

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DUANE K. OKAMOTO
Deputy to the Chairperson

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
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2009, 9:00 A.M.
ROOM 312**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 240
MAKING A GRANT-IN-AID APPROPRIATION
TO THE COUNTIES TO FINANCE DROUGHT MITIGATION
PROJECTS AND MEASURES.**

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 240. The purpose of this bill is to provide funding to the counties to pursue drought mitigation projects and measures in each county of the state. The department supports the intent of this bill as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Biennium Budget for Fiscal Years 2009-2010.

The effects of drought on agriculture can be devastating. The drought that occurred this past year highlighted the competition for limited water resources. With the possibility of drought lasting for years, crop yields can fall dramatically and farms can close. Approximately five years ago, the Commission on Water Resource Management assisted in the creation of drought committees in each county. The committees then came up with prioritized, potential projects, including reservoir construction, to implement in order to mitigate the effects of drought. This request represents recognition of the importance and need for these projects. We recommend that a matching contribution from the counties be included which would show their commitment to these projects and allow for faster implementation.

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
LAURA H. THIELEN
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
AGRICULTURE**

**Wednesday, February 4, 2009
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 312**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 240
MAKING A GRANT-IN-AID APPROPRIATION TO THE COUNTIES TO FINANCE
DROUGHT MITIGATION PROJECTS AND MEASURES**

House Bill 240 appropriates an unspecified amount for grant-in-aid to implement agricultural drought mitigation projects and measures in each county of the State. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) recognizes the importance of mitigating the effects of drought, as it is consistent with the goals and objectives of our program and the Hawaii Drought Plan; however, given the current fiscal difficulties, it would not be prudent to pursue enactment at this time.

LAURA H. THIELEN
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

RUSSELL Y. TSUJI
FIRST DEPUTY

KEN C. KAWAHARA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
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KAIHOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS



Hawaii Agriculture Research Center

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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

HOUSE BILL 240

Making an Appropriation to the Counties to Finance Drought Mitigation Projects and Measures

February 4, 2009

Chairman Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

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

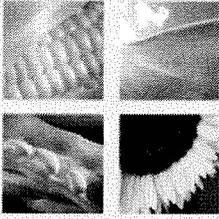
HARC supports House Bill 240 which proposes funding to support county projects to mitigate drought.

Many of the state's areas have been in a long continuous drought. Preventative measures need to be taken to relieve the water shortage. This effort can not be continually delayed if water is to be available for communities and local food production which is recognized as a serious need.

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 needed now to implement the counties plans.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Hawaii's agricultural needs.



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Hawaii Crop Improvement Association

Growing the Future of Worldwide Agriculture in Hawaii

Testimony By: Alicia Maluafiti
HB 240, Making A GIA Appropriation to the Counties to Finance Drought
Mitigation Projects and Measures
House Agriculture Committee
Wednesday, Feb.4, 2009
Room 312, 9:00 am

Position: Strong Support

Chair Tsuji and Members of the House AGR Committee:

My name is Alicia Maluafiti, Executive Director of the Hawaii Crop Improvement Association. The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association (HCIA) is a nonprofit trade association representing the agricultural seed industry in Hawaii. Now the state's largest agricultural commodity, the seed industry contributes to the economic health and diversity of the islands by providing high quality jobs in rural communities, keeping important agricultural lands in agricultural use, and serving as responsible stewards of Hawaii's natural resources.

We appreciate this GIA appropriation request, particularly in these times of budget deficits of a magnitude unheard of before in Hawaii. Despite the cold weather and rain in recent weeks, our islands continue to be in drought conditions, which affect farmers' ability to grow crops and livestock. It also places our residents at risk of water shortages. We urge your strong support of this measure for \$4 million, which will continue the drought mitigation projects and strategies developed in each county and incorporated in the Hawaii Drought Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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TESTIMONY

House Agriculture Committee

**RE: HB 240 Making a Grant-in-aid Appropriation to the Counties to finance
Drought Mitigation Projects and Measures**

Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation on behalf of its member farmers and ranchers is in support of HB240, providing funding to the Counties to implement Drought Mitigation projects and measures.

Farms and ranches are adversely impacted from low rainfall periods because their crop market share is fairly limited by the size. When drought conditions prevent them from growing a complete growth cycle, they lose not only the single crop. But in many cases an entire year's market.

This Bill will provide funding to install mitigating measures to prevent the crop losses at the beginning of the drought cycle or during prolonged low rainfall. The Bill designates the Counties as expending agencies as past experience have shown that the Hawaii Drought Council is governed by much more bureaucratic requirements, which delays the project from proceeding in a timely manner. In drought situations any delay causes disaster for the farms and ranches.

The Farm Bureau also suggests that the Bill language be amended to include that drought funds be limited or restricted for agriculture purposes and not fire hazard mitigation. The Fire hazard mitigation program has access to Federal assistance on a very broad front and tends to reduce the funding available for agricultural purposes.

