

SB 2645



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE
ON
AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

FEBRUARY 5, 2008, 2:45 P.M.

SENATE BILL NO. 2645
RELATING TO DROUGHT MITIGATION

Chairperson Tokuda and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill No. 2645. The purpose of this bill is to provide funding to pursue drought mitigation projects and measures in each county of the state. The department supports the intent of this bill provided it does not impact the priorities set forth in our Executive Biennium Budget, however, defers to the department of land and natural resources regarding the proper expending agency.

The effects of drought in agriculture can be devastating. With the possibility of drought lasting for years, crop yields can fall dramatically and farms can close. Approximately two years ago, the Commission on Water Resource Management assisted in the creation of drought committees in each county. The committees then came up with potential projects to implement in order to mitigate the effects of drought. This request represents recognition of the importance and need for these projects.

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



LAURA H. THIELEN
CHAIRPERSON
MEREDITH J. CHING
JAMES A. FRAZIER
NEAL S. FUJIIWARA
CHIYOME L. FUKINO, M.D.
DONNA FAY K. KIYOSAKI, P.E.
LAWRENCE H. MIKE, M.D., J.D.

KEN C. KAWAHARA, P.E.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**TESTIMONY OF THE CHAIRPERSON
OF THE COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

on Senate Bill 2645 – Relating to Drought Mitigation

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE
ON
AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

February 5, 2008

The purpose of Senate Bill 2645 is to provide an unspecified amount of funding to pursue drought mitigation projects and measures in each county of the State. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports the intent of this measure, as it is consistent with the goals and objectives of our program and the Hawaii Drought Plan, but we are unable to support this measure as the funds are not included in the Executive Biennium Budget.

Droughts have severely affected Hawaii in the past, and as part of a natural climate cycle, droughts will impact the State in the future. In addition to agriculture and livestock industries, drought induced impacts will also affect other segments of the community, such as water supply, commerce, environment, public health and safety.

The Department concurs with the importance of drought planning and the effective implementation of mitigation measures and strategies. The Hawaii Drought Plan and the County Drought Mitigation Strategies identify and recommend implementation of drought mitigation actions, subject to available funding. These Drought Mitigation Strategies were developed in consultation with key stakeholders who participated as members of the respective local County Drought Committees to identify and prioritize projects to help reduce the impacts of drought in their communities.

Should available funding be identified in support of these projects, the Department recommends that such funding be provided directly to the counties for implementation of drought mitigation activities at the county level.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Council Chair
G. Riki Hokama

Director of Council Services
Ken Fukuoka

Vice-Chair
Danny A. Mateo

Council Members
Michelle Anderson
Gladys C. Baisa
Jo Anne Johnson
Bill Kauakea Medeiros
Michael J. Molina
Joseph Pontanilla
Michael P. Victorino



COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
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WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
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LATE

February 4, 2008

TO: Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: G. Riki Hokama
Council Chair 

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF FEBRUARY 5, 2008; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2645,
RELATING TO DROUGHT MITIGATION**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds for drought mitigation projects in each county of the State.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I support this measure for the following reasons:

1. The implementation of the drought mitigation plan developed by the counties' drought committees is of vital importance to Maui County, which has been under the constant threat of drought for several years.
2. The lingering drought and near-drought conditions have affected the entirety of Maui County's agriculture industry, from the independent family farmers to the agribusiness stalwarts that have historically provided steady employment. Maui County's invaluable green environment has also suffered, with native species put at risk. The efforts of those who have developed mitigation plans, involving improved water storage and conservation, merit additional support to protect the economy and ecology.
3. While Maui County has been doing its best to provide for the prudent conservation of the County's precious water supply by encouraging the use of reclaimed water and imposing restrictions on the use of potable water for the irrigation of golf courses, much remains to be done. The funds provided by this legislation would jumpstart additional efforts supported by the county drought committees.

For the foregoing reasons, I support this measure.

HAWAII FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
2343 ROSE STREET
HONOLULU, HI 96819

FEBRUARY 5, 2008

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

TESTIMONY ON SB 2645
RELATING TO DROUGHT MITIGATION

Chair Tokuda and committee members:

My name is Alan Takemoto, Executive Director, of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, which is the largest non-profit general agriculture organization representing approximately 1,600 farm and ranch family members statewide.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation supports SB 2645.

