

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION
AND
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 2023
10:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 229 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1250 HD1
RELATING TO MAMAKI TEA**

Chairpersons Keohokalole and Gabbard and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1250 HD1. This bill imposes labeling requirements for mamaki tea grown in the State and appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to administer the mamaki tea labeling requirements.

DOA supports the labeling of Hawaii grown mamaki tea and the appropriation of funds to administer the labeling requirements. The funds will support an inspector or specialist (approximate appropriation request of \$100,000) to help rebuild DOA's labeling enforcement capability that was lost during the severe reductions in force that occurred in prior administrations, and enable DOA to address labeling enforcement challenges in various Hawaii products such as mamaki tea, coffee, and macadamia nuts. The inspector will take the lead in researching and utilizing newly developed testing technologies and protocols, such as Oritain (<https://oritain.com>), to identify the source of different products geographically. Oritain can generate science-based data



that identifies specific growing regions as a proof and confirmation of truth or false labeling. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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Kauai

Aloha Chairs Keohokalole & Gabbard, Vice Chairs Fukunaga & Richards, and Members of the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection & Agriculture and Environment Committees,

The Hawaii Farmers Union United (HFUU) is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports HB1250.**

We believe that HB1250 Mamaki Tea is important legislation because it will help to ensure that mamaki tea is accurately labeled, and only mamaki tea produced in the state of Hawaii is sold to consumers. Appropriated funds to the department of agriculture to cover the administrative costs necessary for this labeling requirement is further necessary for the protection and fair promotion of mamaki tea.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF



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March 17, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON HB 1250, HD1
RELATING TO MĀMAKI TEA

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
10:00 AM

Aloha Chairs Keohokalole and Gabbard, Vice-Chairs Fukunaga and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 1250, HD1, which imposes labeling requirements for Māmaki tea grown in the State and appropriates funds to the department of agriculture to administer the Māmaki tea labeling requirements.

Māmaki, a Hawaiian endemic shrub, is only found in Hawai'i which makes it uniquely Hawaiian. It can be found as a bush, shrub, or tree and its leaves are used to make herbal tea.

The Māmaki tea industry is a fairly new industry, so we must protect this culturally important agricultural crop from deceptive or misleading labels.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

LATE

HB-1250-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 11:00:53 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/17/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Bence	Testifying for Hawai'i Sustainable Farms	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-1250-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 8:38:01 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/17/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bruce Corker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Members of the CPN and AEN Committees:

As a Hawaii County farmer, I strongly support HB1250.

This measure provides TRUTH-IN-LABELING for the benefit of farmers and consumers.

For far too long the State of Hawaii has not adequately protected the “Hawaii Brand” and ignored basic principles fair labeling that would protect Hawaii farmers and other Hawaii producers from deceptive marketing practices. See this article from the San Francisco Chronical published last summer which describes marketing practices that are undermining the “Hawaii Brand” –

<https://www.sfgate.com/hawaii/article/hawaii-products-not-from-islands-17312415.php>

Hawaii needs to protect the integrity of its specialty agricultural crops in the same way that Idaho protects its Idaho Potatoes, Vermont protects Vermont Maple Syrup, California protects its wine grape growers, Georgia protects its Vidalia Onions, and France protects Champagne—all of which require 100% genuine contents to use their regional names on labels.

Why is Hawaii allowing use of the Hawaii name and Hawaii regional names on labels for packages containing products not produced in Hawaii?

Please pass HB1250. Thank you.

Bruce Corker, Rancho Aloha

HB-1250-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 4:00:09 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/17/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JC Watson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB1250. I am an avid conservationist and have also commercially grown, sustainably harvested, and sold mamaki for over 3 years. I strongly support labeling protections regarding this commodity and making a special distinction for locally grown and produced mamaki. As current growth projections for this crop continue to increase, there is a real need to have meaningful protections put in place to ensure that externally grown mamaki cannot be labeled and sold as Hawaiian mamaki anymore than Kona coffee cannot be labeled as such if it wasn't grown in Kona.

Mahalo nui,

JC Watson

HB-1250-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 7:15:23 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/17/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of HD1. Thank you.