

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2025
2:00 p.m.
CONFERENCE ROOM 308 AND VIDEOCONFERENCE

HOUSE BILL NO. 496 HD2
RELATING TO MAMAKI TEA

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 496 HD2. This bill imposes labeling requirements for mamaki tea grown in the State and appropriates funds for a Measurement Standards Inspector position.

The Department of Agriculture (DOA) strongly supports this bill. The growing demand for Hawaiian mamaki tea as a brand should be protected and promoted. This bill provides mamaki tea the protection afforded to other valuable agricultural crops like coffee and macadamia nuts.

DOA strongly supports the appropriation of funds to establish a Measurement Standards Inspector V position (SR-19, \$65,000), to restore DOA's capability for enforcement of packaging and labeling regulations. The inspector will enforce the new labeling laws for mamaki tea, coffee, macadamia nuts, and Hawaii-made products.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 20, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 496, HD2
RELATING TO MĀMAKI TEA

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

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 496, HD2, which prohibits the use of certain words that can be used on the label of a consumer package that contains or includes tea or dried leaves from the plant *Pipturus albidus*, unless one hundred per cent of the tea or dried leaves were grown in the State.

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. Māmaki has cultural and medicinal significance and is growing in popularity in local and global markets for its health benefits.

The Māmaki tea industry is fairly new, so we must protect this culturally important agricultural crop from deceptive or misleading labels. Hawai'i's Māmaki growers work hard to cultivate this unique crop, often on small-scale farms that contribute to the local economy and preserve agricultural traditions. Proper labeling requirements ensure that the benefits of Hawai'i's māmaki tea industry go to these dedicated farmers, not misleading competitors.

This measure is an important step in preserving the integrity of Hawai'i's agricultural products, protecting local farmers, and ensuring that consumers can make informed decisions about the origins of the products they purchase.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-496-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 11:15:36 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicole Galase	Hawaii Cattlemen's Council	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council supports this measure

HB-496-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 9:50:45 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jan K Baldado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly SUPPORT HB 496.

Mahalo nui.

HB-496-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 1:00:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa M Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 496 Which prohibits the use of certain words on the label of a consumer package that contains or includes tea or dried leaves from the plant Pipturus albidus, unless one hundred per cent of the tea or dried leaves were grown in the State. Appropriates funds for a Measurement Standard Inspector position.

Mahalo,

Theresa Thompson