January 29, 2020
8:30 a.m.
Conference Room 312

Aloha Chair Creagan, and Members of the Committee:

I thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of HB 1886, relating to coffee labeling. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Hawai'i County Council.

The purpose of this measure is to support Hawai'i's coffee growers by requiring disclosure on the label of coffee blends by regional origins and percentage by weight of blended coffees, making it a violation of coffee labeling law to use geographic origin in labeling or advertising for roasted or instant coffee blends that contain less than 51% by weight from that geographic origin. More than 90% of Hawai'i's coffee farms are located on the island of Hawai'i. Existing labeling requirements for Kona coffee causes consumer fraud and degrades the "Kona Coffee" name. Confusion of the difference between Kona coffee and Kona coffee blends caused Consumer Reports magazine to rate Kona Coffee as second rate. The label on the package of 10% Hawai'i coffee blend does not advise consumers that 90% of the coffee is imported, foreign grown, or may be a mixture of multiple Hawaiian regions and foreign grown coffee. Immediate legislative action is necessary to protect the reputation of Hawai'i grown coffee, as the 10% requirement directly damages and degrades the economic interests of Hawai'i coffee farmers.

For the reasons stated above I urge the House Committee on Agriculture to support this measure. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (808) 323-4267.

Mahalo for your consideration.

REBECCA VILLEGAS
COUNCIL MEMBER, HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

decoite2 - Aurielle

From: Eric Allen <mgfkona@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2020 8:39 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Subject: Please Support HB1886

Dear Committee Chair Creagan and Members,

Aloha, I am a Kona coffee farmer in Holualoa and wish to testify in support of the HB1886 related to coffee labeling. We own and operate a small family farm with many heirloom coffee trees that are over 60 years old. It is a very physical and marginal business that requires endless hours to care for the trees, process the coffee, and marketing the coffee. Most of the 750 Kona coffee farmers make little to no income because of low coffee prices and the high cost for hand picking, higher Island operating expenses for supplies, and the loss from coffee bore beetles. The greatest threat to Kona coffee farmers is large 10% Kona coffee blenders that are selling Kona branded coffee at prices far below production costs.

The current law allows coffee to be sold displaying the famous "Kona" name, even if 90% of the coffee in the bag is from Brazil, Vietnam, etc. I feel this is clearly deceptive to Consumers that thought they were buying real Kona Coffee, but really were just taken advantage of by slick marketing and blenders profiting from this deception. It is upsetting when I meet a tourist and we talk about what we do and they learn that I am a Kona Coffee farmer. I have had some be frank and say they tried Kona Coffee and did not think it was that special. After we discuss more and learn they really purchased a 10% blend at a low price. They wonder how this clear fraud could be legal in Hawaii, and I wonder how the 10% Blending are destroying the Kona coffee reputation. Blending Kona coffee at just 10% is great for farmers in South America who supply the 90% of the coffee labeled Kona, but not so go for consumers and the Kona farmers who suffer from reduced prices for our real Kona Coffee. Most Kona coffee farms are not profitable to operate because of the the low prices and over time Kona coffee farms will be forced to close down.

The new law HB1886 would require at least 51% of the coffee used be from the named region and the remainder of the coffee origin/origins be identified. This is good for consumers to know what they are truly consuming and will help save the Kona Coffee industry and its reputation for exceptional coffee. I hope you will help protect the Kona Coffee industry for generations to come by the passage of HB1886.

Mahalo,

Eric Allen
Morning Glory Farms LLC
Kona, Hawaii
Phone: 808-374-0090

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/25/2020 10:18:16 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bob Smith	Smithfarms.com	Support	No

Comments:

I am strongly in favor of this bill. Our regional coffees need protection!

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/26/2020 4:16:36 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joachim Oster	ATHENA of HAWAI'I LLC	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Committee Chair Creagan and Members,

ATHENA of HAWAI'I is growing and selling Kona coffee since 14+ years. We are testifying in **strong support of HB1886 – Relating to Coffee Labeling.**

Plain and simple, permitting the sale of any agricultural product under a Hawai'ian name not containing at least 51% locally grown is undermining the economic feasibility of the farming business. Foreign produced commodities will ALWAYS be cheaper to import and repackage as i.e. Hawai'ian, Kona, Maui or Ka'u grown.

The argument that existing blend laws would keep current jobs is simply false because it doesn't take into account the lost income opportunities in farming, bankruptcies of otherwise profitable farm businesses, credibility of all other Hawaiian-Made products, lowering the real estate value of actual farm land, lost tax revenue of farm jobs, and loss of infrastructure in agricultural areas.

Mahalo nui loa,

Joachim Oster, coffee farmer and retailer

ATHENA of HAWAI'I LLC, Kona, Hawai'i

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/26/2020 6:30:23 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bruce Maryanoff	KCFA	Support	No

Comments:

"Testimony in strong support of HB1886"

Dear Mr. Creagan and Members of the Committee:

We submit this written testimony **in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1886**. We have two working Kona coffee farms [Honalo Farm and Cynthiana Farm]. **We produce KONA typica coffee, an heirloom variety of *Coffea arabica***, a long-established and traditional coffee of Hawaii.

The new law does not require much information about the remaining 49% which could be inexpensive **Robusta coffee**, from the plant *Coffea canephora* estimated to account for more than 40% of the world supply of coffee. The current bill is a good start, requiring 51% Kona coffee, does not require 49% to be identified as *Arabica* or much less expensive *Robusta*.

Please note that agricultural products from all over the world are, and have been, protected by laws that control their identity as to place of origin and unique characteristics. Some notable examples include wines, cheeses, olive oils, specialty vinegars, spices, and condiments. Coffee produced in Kona and other notable Hawaiian appellations deserve to be treated in the same manner. The Kona brand must have its integrity protected to command high respect in the coffee world.

