

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



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

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2009
9:00 A.M.
ROOM 312

HOUSE BILL NO. 1434
RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1434. The purpose of this bill is to require the University of Hawaii, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH-CTAHR), in cooperation with the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) and the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF), to conduct a feasibility study on the potential for establishing a farm to school program in Hawai'i's public schools.

The Department acknowledges that House Bill No. 1434 has merit; however, given the current fiscal challenges it would not be prudent to allocate resources for this at this time. The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) offers comments.

The HDOA strongly supports programs that connect schools with local farms; educate students about food cultivation; encourage students to pursue careers in agriculture; and instill healthy eating habits in Hawai'i's youth. The HDOA is working toward increasing food self-sufficiency in Hawai'i, raising production and demand of locally grown foods and decreasing our dependence on imported foods. The Department is collaborating with public institutions (prisons and schools) and industry stakeholders, to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables from local producers.

The HDOA appreciates this committee's efforts to support programs that give students the choice to eat healthier, more nutritious local produce and expand the market for local farmers.



TESTIMONY

House Committee on Agriculture
HB 1434 Relating to Education

Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation on behalf of its member farmers and ranchers is in **support of the intent** of HB1434 proposing a study for a Farm to School Program.

The Farm to School program is a well established National Program. In Hawaii Kokua Hawaii Foundation has piloted efforts in this area. It provides opportunities for our farmers and ranchers and will significantly add towards our self sufficiency.

However, even as we support the concept, we do not support another Study. Since Kokua Foundation has begun piloting this program, lessons can be learned from their experience and how it could be expanded throughout the State. What is lacking at this time is a State Policy to embark on this initiative. Many states have policies, and examples are provided at the Farm to School website: <http://www.farntoschool.org/policies.php>

We urge that a policy regarding a Farm to School Program in Hawaii be adopted at this time in place of a Study. Other measures before the legislature including modifications in the procurement code and the Value-Added Facility CIP as proposed in HB242 are practical measures that can be implemented to make the Farm to School Program a reality.

We respectfully request your support in amending this measure to be a policy statement supporting the Farm to School Program as well as support of the other measures such as HB242 to implement the program. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

wooley1-Christopher

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2009 5:25 PM
To: AGRtestimonv
Cc:
Subject: Testimony for HB1434 on 2/6/2009 9:00:00 AM

Testimony for AGR 2/6/2009 9:00:00 AM HB1434

Conference room: 312
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Thomas E. Fratinardo
Organization: Individual
Address: 458 Laupahoehoe, Hawaii
Phone: 808
E-mail:
Submitted on: 2/4/2009

Comments:

Ladies and Gentlemen. I strongly support HB1434. I am retired living in Laupahoehoe. I am soon to participate in the Master Gardener Program which is taught by the University Of Hawaii. This program trains local people to go back into their communities to provide support to unskilled gardeners. I would love to take my experience and apply it to the children of Laupahoehoe School. Our local children need a program like this one. They need to get away from the television and video games and learn how to provide food for their families. In the economic times we are in, more and more people will rely on locally grown food in order to subsist. We must be a self sustaining society. It is far too costly to continue importing our produce. I hope all house members will support this bill. Mahalo!