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TESTIMONY OF MICAH A. KANE, CHAIRMAN  
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

ON S.B. 2907  
RELATING TO THE PASTORAL AND AGRICULTURAL HOMESTEADING DIVISION  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

February 26, 2008

Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) supports the purpose and intent of S.B. 2907 to promote pastoral and agricultural homesteading by establishing a division for that purpose as long as its funding does not impact Department funds or the Administration's priorities as reflected in the Executive Supplemental Budget.

In 2000, the DHHL Agricultural Task Force provided recommendations on how to promote successful native Hawaiian farming at various levels. One of these recommendations related to the creation of an Agricultural Resources Division within DHHL. Other recommendations related to (1) Land Use and Lease Enforcement, (2) Farm Support Services, (3) Infrastructure, and 4) Value-Added Products and Marketing Support.

Due to the affordable housing crisis in Hawaii, and because Hawaiians have the lowest rate of homeownership in the State of Hawaii, DHHL's focus has been on accelerating homeownership opportunities for native Hawaiians. We recognize there is a need for DHHL to focus on the Agricultural and Pastoral needs of our beneficiaries and appreciate your support for increasing DHHL's administrative and operational capacity to do so.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.