We appreciate the Legislature's continued commitment to agriculture. We recognize the fiscal challenges facing the legislature this year. At the same time, we know that farmers and ranchers are facing significant reduction in viability due to droughts. These measures, in contrast to the larger CIP measures identified in HB243, address smaller projects that could provide immediate results.

If there are questions, please contact Paul Matsuo who is HFBF's advisor on Water Infrastructure matters. He can be contacted at 8395040.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our views on this matter.



KONA COUNTY FARM BUREAU
P.O. Box 2341 • Kealahou, Hawaii 96750
Phone: 324-6011

February 1, 2008

House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture
House of Representatives Committee on Tourism, Culture, and International Affairs

Testimony on HB 240

(Relating to MAKING A GRANT-IN-AID APPROPRIATION TO THE COUNTIES TO FINANCE
DROUGHT MITIGATION PROJECTS AND MEASURES.)

Chairman Clift Tsuji, Chairman Joey Manahan, and Committee Members:

The Kona County Farm Bureau respectfully submits testimony regarding HB 240.

The Kona County Farm Bureau is in support of the need to implement the Hawaii drought plan adequately, by providing sufficient funding to the counties so they may work to address the many challenges that our agriculture industry faces in responding to droughts.

The availability of agricultural water is not only important to sustain current agricultural opportunities, but also to increase the local farmers' ability to expand local food production as well as the production of other agricultural products.

Thank you for providing this opportunity to share with you the position of the Kona County Farm Bureau.

Sincerely yours,

Nancy Pisicchio
President

Maui County Farm Bureau

An Affiliate of the American Farm Bureau Federation and Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation

Serving Maui's Farmers and Ranchers

P.O. Box 148

Kula, Hawaii 96790

RE: HB 240 Making a Grant-in-aid Appropriation to the Counties to finance Drought Mitigation Projects and Measures

Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Maui County Farm Bureau is Maui's general agriculture advocacy non-profit organization. Affiliated with the Hawaii Farm Bureau and American Farm Bureau Federation, we represent Maui's farm and ranch families and organizations. MCFB strongly supports HB240, providing funding for continued implementation of Hawaii's drought Plan.

As rainfalls come, droughts are forgotten. Yet during droughts, everyone speaks towards the importance of completing drought mitigation projects. This Bill seeks to implement the plan in a systematic way. We realize that large blocks of funding is difficult to come by. We therefore are suggesting a systematic process to gradually increase our drought management abilities.

MCFB respectfully requests your strong support of HB 240. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this matter.

Council Chair
G. Riki Hokama

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



Director of Council Services
Ken Fukuoka

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov/council

February 3, 2009

TO: Honorable Clift Tsuji, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture

Honorable Joey Manahan, Chair
House Committee on Tourism, Culture, & International Affairs

FROM: Gladys C. Baisa
Councilmember

DATE: February 4, 2009

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB 240, MAKING A GRANT-IN-AID APPROPRIATION TO THE COUNTIES TO FINANCE DROUGHT MITIGATION PROJECTS AND MEASURES**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds to the counties for drought mitigation purposes.

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.

Drought is one of the most difficult to control natural disasters and severely affects crops and livestock. Drought conditions continue to affect the local farms and ranches, making it difficult for the farmers to produce quality products on a consistent basis year round.

Each County developed a drought mitigation strategy for its respective county, emphasizing drought mitigation projects. These strategies represent the local needs and concerns of each county. However, sufficient funding to the counties is necessary to address the many challenges that our agriculture industry faces.

A steady and reliable supply of water is needed for our agriculture industry to survive. I ask for your support of this important measure.

GCB:amm

Council Chair
Danny A. Mateo

Vice-Chair
Michael J. Molina

Council Members
Gladys C. Baisa
Jo Anne Johnson
Sol P. Kaho'ohalahala
Bill Kauakea Medeiros
Wayne K. Nishiki
Joseph Pontanilla
Michael P. Victorino



Director of Council Services
Ken Fukuoka

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.maui-county.gov/council

February 3, 2009

TO: Honorable Clift Tsuji, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture

FROM: Joseph Pontanilla, Council Member

DATE: Wednesday February 4, 2009

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Pontanilla".

**SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF HB 240, MAKING A GRANT-IN-AID
APPROPRIATION TO THE COUNTIES TO FINANCE DROUGHT
MITIGATION PROJECTS AND MEASURES**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure. The purpose of this act is to appropriate funds for drought mitigation projects in each county. I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I **support HB 240** for the following reasons:

1. The implementation of the drought mitigation plan developed by each of the counties' drought committees is of vital importance to Maui County, which has been under constant threat of drought for several years.
2. Lingering drought and near-drought conditions continue to affect the entirety of Maui County's agricultural trade as well as cause risk to Maui County's green environment and native species. The efforts of those who have developed mitigation plans, involving improved water storage and conservation, are laudable of additional support to protect the economy and ecology.
3. While Maui County has been prudent to exercise and encourage water conservation and use of reclaimed water, much remains and is needed to be fulfilled. This legislation will provide needed funding to advance efforts supported by the county drought committees.

I urge your support of this measure.