Our reasons for **strong support of HB1886**:

1. **Misleading labeling is fraudulent** – consumers should be able to know what they are actually paying for.
2. **Use of the name without requiring the content exploits the region and deprives farmers of income. Further, not even identifying the 49% as *Arabica* or not is also misleading.**
3. **Low quality coffee is being sold under a prestigious name and results in lowering standards and damaging the brand. Possible blending with *Robusta* coffee also damages the brand.**

The blenders, many owned by large companies, strongly oppose this change because they are making a fortune selling inexpensive coffee that may not even be *Arabica* as "Kona" or "Ka'u" to unsuspecting customers. **This would never be allowed for California Wine, Wisconsin cheese, Kentucky Bourbon, Idaho potatoes, Georgia peaches, or any number of products worldwide.**

Hawai'i needs to step up and protect the brand integrity of its premier *Arabica* coffee brands that are grown throughout the islands. Thank you for your positive consideration and passage of **HB1886**.

Sincerely,

Bruce and Cynthia Maryanoff

cmaryanoff@comcast.net

Co-CEOs, Absolute Palate LLC

26 January 2020

"Testimony in strong support of HB1886"

Dear Mr. Creagan and Members of the Committee:

We submit this written testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB1886**. We have two working Kona coffee farms [Honalo Farm and Cynthiana Farm]. **We produce KONA typica coffee, an heirloom variety of *Coffea arabica***, a long-established and traditional coffee of Hawaii.

The new law does not require much information about the remaining 49% which could be inexpensive **Robusta coffee**, from the plant *Coffea canephora* estimated to account for more than 40% of the world supply of coffee. The current bill is a good start, requiring 51% Kona coffee, does not require 49% to be identified as *Arabica* or much less expensive *Robusta*.

Please note that agricultural products from all over the world are, and have been, protected by laws that control their identity as to place of origin and unique characteristics. Some notable examples include wines, cheeses, olive oils, specialty vinegars, spices, and condiments. Coffee produced in Kona and other notable Hawaiian appellations deserve to be treated in the same manner. The Kona brand must have its integrity protected to command high respect in the coffee world.

Our reasons for **strong support of HB1886**:

1. **Misleading labeling is fraudulent** – consumers should be able to know what they are actually paying for.
2. **Use of the name without requiring the content exploits the region and deprives farmers of income. Further, not even identifying the 49% as *Arabica* or not is also misleading.**
3. **Low quality coffee is being sold under a prestigious name and results in lowering standards and damaging the brand. Possible blending with *Robusta* coffee also damages the brand.**

The blenders, many owned by large companies, strongly oppose this change because they are making a fortune selling inexpensive coffee that may not even be *Arabica* as "Kona" or "Ka'u" to unsuspecting customers. **This would never be allowed for California Wine, Wisconsin cheese, Kentucky Bourbon, Idaho potatoes, Georgia peaches, or any number of products worldwide.**

Hawai'i needs to step up and protect the brand integrity of its premier *Arabica* coffee brands that are grown throughout the islands. Thank you for your positive consideration and passage of **HB1886**.

Sincerely,

Bruce and Cynthia Maryanoff

cmaryanoff@comcast.net

Co-CEOs, Absolute Palate LLC

26 January 2020

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/26/2020 6:36:44 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cynthia Maryanoff	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

"Testimony in strong support of HB1886"

Dear Mr. Creagan and Members of the Committee:

We are submitting this written testimony **in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1886**. We have two working Kona coffee farms [Honalo Farm and Cynthiana Farm]. **We produce KONA typica coffee, an heirloom variety of *Coffea arabica***, a long-established and traditional coffee of Hawaii.

We are testifying in **strong support of HB1886 – Relating to Coffee Labeling**. The current law says that blended coffee can be labeled "Kona Blend, Ka'u Blend, Maui Blend, Kauai Blend, Hilo Blend, etc." even if it contains as little as 10% of the actual coffee grown in that region. The rest can be "no-name" coffee from anywhere around the world. The new law would require at least 51% of the coffee used in blends to be from the named region and the remainder of the coffee origin/origins be identified.

Sadly, the new law does not require much information about the remaining 49% which could be inexpensive **Robusta coffee**, which comes from the plant *Coffea canephora* and is estimated to account for more than 40% of the world supply of coffee. The current bill, while it is a good start by requiring 51% Kona coffee, does not even require the 49% to be identified as *Arabica* or the much less expensive *Robusta*. But it is a good start and we are testifying in **strong support of HB1886 – Relating to Coffee Labeling**.

Please note that agricultural products from all over the world are, and have been, protected by laws that control their identity as to place of origin and unique

characteristics. Some notable examples include wines, cheeses, olive oils, specialty vinegars, spices, and condiments. Coffee produced in Kona and other notable Hawaiian appellations deserve to be treated in the same manner. The Kona brand must have its integrity protected to command the high respect that it garners in the broad coffee world.

We are testifying in **strong support of HB1886 – Relating to Coffee Labeling.**

Our reasons include:

1. **Misleading labeling is fraudulent** – consumers should be able to know what they are actually paying for.
2. **Use of the name without requiring the content exploits the region and deprives farmers of income. Further, not even identifying the 49% as *Arabica* or not is also misleading.**
3. **Low quality coffee is being sold under a prestigious name and results in lowering standards and damaging the brand. Possible blending with *Robusta* coffee also damages the brand.**

The blenders, many owned by large companies, strongly oppose this change because they are making a fortune selling inexpensive coffee that may not even be *Arabica* as "Kona" or "Ka'u" to unsuspecting customers. **This would never be allowed for California Wine, Wisconsin cheese, Kentucky Bourbon, Idaho potatoes, Georgia peaches, or any number of products worldwide.**

Hawai'i needs to step up and protect the brand integrity of its premier *Arabica* coffee brands that are grown throughout the islands. Thank you for your positive consideration and passage of **HB1886.**

Sincerely,

Bruce and Cynthia Maryanoff

cmaryanoff@comcast.net

Co-CEOs, Absolute Palate LLC

26 January 2020

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/27/2020 12:32:20 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Committee Chair Creagan and Members,

I am a Kona Coffee Farmer testifying in **strong support of HB1886 – Relating to Coffee Labeling**. The current law says that blended coffee can be labeled "Kona Blend, Ka'u Blend, Maui Blend, Kauai Blend, Hilo Blend, etc" even if it has as little as 10% of the actual coffee grown in that region in it. The rest can be no-name coffee from anywhere around the world. The new law would require at least 51% of the coffee used be from the named region and the remainder of the coffee origin/origins be identified.

