

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DUANE OKAMOTO
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 Fax: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
JANUARY 30, 2009
9:30 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 312**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 237
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 237. The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds to fund a marketing study for Hawaii's macadamia nut industry. The Department of Agriculture (HDOA) offers comments.

The components of the study as outlined in this bill are appropriate however two important areas of the study are outside the expertise of the department and would have to be contracted. These areas are the composition of a Hawaii macadamia nut commission and a nutritional analysis of macadamia nuts. Agricultural product commissions are more common on the mainland and it is unknown if experts with experience with this type of commission can be found in Hawaii. Also, the HDOA does not have the expertise or equipment to conduct the nutritional analysis.

We acknowledge the value of this study but believe that the priorities set forth in the Executive Biennium Budget for Fiscal Years 2009-2010 should take precedence. At the appropriate time, when economic conditions improve, a marketing study of Hawaii's macadamia nut industry, as proposed in this bill, should be conducted with sufficient funding and adequate time to complete a comprehensive study.



2343 Rose Street, Honolulu, HI 96819
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Neighbor Islands: 1-800-482-1272
Fax: (808) 848-1921; e-mail: info@hfbf.org

Re: HB 237 ~ Relating to Agriculture; Establishing a Macadamia Nut Commission
Hearing Date: Jan. 30, 2009 @ 9:30 AM
AGR; House Conference Room 312

Position: Support

Representative Clift Tsuji
Committee on Agriculture

Chair Tsuji, and Members of the Committees on Agriculture,

The Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation is the largest general agriculture organization in the State of Hawaii with over 1600 members Statewide and us "Support HB 237. The stakeholders in this commodity group feel this commission is needed and we support their decision.

The establishment of a Macadamia Nut Commission and marketing study will support & facilitate this industries successful future in Hawaii. This study along with an organized commission will help strategically plan the future of this important industry in Hawaii. We respectfully ask for your support.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.

Respectfully,

Warren Watanabe
Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation

The Twenty-Fifth Legislature
Regular Session of 2009

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Committee on Agriculture
Rep. Clift Tsuji, Chair
Rep. Jessica Wooley, Vice Chair

State Capitol, Conference Room 312
Friday, January 30, 2009; 9:30 a.m.

**STATEMENT OF THE ILWU LOCAL 142 ON H.B. 237
RELATING TO MACADAMIA NUTS**

The ILWU Local 142 supports H.B. 237, which appropriates funds for a marketing study for Hawaii's macadamia nut industry, including the best structure for the establishment of a Hawaii Macadamia Nut Commission.

Hawaii has a number of macadamia nut growers, large and small. In fact, the Hawaii production of macadamia nuts helped to expand the industry. However, in recent years, production has dropped due to bad weather and pests. Furthermore, the price of macadamia nuts has also dropped due to competition from other countries like Australia.

Nevertheless, the macadamia nut is viewed as a viable crop, helping to employ hundreds of workers statewide. Efforts must be made to support the industry. H.B. 237 proposes a marketing study and a commission to assist the macadamia nut industry. While an initial appropriation is requested, the bill proposes that processors and producers be assessed to support the commission. This will help the commission be self-sustaining, but may also be a burden for small growers.

The ILWU urges passage of H.B. 237, with consideration of an amendment to ensure that small growers are not unduly taxed.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views and concerns.