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State of Hawaii  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
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**TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS**

**FEBRUARY 12, 2019  
10:00 A.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 211**

**SENATE BILL NO. 485  
RELATING TO BIOSECURITY**

Chairperson Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Senate Bill 485. This bill increases the amount of funds deposited into the Agricultural Development and Food Security Special Fund. The Department of Agriculture supports the intent of this bill provided it does not impact the Department's priorities listed in the Executive Budget.

The Agricultural Development and Food Security Special Fund is an important resource that the Department utilizes for the awarding of grants to farmers for agricultural production or processing activity, irrigation systems maintenance, equipment purchases to support agricultural production or processing, research on and testing of agricultural products and markets, funding of agricultural inspectors across the Department, promotion of locally grown products, water quality testing and improvement, and any other activity intended to increase local agricultural production or processing.

The title on this measure suggests that more finding through the Agricultural Development and Food Security Special Fund will support biosecurity efforts across the state. While this is true, it should be noted that any additional monies deposited into this fund will support all local agricultural development statewide, one aspect of which would be import replacement to support the biosecurity program. This fund serves a larger purpose to both the Department and the local agricultural industry. Not only does



Page 2

it serve various divisions throughout the Department with program funding and personnel, it also directly supports the agricultural organizations and commodity groups with critical funding requests that the Department receives each year. Additional funds would expand that level of support to agricultural groups statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i  
Supporting SB 485 Relating to Biosecurity  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Tuesday, February 12, 2019, 10:00 AM, Room 211

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*The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 40,000 acres in 13 preserves and work in over 30 coastal communities to help protect the near-shore reefs, waters and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands. We forge partnership with government, private parties and communities to protect forests and coral reefs for their ecological values and the many benefits they provide to people.*

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The Nature Conservancy supports SB 485 to provide additional barrel tax revenue to the Agricultural Development and Food Security Special Fund. We believe this is effective policy and funding in support of the State's agriculture and food security goals, as well as important biosecurity and other invasive species response programs.

Invasive weeds, insects, diseases, snakes, and other pests are one of the greatest threats to Hawaii's economy, agriculture, natural environment, and the health and lifestyle of its people. With favorable conditions and limited competition, non-native species arrive in the Hawaiian Islands to find an easy environment in which to thrive.

We also hope that the funding proposed in this bill will continue to be additive and not just replace existing funds. For example, in Fiscal Year 2007 the Legislature's provision of specific funding for coqui frog control was really a shifting of existing funds from other important invasive species programs, which then caused layoffs in the Island Invasive Species Committees and a hiatus in the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council's research grant program.

The [Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan](#)—prepared by the Department of Agriculture with the support of its many government and non-government partners—addresses the full range of invasive species prevention, early detection, rapid response, control, research, and outreach priorities across the state. Beyond this bill's additive funding, we encourage the Legislature, the Administration and partners to enhance our collective attention and funding applied to the full range of pest issues across the islands as outlined in the comprehensive Biosecurity Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill. Using the barrel tax revenue for its originally intended purposes is a wise investment in our future.

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS  
Tuesday, February 12, 2019 — 10:00 a.m. — Room 211

**Ulupono Initiative Strongly Supports SB 485, Relating to Biosecurity**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Murray Clay and I am Managing Partner of the Ulupono Initiative, a Hawai'i-based impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life for the people of Hawai'i by working toward solutions that create more locally produced food; increase affordable, clean, renewable energy; and better manage waste and fresh water resources. Ulupono believes that self-sufficiency is essential to our future prosperity and will help shape a future where economic progress and mission-focused impact can work hand in hand.

**Ulupono strongly supports Senate Bill 485**, which increases the portion of the barrel tax that goes to agriculture development from 15 cents to 30 cents per barrel, because it aligns with our goal to increase local food production.

The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture is one of the lowest funded departments in State government. Yet, for many rural and agrarian citizens, the Department provides necessary support to survive. We hope that increased funding will allow the Department to revitalize its data and other branches that provide critical information and support to farmers and ranchers. We also note that the critical information and data was lost when the market analysis and news service branch was eliminated in October 2009. This branch was critical to helping guide the State towards achieving its goal to double local food production.

As Hawai'i's local food issues become increasingly complex and challenging, organizations need additional resources and support to address and overcome them. We appreciate this committee's efforts to look at policies that support local food production.

We believe that through collaboration, we can help produce more local food and support an economically robust homegrown agriculture industry, which strengthens our community with fresh, healthy food. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Murray Clay  
Managing Partner

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*

**SB-485**

Submitted on: 2/8/2019 9:54:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2019 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Caroline Kunitake	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support SB485. We need to fund Hawaii bio security efforts.

Mahalo,

Caroline Kunitake



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February 12, 2019

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**TESTIMONY ON SB 485**  
RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

Room 211  
10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, 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 1,900 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community.

Hawaii Farm Bureau **supports SB 485**, which increases the amount of barrel tax deposited into the agricultural development and food security special fund.

The barrel tax was intended to support critical investments in clean energy, local agricultural production, and environmental response to reduce the State's dependence on imported fossil fuels and food products. As an organization opposed to new taxes, HFB took an unusual step by supporting the environmental response, energy, and food security tax, or barrel tax. It was a desperate move by the industry to secure stable funding for Hawaii's agricultural industry.

The barrel tax was originally intended to increase local capacity to grow and produce import replacement products in order to fulfill the State's vision for increased self-sufficiency and sustainability. During the economic downturn, proceeds from this fund were reallocated to balance the budget. We understand that some of the proceeds continued to benefit agriculture.

HFB believes increasing the amount of barrel tax deposited into the agricultural development and food security special fund is pertinent in protecting Hawaii's natural resources, agriculture, and human health.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important subject.