This bill is important because:

1. **Misleading labeling is fraudulent** – consumers should be able to trust the labeling.
2. **Use of the name without requiring the content exploits the region and deprives farmers of income.**
3. **Low quality coffee is being sold under a prestigious name and results in lowering standards and damaging the brand.**

The blenders, many owned by large mainland companies, strongly oppose this change because they are making a fortune selling cheap low-quality coffee as "Kona" or Ka'u" to unsuspecting customers. **This would never be allowed for California Wine, Kentucky Bourbon, Idaho potatoes, Georgia peaches, Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee, or any number of products worldwide.**

Hawai'i needs to step up and protect the brand integrity of its premier coffee brands that are grown throughout the islands. Thank you for your positive consideration and passage of **HB1886**.

Mahalo,
Jim Monk

South Captain Cook area

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/27/2020 1:15:33 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Colehour Bondera	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

January 27, 2020

Aloha,

As a long-term (nearly 20 years at this time) organic Kona coffee farmer who sells 90+% of our production directly to the end consumer of our production, it is with great pleasure that this letter is in support of HB 1886 regarding coffee labelling.

Frankly, we need honesty in labels in order for there to be consistent/repeat demand, and as a weekly vendor as a farmers market in Keauhou, it is clear that the labels that are presently permitted dramatically mislead consumers who cannot easily understand what they are being told by what is in the market now. More and clearer information allows consumers to make the choices that they seek and Hawaii is then remembered more fondly as a place to know and trust. This is not what happens with the current labelling laws.

Please pass this so that farmers such as my family, can continue to survive and perhaps even flourish as producers of a high quality product that we should all be proud of.

Sincerely,

Colehour Bondera

KANALANI OHANA FARM

PO Box 861

Honauanau, HI 96726

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/27/2020 4:05:04 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
bruce corker	Rancho Aloha Kona Coffee	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Creagan and Members of the Committee:

I am a coffee farmer in Holualoa in the North Kona District of Hawaii County and a member of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association.

I strongly support the fair labeling provisions of HB1886.

I offer 3 points for the Committee to consider:

1—HAWAII IS OUT OF STEP: For more than 25 years Hawaii has been 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. It is long past time for Hawaii to provide its coffee farmers with the types of protections offered by other states to their specialty crop farmers—for example, Idaho’s protections for its potato farmers, California’s protections for Napa and Sonoma wine grape growers, and Vermont’s for maple syrup producers against misleading and fraudulent marketing.

2—10% BLENDS TAKE MONEY FROM COFFEE FARMERS: A 2018 United Nations study concludes that Hawaii origin brands, like Kona, do “not enjoy any strong protection of its name” and that as a result “downstream stakeholders [rather than farmers] reap the economic benefits of the fame of Kona.” Here is a link to the UN study: <http://www.fao.org/3/I8737EN/i8737en.pdf>

Also see the 2010 analysis of resource economist Marvin Feldman finding that as much as \$14.4 million each year may be flowing out of the pockets of Kona coffee farmers and into the “excess profits” of blenders. Here is a link--
<https://www.konacoffeefarmers.org/kona-labeling/economic-effects-of-blending-kona-coffee/> The Feldman study indicates that the average 5 acre Kona coffee farm loses almost \$20,000/year because of 10% blends.

3—CONSUMERS ARE BEING CHEATED: A significant number of consumer purchasers of Hawaii coffee “blends” are visitors to the islands and their spending is an important pillar of the state’s economy. When those tourists later learn (as a fair number

of them do) that what they bought thinking it was Hawaii-grown coffee was in fact 90% from somewhere else, their goodwill and affection for Hawaii is undercut. Consumers do not like being misled and cheated. See- <https://www.civilbeat.org/2019/12/hawaiis-coffee-blend-law-deceives-consumers/>

Please support Hawaii farmers and enact HB1886.

Bruce
Corker
 Rancho
Aloha
 Holualoa

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/27/2020 4:29:45 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ronalee Ashbach	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Committee Chair Creagan and Members,

As of 2017 I became a local coffee farmer in Honaunau on the Big Island, before that I was not even aware of the labeling issues and the importance of proper labeling for 100% Kona Farmers. It is expensive and labor intensive to farm Kona coffee and misleading fraudulent labels do not help in this cost to grow Kona coffee. Please consider the passage of HB1886 to protect all Kona Coffee farmers that work so hard to produce 100% Kona coffee and presently being harmed by blenders.

Mahalo,

Ronalee Ashbach

Owner- RC Farm LLC

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/27/2020 4:31:17 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Chet Gardiner	Cassandra Farms	Support	No

Comments:

In addition to being a long-time connoisseur of fine coffee, I am a coffee farmer from the Kona region of the Big Island of Hawai'i. I am also the Vice President and a member of the Board of Directors of our Kona Coffee Farmers Association.

This is an issue of **honesty in advertising** and for us, survival.

Kona Coffee is primarily grown on small, often family operations. It is often more of a lifestyle choice and passion than a "business" - we mainly grow for love, not money. For us, the reputation of Kona Coffee, probably the best tasting coffee on the planet is an issue of basic survival for hundreds of Coffee farms in our region as well as a matter of pride.

The horrible taste of the "Blends" that are allowed to be labeled as "Kona", and that are consumed by people who have never had the pleasure of drinking real 100% Kona Coffee threatens our industry. People who love coffee and are willing to pay a premium for fine tasting coffee and then taste these "blends" inevitably retain extremely negative feelings about the entire Kona Coffee experience as well as an aversion to the idea of spending the money to buy REAL 100% Kona.

In other words, blends ***water down our Brand with their very bad tasting coffee.***

We are asking for TRUTH in advertising. We are asking for honesty in Labeling. 10% "Kona" blends will NEVER taste good, are seriously inferior to 100% Kona and must not be allowed to use the Kona name.

Even bags containing 51% Kona coffee should include labeling warning folks that the rest IS NOT KONA.

No other state or region of the world, such as Jamaica (Blue Mountain), Idaho Potatoes, Champagne region of France, etc. that produce as rare a product with the high quality of Kona Coffee allows their brand to be degraded as Hawai'i has allowed Kona Coffee to be adulterated.