Drought is one the most debilitating factors that continues to face farmers and ranchers statewide. When drought occurs, farmers and ranchers are the first segments of the community to be asked or required to cut back on water usage. Without adequate water, farmers and ranchers income and production will be dramatically affected.

The State Drought Plan consists of four county drought committees who focus on specific actions to mitigate drought in their respective county. However, we need to make sure that sufficient amount of funding is made available to implement the plans. Last year the legislature passed a \$4 million appropriation funding bill, whereby \$1 million would go to each county. We believe this was a good start, but additional funding will be needed to prepare us for future drought conditions.

We respectfully ask that you support the passage of this measure.

Thank you.



LATE TESTIMONY



Maui County Farm Bureau

*An Affiliate of the American Farm Bureau Federation and Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation
Serving Maui's Farmers and Ranchers*

TESTIMONY

SB2645

RELATING TO DROUGHT MITIGATION

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Chair Tokuda and Committee Members:

My name is Warren Watanabe, Executive Director of the Maui County Farm Bureau, a non-profit general agriculture organization and an affiliate of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation.

MCFB on behalf of our member farmers, ranchers and agricultural organizations, **STRONGLY SUPPORT** SB2645, providing funding for drought mitigation measures.

MCFB recognizes and appreciates the legislature for passing Act 238 during the 2007. The Governor has released the funding and projects are underway on Maui to improve the intakes for water delivery to the County Kula Agricultural Park as well as \$200,000 for planning for stormwater recapture to provide new sources of water for agriculture. The stormwater recapture planning will dovetail well with the ongoing CIP project for the Upcountry Dual line. The dual line provides infrastructure to deliver water, however, without additional water supplies, those users may be at risk of not having water during times of drought. The \$200K project is a good first step to increase agricultural water deliveries in Upcountry Maui. After approval of Act 238, the Maui County Drought Council identified the above projects as the top priority for our County. Each of the other Counties have done the same.

This appropriation seeks to continue this process of working on the Drought Mitigation projects identified by the various County Drought Councils. It is by whittling away, project by project that we can increase Hawaii's ability to withstand drought periods. Drought mitigation projects must be undertaken ahead of a drought. When the drought comes, it is too late.

We respectfully request passage of this measure to increase Hawaii's ability to withstand droughts.

1/29/08

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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

SENATE BILL 2645

RELATING TO DROUGHT MITIGATION

February 5, 2008

Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committees:

My name is Stephanie Whalen. I am President and Research Director of the Hawaii Agriculture Research Center (HARC). I am testifying today on behalf of the center, our research and support staff, and our members and clients.

HARC strongly supports of Senate Bill 2645 Relating to Drought Mitigation.

Conservation of water and its appropriate management in times of shortage is a critical issue for island communities. Strategic planning for drought mitigation is important and has been accomplished by our counties with input from their respective communities. As water becomes the limiting factor for society water conservation and improved management should rise to the top of the state's priorities.

Funds are now needed to implement the counties plans.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**Hawaii
Crop
Improvement
Association**

Paul Koehler, Past-President, Board Member
2111 Piilani Highway
Kihei Hawaii 96853
Phone: 808-879-4074 Fax: 808-879-0499

Testimony by: Paul Koehler
SB 2645, Relating to Drought Mitigation
Senate AHW Committee
Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2008
Room 224: 2:45 pm

Position: Strong Support

Chair Tokuda, and Members of the Senate AHW Committee:

My name is Paul Koehler. I am a Maui resident, Past-President and sitting Board Member of HCIA. The HCIA represents seed production and research facilities operating in Hawaii. The HCIA is comprised of five member companies that farm an estimated 8,000 acres on four islands, valued at \$97.6 million in operating budget (2006/2007 HASS). We are proud members of Hawaii's diversified agriculture and life sciences industries.

Your support is requested for this appropriations request that would fund implementation of the counties' drought mitigation plans. Hawaii is still recovering from about ten years of drought. We must be pro-active in capturing water and holding it in reserve for drought conditions, particularly during the rainy seasons.

Your support of this measure is appreciated. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.