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March 13, 2020

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2939, SD1**  
RELATING TO CRIMES ON AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Room 312  
8:30 AM

Aloha Chair Creagan, Vice Chair DeCoite, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

**The Hawaii Farm Bureau supports SB 2939, SD1**, which imposes extended terms of imprisonment for crimes committed on agricultural lands.

Agricultural crime is a persistent problem facing agriculture. Weather, drought, pests, weeds, disease, unstable markets, transportation, labor issues, and a changing climate all contribute to uncertainty for farmers and ranchers. Few businesses face such challenges, yet we are charged with producing food, fiber, fuel and flowers for the 99% of non-farmers. Add in the constant threat and impacts of trespass, theft, and vandalism, and it's a wonder farms and ranches remain viable.

Sadly, agricultural crime is a growing trend in Hawaii. Farmers and ranchers are often victims of those who are looking for easy targets. Despite our efforts to install cameras, form community ag watch groups, and patrol our farms, these criminals know that being caught and prosecuted is unlikely. Our police departments are trying to help but they don't have the staffing to be everywhere at all times either.

In recent years, not only have crops and livestock been stolen, but also tractors, trucks, farm equipment, and tools. When someone is caught committing a crime on agricultural land (and this is not common), the case against that individual should be taken very seriously and the penalties should be severe.

This bill proposes to impose more serious sentences for those that commit crimes against farmers and ranchers on agricultural lands. We hope that this will serve as a deterrent to would-be criminals. The bill is one of several measures this session that could help prevent agricultural crimes and thereby help our farmers and ranchers stay in business.

HFB continues to work with both the police and prosecutor's office to find ways we can work together to help deter, apprehend, and convict individuals that are committing agricultural crimes.

Thank you for your continued support of our local farmers and ranchers.

**SB-2939-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2020 5:48:33 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Andrea Quinn        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

**SB-2939-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 5:38:07 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Molly Hernandez     | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Aloha House of Representatives,  
Creagan, DeCoite & Members of the Agriculture Committee,

My name is Molly Hernandez and I'm in support of Senate Bill 2939 SD1 to impose extended terms of imprisonment for crimes committed on agricultural lands.

Criminal activities on agricultural lands are a big factor that are occurring all over the State of Hawaii. Many agricultural lands have become a haven for homelessness, drug addiction, mental health issues, domestic violence, theft of abandoned vehicles and death by firearms. Criminals should be liable and given the most and foremost maximum penalty for crimes committed on agricultural lands.

Please support Senate Bill 2939 SD1 into law so that action may be pursued to protect and provide justice to all on agricultural lands in the State of Hawaii.

Mahalo for your time, your consideration and your SUPPORT of Senate Bill 2939 SD1.

Mahalo Nui Loa,  
Molly Hernandez and Ohana of Malia Soma-Valmoja

**SB-2939-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 7:28:54 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mel valmoja         | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, Members of the House of Representatives, AGR and Staff,

My name is Mel Valmoja and i stand in support of SB2939 SD1.

We need to have people think twice before committing any type of crime on Agriculture lands.

Support our Law enforcement by deterring people from committing crime on Farm/Agriculture lands.

Crime prevention is the key, and evtended prison terms for individuals choosing to knowingly break the law should be death with accordingly.

Please continue to support Agriculture in Hawaii by protecting farmers, their livelihood, and their property.

Help Agriculture to become a viable economic, sustainable, and future for us and our Keiki.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

Mel Valmoja and Ohana of Malia Soma-Valmoja