I urge passage of HB1886 as a start toward truth in labeling.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this matter.



RE: SUPPORT for HB1886
RELATING TO COFFEE LABELING
Coffee Labeling; Blended Coffee; Percent of Coffee By Weight

Aloha Chair and Representatives,

The Kona Coffee Farmers Association (KCFA) 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.

In consultation with the Hawaii Coffee Association (HCA), the KCFA would like to submit amendments to this bill. Language for amending the KCFA bill to reflect the KCFA/HCA agreement on a phased-in approach would be:

1--Add after the 4th sentence to the bill's amending language for 486-120.6(b) the following:

"In place of separate listings of regional origins of coffee not grown in Hawaii in the blend, the list may include the words "Foreign-Grown Coffee" preceded by the per cent of such coffee by weight in the blend."

2--Replace the bill's amending language for 486-120.6(c)(2) with the following:

[(c) It shall be a violation of this section to:] " (2) Use a geographic origin in labeling or advertising, including in conjunction with a coffee style or in any other manner, if during the period from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 the roasted or instant coffee contains less than twenty percent coffee by weight from that geographic origin; and if during the period from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 the roasted or instant coffee contains less than thirty percent coffee by weight from that geographic origin; and if after July 1, 2022 the roasted or instant coffee contains less than fifty-one percent coffee by weight from that geographic origin."

KCFA maintains that a 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 or above the 51% level, where Kona, Ka'u, Maui, Molokai or Kauai can rightly take the top percentage on the bag.

The blenders will continue to argue that we should "study" this issue. They will testify that coffee prices will 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.

Blenders will disingenuously argue that selling 10% blends allow more consumers to "taste" Kona. But our market is not the tourist market, nor is it Walmart. Such pricing comes at the expense of a sustainable living for our Hawaii growers. We operate in a global specialty coffee marketplace, one that wants 100% Kona.

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!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Suzanne Shiner". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Suzanne Shiner
President Emeritus

decoite2 - Aurielle

From: Jason Stith <stith1970@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2020 9:56 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Subject: Strongly support HB1886

I am a kona coffee farmer. Please consider the deleterious effect the current law has on the quality of coffee sold as kona to our visitors. We have an incredible product here. Create a law that treats it as such. We need to elevate this wonderful coffee, not water it down. Help the coffee farmers and the tourists and further paint the picture of Hawaii as a paradise, NOT a ripoff!
Raise the bar, pass HB1886

Thank you,

Jason Stith, owner
Mahina Mele Farms LLC
808 896 5693

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 11:37:07 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bill Dwyer	Kona Mountain Coffee	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Committee Chair Creagan and Members,

Our Company Kona Mountain Coffee is a fully Intergrated Kona Coffee Company. We have 105 acre's kona coffee farm and sell all our Kona coffee at our to Retail Stores in Kona and Waikiki. We also have a website over 15 Years. Our Challenge with the current market has been to continune to educate coffee consumers the meaning of 10% Kona Blend, the next questions is always, is what is the coffee that is 90%. We as Kona Coffee Farmers work very hard to keep the Quality and the reputaion and History of the Kona name like Napa Wines, Please help us continue the Kona good name and take the confusion out for the coffee consumers and help us pass the business to the next generation. We support HB1886

Thank You

Bill Dwyer

President/CEO

Kona Mountain Coffee

Cell 808 987-9557

decoite2 - Aurielle

From: John Redden <southkonafarms@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2020 9:30 AM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: info@konacoffeefarmers.org
Subject: Blending coffee and Hawai`i brand names

Aloha,

I'm the owner and manager of South Kona Farms. I have read at least two books detailing the history of coffee. Blending goes back its beginning. I am not against blending per se. What I am opposed to is the deceptive manner in which it is done in the state of Hawai`i by large producers. A 10% "Kona blend" reads like 100% at a distance. The labels do not tell where the other 90% comes from. Consider the two top producing countries on the planet, Brazil and Vietnam. Wouldn't you like to know where your blended beans come from? "Kona blend" is not even a good name for co-branding. Consider wine blending. No one markets a wine as a "Napa blend" but they would market it as "Minage a Troi". Excellent blended wines always state their percentage, what grapes they are using and where they come from.

Please support HB1886. This bill will go a long in correcting this issue.

-South Kona Farms

decoite2 - Aurielle

From: Michael Gomes <gomesmike76@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2020 12:24 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Subject: Kona Coffee Brand integrity

Aloha,

Look, I am not going to beat around the bush. We all know that it is bullshit that these big companies mix crap coffee with 10% Kona Coffee and can sell it as such. Local farmers must pay taxes and lease land from Kamehameha Schools. Is it fair that we also have to compete with an inferior product that garners the same price? The local farmers have nearly insurmountable costs to contend with! Coffee Berry Borer destruction and treatment. Lease hold, GET tax, up keep, equipment maintenance, packaging, shipping and advertising! Give us poor small business coffee farmers a break and vote in favor of HB1886. This is the right thing to do. Be politicians for your people, not big companies that sell packaged lies that are detrimental to Kona and Hawaii's economy.

Aloha and mahalo,

Michael Gomes
Vice President of Operations
www.absolutelykona.com
(808) 322-0652

decoite2 - Aurielle

From: Janelle Gomes <janellegomes77@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2020 12:10 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Subject: In Support of HB1886

Aloha, my name is Janelle Gomes.

I am a small 100% Kona Coffee Farmer. I am testifying that I am in full support for HB 1886. I have many expenses as a small business coffee farmer. I do not get as many sales for our TRUE 100% Kona Coffees because these "blenders" are getting all the profits from their 10% blends or "Hawaiian" blends.

I have had people tell me that Kona Coffee is mediocre at best. I ask them what brand they tried and they give me a "Kona" Blend.....I then explain that it is only 10% Kona Coffee mixed with other coffee from wherever. Then I give them a sample of our coffee and they rave about it.

