

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

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

TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025
1:01 p.m.
CONFERENCE ROOM 229 AND VIDEOCONFERENCE

HOUSE BILL NO. 496 HD2
RELATING TO MAMAKI TEA

Chairs DeCoite and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Wakai and Richards and Members of the Committees:

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. 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 albidis*, unless one hundred percent of the tea or dried leaves were grown in the State. 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 appreciates that funds are added to this bill to support one Measurement Standards Inspector V SR-19 \$65,000, to support and restore enforcement capability for



labeling regulations for Hawaii products such as mamaki tea, coffee, and macadamia nuts. The inspector will inspect and enforce the new laws.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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March 18, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON HB 496, HD2
RELATING TO MĀMAKI TEA**

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
1:01 PM

Aloha Chairs DeCoite and Gabbard, Vice-Chairs Wakai 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 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.