

**TESTIMONY**  
**HB 242, HD1**  
**LATE**



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### Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs and Committee on Higher Education

#### RE: HB 242 HD1 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Hee, Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committees:

Hawaii Bureau Federation representing Hawaii's farm and ranch families and organizations supports HB242 HD1, providing funding towards the expansion of value added facilities for agriculture.

People regularly ask us what can be done to help agriculture. As in most businesses, the answer is to reduce cost and increase revenues. This measure seeks to address the latter. To increase viability, waste within the system must be minimized and thereby, revenues increased. Farmers and ranchers in Hawaii face limited capacities to produce value added products which can play a major role in increasing the revenue base of their enterprises. At the request of the Legislature, UH-CTAHR prepared a report addressing the opportunities provided in the former Del Monte facility. On the island of Maui, the former culinary arts facility at the Maui Community College campus provides a similar opportunity. This measure seeks to utilize these existing facilities to provide farmers and ranchers abilities to expand their value added production capacities.

The Maui Culinary Academy has a template of what can happen. They currently work with farmers and ranchers to develop value added products. These products are produced at the Academy. However, large scale production of successful products will require a larger facility. The purpose of this measure is to address such products. As we pursue Farm to School programs, the facility could also be used to mass produce products that could be used in school lunch programs. As we pursue increasing the use of our State procurement system, these facilities will be important to maximize the use of local products while meeting the practical limitations of the school cafeterias.

HD1, requires a some kind of a match of funds. We agree to this condition, provided that the source of the match is flexible. Annually, there is a grant opportunity through USDA for Value Added operations. We intend to work with CTAHR and MCC to pursue this source as well as other funding sources as may be available. During these difficult fiscal times, we agree that such a condition is reasonable and that leveraging of scarce State funds is a good way to advance agriculture's needs.

We respectfully request your support of this measure to increase the revenue stream of our farmers and ranchers as well as build the capacity within the State to increase our self sufficiency.

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

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## **Maui County Farm Bureau**

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

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January 29, 2009

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**Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs and Higher Education**

**RE: HB 242HD1 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chair Hee, Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committees:

Maui County Farm Bureau, representing 180 farm families and organizations strongly supports HB242 HD1 expanding agriculture's value added production capacity.

A few years ago, the State invested in Maui Community College by providing the funds for a state of the art culinary facility to educate local chefs. The college has taken support for locally grown to heart and has partnered with our farmers and ranchers to use local products. They also have a program to develop value added products using our agricultural crops.

As this facility was completed the former facility was abandoned. Chancellor Sakamoto strongly suggested that we explore use of the facility to expand commercial capacity of value added products. Unfortunately, funding was a challenge, and we have not been able to pursue this idea. The facility is there ...but it is a shell. We have small value added facilities on Maui but many are outgrowing their capacity. Providing a central location that can produce these products at a larger scale will not only expand the revenue base for our farmers but also provide new revenues to the State through export products. Quarantine issues will not longer be a issue. We see this as a economic stimulus opportunity. It is a good use of resources as it utilizes existing facilities rather than having to build a new facility from the ground up. By partnering with the Community College Culinary Program, technical expertise will be available. The facility could also become a training ground for newly graduating culinary students, providing them real life production experience before facing the "real world".

We support the concept of leveraging State funds with other types of funding. We are willing to work with MCC to seek other funding sources to implement this project.

We respectfully request your support of this measure. Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Warren K. Watanabe  
Executive Director

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**(END)**