How is it fair that these other companies get to use our Kona or Hawaii name and trick consumers into thinking this is what REAL KONA COFFEE tastes like? King money out of real Kona Coffee farmers' pockets. I produce a great product of pure 100% Kona single estate coffee and I reserve the right to use the proper labeling and charge what I do. They take 90% whatever coffee and charge the consumer for Kona coffee prices, deceiving the consumer! False advertising!! Lying! This takes profits from our local hawaiian businesses and out of our childrens' lives. Kona coffee is expensive because it is expensive to produce and hard work. We also have to fight the Coffee Berry Borer, we must maintain our farms and the costs of processing, production and advertising all add up.

For every sale the BIG brands make, it takes money from the legitimate Kona Coffee farmers. Especially the small business farmers.

This is unexceptable!!!

This is false advertising!!!

Deception!!!

Therefore I am in SUPPORT OF HB1886.

Mahalo

Janelle Gomes
Honalo Farm
78-7007 Mana Opelu Ln
Holualoa HI 96725

Dear Committee Chair Creagan and Members,

My husband and I have been growing, processing and selling 100% Kona coffee for 21 years. We strongly support HB1886. Requiring 51% of the coffee in a bag labeled Kona blend and requiring the origin of the remainder of the coffee be listed will greatly benefit Hawaii's Kona coffee farmers. The same applies for all regions of coffee grown in Hawaii.

For too long, the State has allowed misleading labeling of coffee and that has been detrimental to Hawaii's coffee farmers. Not only has it kept the price of coffee low, it has fooled the consumer into thinking that a 10% blend of Kona coffee represents the flavor of Kona coffee. This results in the loss of future sales. The blenders make more money while degradating the reputation of our superior coffee.

Please support the growers of fine Hawaii coffees and pass this bill.

Mahalo,
Clare & Phil Wilson
Huahua Farm
Holualoa, Hawaii

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 2:10:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joseph Kohn MD	We Are One, Inc. - www.WeAreOne.cc - WAO	Support	No

Comments:

Support Brand Integrity & Hawaii Coffee Farmers

www.WeAreOne.cc

decoite2 - Aurielle

From: Konalicious <info@konaliciousorganiccoffee.com>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2020 9:20 AM
To: AGRtestimony
Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of HB 1886

Dear Committee Members,

I am an organic coffee farmer in the South Kona district and would like to testify in strong support of HB 1886 - relating to Coffee Labeling. The current method of allowing coffee with as little as 10% of the named coffee to be labeled as "blend" is deceptive and damaging to our business. By allowing inferior types of coffee to be blended with small amounts of Hawaiian district coffees we are seeing our hard work denigrated and our valuable commodity cheapened. Consumers are being cheated by thinking they are purchasing a high quality product when in fact they are having cheap, imported coffees brought in thru a back door. I have seen a bumper sticker that reads "Do not mistake Aloha for weakness." It is time for Hawaii to stand up to these large companies, many from the mainland, and protect what is ours - the good reputation and much valued district names of Hawaiian coffee growing farms. Please show us respect.

Mahalo,
Cheryl Wells
Konalicious Organic Coffee

decoite2 - Aurielle

From: Maria Carl <mariacarlrogers@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2020 4:00 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Subject: Testimony in strong support of HB1886

To: Committee Chair Creagan and Members

From: Maria Carl, President, Hawaii Cacao and Chocolate Association (HCCA); CEO, 21 Degrees Estate Cacao Farm (Oahu)

Re: Hawaii Cacao and Chocolate Association Support for HB 1886 Relating to Coffee Labeling

Dear Committee Chair Creagan and Members,

I am writing in strong support of HB1886 relating to coffee labeling both in my role as the President of the Hawaii Cacao and Chocolate Association President and also as a private commercial cacao farmer and business owner in Kahalu`u (Oahu). The Cacao and Chocolate industry in Hawaii very closely mirrors that of the coffee industry in terms of quality, positions—and risk for fraudulent labeling. From our organization's inception in 2012, we established our own labeling laws from the beginning as a result of the trials that the coffee industry has encountered in this area, and we know first-hand what a negative impact misleading and fraudulent labeling can have on our growers, farmers and makers. Moreover, the premium we growers place on growing and producing an extraordinarily high-quality agricultural product which fetches a commensurate value, is greatly at risk for reputation damage as well.

In a state with some of most expensive land and labor, we've seen that commodity agriculture like sugar and pineapple cannot easily compete on the global market. But, for growers and artisans committed to producing some of the highest quality coffee, cacao and vanilla—and other specialty craft products—they rely on brand integrity and reputation in order to remain relevant and competitive.

What happens to one of us happens to all of us. For this reason, we stand united with the Hawaii coffee industry in promoting protection of brand integrity for its premier coffee brands.

Thank you for your positive consideration and passage of **HB1886**.

Mahalo,

//signed//

MARIA CARL (Colonel, USAF, Ret)
President – Hawaii Cacao and Chocolate Association
CEO – 21 Degrees Estate Cacao Farm
Email: mariacarlrogers@gmail.com
Phone: (808) 778 0308

--

Maria

MARIA CARL, Co-Owner, 21 Degrees Estate www.21degreesestate.com

President of Hawaii Cacao and Chocolate Association (HCCA), 2019-2021

(808) 778 0308

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 4:37:14 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dee Fulton	Mauna Mama Kona Coffee	Support	No

Comments:

It's not easy to make money as a small farmer growing Kona coffee. It does not help that the premium brand name is misappropriated and applied to blends with only a small fraction of Kona coffee.

Please pass this bill to require at least 51% Kona coffee before the coffee blend can be labeled Kona coffee.

Mahalo,

Dee Fulton, Kona coffee farmer

Holualoa, HI

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/27/2020 10:06:51 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cecelia Smith	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Testimony in Strong Support of HB 1886

Dear Committee Chair Creagan and Members,

I am a 31 year long Kona Coffee farmer and live in south Kona on Hawaii and fervently believe we REALLY need this HB1886 to pass through the Legislature. Currently the law says that blended coffee can be labeled "Kona Blend, even if it has as little as 10% of the actual coffee grown in that region in it. (Who is even checking THAT 10%? Auwe!) The rest in the bag can be junk coffee from anywhere around the world. That's crazy and not pono while using our precious Hawaiian area names to lure in unsuspecting buyers. The new law would require at least 51% of the coffee used be from the REAL place and the remainder of the coffee origin needs to be identified on that "Blend" package. **I implore you to recognize that our Hawaiian origins need to be valued!** It will begin with the passage of HB 1886.

- Buyers need to have very accurate labeling so that we aren't tricking our consumers. That is wrong.
- We Kona farmers lose money when consumers drink what they think is Kona, but find it is junk. Consumers will avoid all coffee with Kona as its name because the 10% Blend is crap.

Blenders are opposed to changing the requirements because they make too much money ripping off the Kona name. This is wrong! Ripp-offs are wrong!

Hawaii and its Legislature need to step up and protect our precious heritage Kona coffee. Some of my trees out the window are over 130 years old and still very happy. I ask you to protect their future harvest!

In advance, thank you for your positive efforts on our behalf and **Please pass HB1886.**

Mahalo and aloha,
Cecelia Smith-Kona coffee farmer
Honaunau mauka, south Kona, Hawaii island

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 8:12:38 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Gary Hooser	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Testimony in strong support for HB1886 - 51% minimum requirement for coffee blend labeling

Aloha Chair Creagan and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB1886, and also fully support the testimony offered by Suzanne Shriner on behalf of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association (KCFA).

Recently, the Kona Coffee Farmers Association (KCFA) approached me about helping them with legislative advocacy. The core issue is one of preserving “brand integrity” which is hugely important to all agricultural products grown in Hawaii - so naturally, I said yes.

While conducting my initial due diligence, I’ve discovered that just about anyone can slap a label on a product that implies the product was grown in Hawaii, when in fact it may not contain any Hawaii grown contents whatsoever.

At the local supermarket, I found “Hawaiian Hazelnut Flavor Coffee - 100% Arabica”. In fine print on the back of the package were the words: “Does not contain Hawaiian grown coffee.”

On a nearby shelf was another bag of coffee loudly proclaiming its Kona roots, as a “Kona blend” with only 10% of the coffee in the bag actually being grown in Kona. The label gives no clue as to where the other 90% is from.

On other shelves, I found instant Idaho mashed potatoes and clear labeling indicating the Idaho Potato state-required registered trademark. And in the wine section, I discover that a Napa Valley “blend” must contain at least 85% wine from grapes that were actually grown in Napa Valley.

Idaho protects the brand integrity of its famous potatoes:

“All persons doing business in the state of Idaho are required to disclose the growing area of origin upon all potato containers in accordance with this rule...Private brands or labels of containers that reference an Idaho location or geographical feature, or otherwise attempt to imply directly or indirectly that a container of potatoes contains potatoes grown in Idaho when in fact such is not the case are prohibited...”Idaho Code

California also protects by law the “brand integrity” of their wines:

“To be designated as a "California" wine, 100% of the grapes used in the wine must be grown in that state. To bear a viticultural area designation such as "Napa," "Sonoma," or "El Dorado County," 85% or more of the grapes used must be grown in the designated area.” Avvo Legal Guide

The preservation of brand integrity is essential in order for small farmers to prosper in Hawaii. While local consumption is critical to provide base markets for local farmers, the true gravy for small farmers resides in the sale of high-value niche agricultural products - to visitors and for export.

Brand integrity ensures both consumers and farmers are protected. Maintaining and enhancing the quality of the product and thus the price-point and marketability of that product, are essential to ensuring profitability.

Whether it be Kona coffee, Maui coffee, Ka'u coffee, Kauai coffee or coffee grown in other Hawaii geographical locations - preserving brand integrity is essential.

Groups and individuals that supported the effort during the 2019 legislative session and in prior years include:

Kona Coffee Farmers Association: the largest (more than 225 active members) and most active coffee farmer organization in Kona—1/30/19 legislative testimony of President Susanne Shriner: *“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.”*

Hawaii Farmers Union United: in addition to supporting testimony last session, HFUU in November adopted the following to its policy statement: *“With respect to the labeling of Hawaii coffee “blends”, we support the interim step of requiring that a minimum of 51% Hawaii grown coffee be in the package and that the origin of all other coffees in the blend be listed on the package.”* See <https://hfuuhi.org/about/hfuu-policy-statement/>

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation-Kona County Chapter: 2/18/19 testimony of KCFB Board member Kathryn Hickey: *“Blenders are driving down the price and quality of the Kona brand, and it is crucial that our legislators work to solve this problem! Our chapter*

strongly supports this labeling bill [51% minimum] and any measures that will protect the Kona brand from dilution by inferior coffees.”

Ka’u Coffee Growers Cooperative: 3/14/19 legislative testimony of Gloria Cambia: *“As President of the Kau Farmers Cooperative and on behalf of the farmer members I strongly support the 51% minimum genuine content and that the origin of the imported coffee is clearly indicated on the label.”*

Hawaii Chocolate and Cacao Association: 3/18/19 legislative testimony of the association’s president Gunars Valkirs: *“One of the major motivating factors for protecting Hawaiian grown cacao and chocolate products was the state of affairs with Kona coffee where blends down to 10% are allowed and used by large companies to blend cheap coffee with Kona and take advantage of the Kona brand. I am happy to see this legislation as an attempt to correct the situation that was allowed to develop.”*

Hawaii Advocates for Consumer Rights: 4/2/19 legislative testimony: *“Using the “Kona”, or “Maui” or “Ka’u” names on packages containing 90% foreign-grown coffee is pure fraud.”*

Hawaii Pono Initiative—3/31/19 legislative testimony: *“PHI supports a 51% minimum threshold for labeling a product as a Hawaii Coffee Blend”.*

Maui Coffee Association Board Member Martha Lind: 4/1/19 legislative testimony: *“By continuing to allow coffee to be labeled as “Hawaiian” when it only contains 10% Hawaiian coffee, it allows inferior imported coffee products to be blended with 10% Hawaiian coffee and be called “Hawaiian coffee.”*

Hawaii Coffee Association: In its November 2019 meeting the HCA Board voted to support a 51% minimum for Hawaii coffee blends.

In addition, the issue of a 51% minimum threshold and protecting the brand integrity of Hawaii grown coffee has in the past been supported by:

Hawaii County Council - Resolution 501-14

Hawaii State Democratic Party - Resolution BUS/AG 2016-03

Hawaii County Democratic Party - Resolution 2018-03

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/24/2020 11:14:46 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/25/2020 1:01:12 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sandra Scarr	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

In Strong Support of HB 1886

Dear Rep. Creagan, Chair, Rep. DeCoite Vice-Chair and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture,

I have grown Kona coffee for the past 20 years. The world-class reputation and good name of our coffee is and has been diminished by the sale of 10% Kona blends. Hundreds of thousands of packages are sold to consumers who do not know that 90% of the bag's contents are from India, Viet Nam, or Central America.

Using the good Kona name on the bag suggests consumers may smell and taste mellow, delicious Kona coffee. Not true. Even expert cuppers cannot taste 10% Kona coffee in a blend of 90% foreign beans. Consumers are left to believe what they taste is the real thing, when it's not.

Coffee farmers across the state want honest legislation. We propose that any blend that uses our good names (such as, Kona, Ka'u, Maui, Kauai) must have at least 51% of the named coffee beans in the blend. And the origin of the other 49% should be identified on the bag.

Other states protect their premium crops. Idaho potatoes must be grown in Idaho, or the state will sue for fraudulent use of their good Idaho name. California wines are carefully protected by state laws that require nearly all of the named geographic origins of the grapes (Napa, Sonoma, etc.) to be grown in that region. Or they will sue for fraud.

When blenders have to put 51% of the named coffee in the bag, they may raise their prices. Both farmers and consumers will benefit. Farmers will receive more money for their crops, and consumers will get a glimpse of how real Hawaii coffees taste.

We are proud of our 150-year history of growing world-class coffees in these islands. Let's make coffee an honest, state-protected part of our heritage. Tell your Legislators to defend Hawaii's premier coffees, farmers, and consumers from abuse. Make 51% the minimum standard for Hawaii coffee blends!

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/25/2020 4:45:23 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Peter Goulding	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear committee members,

I am a small coffee farmer and a member of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association. I strongly support HB1886 regarding coffee labeling. Current labeling laws are misleading to consumers and allow large coffee blenders to deceive customers with only 10% kona coffee. Requiring 51% is only being fair, as there should be a majority of the type of coffee that it is labeled to be.

Those of us who grow and sell 100% kona coffee are being hurt financially by these large blenders that get away with labeling their 10% blend as kona coffee. Large blenders obviously know that the kona brand is the most valuable and commands the highest price, that's why they do what they do, labeling a 10% blend as kona coffee. They are in fact stealing our brand equity and customers might stop valuing kona coffee so highly because the 10% blend doesn't taste as good as they think it should and they don't notice it's only 10% kona coffee when they buy due to the deceiving labeling.

Please pass this bill to stop deceptive labeling and protect both small farmers and the value of our world renowned kona coffee

Mahalo,

Pete Goulding
Small coffee farmer
Kailua Kona, Hawaii

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/26/2020 7:34:29 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
John Koontz	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a coffee farmer, residing in South Kona, I feel it is urgent to show my support of HB1886. Kona blends have weakened the status of Kona Coffee as a leader in quality. Allowing a 10% blend to cash in on a name for profit, while in reality providing an inferior product, is false advertising. If it doesn't contain at least 51%, it should be called "Guatamalan blend" or where ever the beans are from.

I can see why the large blenders are against this bill, and it all comes down to \$\$\$\$\$\$\$

Please realize that a 10% blend using the name Kona (or Kau, Maui, etc.) is false advertising, resulting in lowering the quality of the name and hurting the income of the farmers.. Let's be proud of the coffee we produce and protect it's name and quality. Mahalo!

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/26/2020 10:52:12 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dawn Poiani	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Product transparency is important. Since Hawaii has an elevated reputation of quality coffee it is important that companies branding as Hawaii coffee are actually sourcing from Hawaii.

decoite2 - Aurielle

From: Thomas Rayson <thomchas77@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 25, 2020 11:18 AM
To: AGRtestimony
Subject: Change the hawaii coffee blend law

Dear state capital persons:

Aloha!

For 27 years the Kona Coffee land law has been on the books allowing anything greater than 10% Kona Coffee to be called Kona blend. This is outrageous and must be changed even 51% is a mild compromise. I support the 51% Kona Coffee Bill and I hope you will too. It is disingenuous to call something Kona Coffee which only has as little as 10% Kona Coffee beans in it. Please stand up to the big Coffee blenders and change the law to allow Kona blend to consist of at least 51% Kona Coffee in all coffee labeled Kona, HawaiianCoffee!

Thank you very much

Thomas Rayson MD

New Board Member Kona coffee farmers Association

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/26/2020 5:39:09 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mark Wessels	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Committee Chair Creagan and Members,

I am a small coffee farmer in Captain Cook in South Kona, Hawaii. **I wish to voice my strong support of HB1886 – Relating to Coffee Labeling.** My wife and I moved here in early 2018 and purchased a 3.5 acre farm planted with 1,800 coffee trees – we live and farm full time here in Captain Cook. We created a new brand, Domain Kona Coffee, and we currently market our coffee via our own website and on Amazon. I was in the wine business for the past 30 years before moving to Hawaii. I was surprised, shocked and frankly dumbfounded to learn that the current law says that blended coffee can be labeled "Kona Blend, Ka'u Blend, Maui Blend, Kauai Blend, Hilo Blend, etc" even if it has as little as 10% of the actual coffee grown in that region in it. The rest can be no-name coffee from anywhere around the world. Given my wine background, this is still hard for me to believe. It goes against any, and all, geographic integrity and identity. The concept of a place name (Kona) being used on a product that contains only 10% of its ingredients from that place is counterintuitive, counterproductive and misleading. This is especially true for a place with a very highly regarded reputation for the quality of its coffee.

One of the world's Finest & Rarest coffees comes from America. It is grown in Hawaii – **only a tiny .01% of the world's coffee comes from Hawai'i.** Why should someone buy Hawaiian coffee ? Or more specifically, why should someone pay a high price Hawaiian coffee ? There is One reason – but there are two parts to this reason and these two parts are inseparable. The reason someone should buy coffee from Hawaiian and pay 3 to 4 times the price of most other coffees is because Hawaiian coffee is both Fine & Rare. It is inconceivable to me that the state of Hawai'i does not protect this very valuable commodity.

Please pass HB1886. This new law would require at least 51% of the coffee used be from the named region and the remainder of the coffee origin/origins be identified.

The reasons this is important are:

1. Misleading labeling is fraudulent – consumers should be able to trust the labeling.

2. Use of the name without requiring the content exploits the region and deprives farmers of income.

3. Low quality coffee is being sold under a prestigious name and results in lowering standards and damaging the brand.

The blenders, many owned by large mainland companies, strongly oppose this change because they are making a fortune selling cheap low-quality coffee as 'Kona' unsuspecting customers. This would never be allowed for California Wine or all other wines from around the world, Kentucky Bourbon, Idaho potatoes, Georgia peaches, Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee, or any number of products worldwide.

Hawai'i really needs to step up and protect the brand integrity of its premier coffee brands that are grown throughout the islands. Thank you for your positive consideration and passage of HB1886.

Mahalo,

Mark Wessels & Lelia Zenner

Domain Kona coffee, Captain Cook, HI

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/27/2020 10:19:48 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Vince Kana`i Dodge	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Re: Testimony in strong support of HB1886

Aloha Legislators!

HB1886 protects the integrity of local regional coffee

HB1886 provides consumers w accurate information

Made in Hawaii is a famous brand- Protect its integrity and support local farmers and producers support HB 1886

aloha nui!

vince Kanai dodge

Waianae, Oahu 96792

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/27/2020 11:57:36 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dr. Hans F Eckert	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Committee Chair Creagan and Members,

I am a *Farmer* and reside in North Kona testifying in **strong support of HB1886 – Relating to Coffee Labeling**. The current law says that blended coffee can be labeled “Kona Blend, Ka’u Blend, Maui Blend, Kauai Blend, Hilo Blend, etc” even if it has as little as 10% of the actual coffee grown in that region in it. The rest can be no-name coffee from anywhere around the world. The new law would require at least 51% of the coffee used be from the named region and the remainder of the coffee origin/origins be identified.

The reasons this is important are:

1. **Misleading labeling is fraudulent** – consumers should be able to trust the labeling.
2. **Use of the name without requiring the content exploits the region and deprives farmers of income.**
3. **Low quality coffee is being sold under a prestigious name and results in lowering standards and damaging the brand.**

The blenders, many owned by large mainland companies, strongly oppose this change because they are making a fortune selling cheap low-quality coffee as “Kona” or Ka’u” to unsuspecting customers. **This would never be allowed for California Wine, Kentucky Bourbon, Idaho potatoes, Georgia peaches, Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee, or any number of products worldwide.**

Hawai’i needs to step up and protect the brand integrity of its premier coffee brands that are grown throughout the islands. Thank you for your positive consideration and passage of **HB1886**.

Mahalo,
Hans Eckert, owner

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/27/2020 10:32:16 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Deniz Tek	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am a small single estate coffee grower in Kona. I strongly support HB1886 because I believe it will :

1. protect the integrity of our unique heritage brand,
2. protect consumers from false labeling,
3. support our local farmers, many of whom are struggling.

Please pass this desperately needed bill.

Aloha,

Deniz Tek

decoite2 - Aurielle

From: Shannon Rudolph <shannonkona@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2020 12:35 PM
Subject: HB 1886 ~ PAST TIME to stand up for Hawai'i farmers!!!

Aloha,

It's waaaay past time to support Kona Coffee farmers!

The legislature has blown off Kona Coffee farmers for decades and this needs to end this year!

Please pass HB 1886 & protect our Hawai'i farmers; enough is enough - past time to move on this.

Stop the fraud to consumers and the unfair advantage of corporations over real Hawai'i farmers!

Mahalo,

Shannon Rudolph

P. O. 243 Holualoa, Hi. 96725

37 year Hawai'i resident

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How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world. ~ Anne Frank

Hawai'i Register to Vote!
<http://olvr.hawaii.gov/>

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 2:26:37 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
John Gelert	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 2:40:39 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Aria Juliet Castillo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 3:09:03 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Dinner	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Misleading the public by unclear coffee information is obviously wrong. Let's make it official. In addition, though, let's find ways to encourage coffee growers to reduce and eliminate pesticide use.

LATE

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 4:14:14 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Marion McHenry	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am submitting my testimony from Kauai. I strongly support this bill.

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 4:27:25 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Paul McKimmy	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Hawaii growers need "brand" protection just like other states' products.

LATE

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 5:09:48 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mary Lacques	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 6:10:42 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Nanea Lo and I'm a lifelong resident of Hawai'i on O'ahu. I am a masters student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. I am writing in to say I fully support this bill because I support our local farmers and you should too! This bill ensures that all coffee sold in Hawaii as a "Hawaii Coffee Blend" (Kona or any geographical designation), must contain at least 51% coffee from the specified region. The present law allows blenders to include only 10%.

me ke aloha 'Āina,

Nanea Lo

LATE

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 8:13:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lorraine Newman	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support this bill. It is important that we support our Kona coffee growers as well as the integrity of their brand. Protect and support Hawaii agriculture.

Mahalo

LATE

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 8:21:19 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jennifer Rodwell	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/29/2020 7:01:02 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sammi Piasecki	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. Consumers deserve to know exactly where their "Kona" coffee comes from.

As a Kona coffee farmer, I work very hard to produce a quality coffee. I know that people buy coffee labeled Kona without knowing that it is not from here (including my sisters). This cheapens my product and undermines my efforts.

Other geographic locations require exactly product labels, why don't we? Idaho potatoes, California wines, other coffee regions of the world.

Hawai'i needs to step up and protect its hardworking farmers (local voters) . Let's protect the integrity of our premier coffee brands.

Mahalo,

Sammi Piasecki

Kona Coffee Farmer

HB-1886

Submitted on: 1/29/2020 3:19:03 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2020 8:30:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tanya Aynessazian	Individual	Support	No

Comments: