

**LINDA LINGLE**  
Governor

**SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DUANE K. OKAMOTO**  
Deputy to the Chairperson



**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. 243  
RELATING TO IRRIGATION SYSTEMS**

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 243. This bill makes an appropriation to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) for positions and the Agricultural Water Use and Development Plan. The department appreciates the intent of this bill and offers the following comments.

The DOA does not operate or maintain the West Kauai or East Kauai irrigation systems. It is our understanding that cooperatives exist for both of these systems to conduct operations and maintenance. Further, the Upcountry Maui Irrigation System is anticipated to be operated and maintained by the Maui County Department of Water Supply through an agreement with the DOA. Lastly, funds for existing irrigation system personnel salaries are primarily paid through the irrigation system revolving fund, which collects fees from irrigation users. This fund also receives a general fund supplement to allow for affordable irrigation water delivery rates and encourage farming. For management and efficiency reasons, additional irrigation personnel should be placed and funded through the revolving fund. Additional general fund supplements initially set aside for the irrigation repair and maintenance special fund could be added to the existing supplement for the revolving fund, but not at the expense of the executive biennium budget.

Funds for the Agricultural Water Use and Development Plan may necessitate a broadened name of the special fund. We suggest the following revisions regarding the irrigation repair and maintenance special fund: 1) revise the name of the "irrigation repair and maintenance special fund" to the "agricultural infrastructure improvement special fund" to allow agricultural land improvement projects access to this Act; 2) revise §167-24(b), HRS, to read: "Moneys in the [~~irrigation repair and maintenance special fund~~] agricultural infrastructure improvement special fund shall be used to fund [~~repair and maintenance of the following irrigation systems:~~] improvements for the following agricultural projects"; 3) add a paragraph to §167-24 (b): "(18) Studies for agricultural water and land planning"; and 4) revise the wording where appropriate in the act to reflect the revised name of the special fund. Please note however that an appropriation for this project is contained in our executive budget and that we believe a more efficient solution is to fund the study as requested in the budget.

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 243  
RELATING TO IRRIGATION SYSTEMS**

House Bill 243 proposes to appropriate funds for capital improvement projects for irrigation systems throughout the State. These funds would also support the development of the Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Water Use and Development Plan. While the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) recognizes the importance of long range water planning for agriculture, which is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Hawaii Water Plan, the Department nonetheless defers to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) on whether this measure impacts the Executive Biennium Budget request.

In addition, the Department defers to DOA for comments regarding the capital improvements of the irrigation systems throughout the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT  
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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS



## **Hawaii Agriculture Research Center**

*Administration: P.O. Box 100, Kunia, HI 96759*

*Ph: 808-621-1350/Fax: 808-621-1359*

### **TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

#### **HOUSE BILL 243 Relating to Irrigation Systems**

**February 4, 2009**

Chairman Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

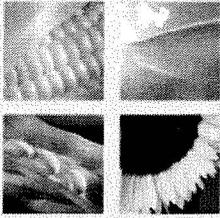
My name is Stephanie Whalen. I am Executive Director of the Hawaii Agriculture Research Center (HARC). I am testifying today on behalf of the center and our research and support staff.

**HARC supports House Bill 243** which proposes measures to support irrigation systems throughout the islands.

HARC is appreciative for this body's unfaltering support throughout the years in providing financial commitments to the state's irrigation infrastructure. Water is an essential element for successful agriculture and your actions demonstrate your awareness of that fact.

HARC strongly supports funding, tax credits and other legislation to facilitate and expedite the repair and maintenance of the state's irrigation systems.

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



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Alicia Maluafiti

# Hawaii Crop Improvement Association

*Growing the Future of Worldwide Agriculture in Hawaii*

Testimony By: Alicia Maluafiti  
HB 243, Relating to Irrigation Systems  
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.

Your strong support is needed for this appropriations request for the irrigation repair and maintenance special fund, which will add positions to manage the irrigation systems statewide, and implement the Agriculture Water Use Development Plan. Such an appropriation provides farmers with accessible and more consistent water flow. Without that there will be no farms, even with the most fertile agriculture lands available.

We urge your support of this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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**TESTIMONY**

House Agriculture Committee

**RE: HB 243 Relating to Irrigation Systems**

Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation on behalf of its member farmers and ranchers is in support of HB243, providing CIP funding for Irrigation Systems across the State.

The Agricultural industry's most important ingredient is reliable irrigation water. This Bill will provide the funding to repair, rehabilitate, and improve existing irrigation systems. These systems are situated in regions now under active agriculture. This Bill supports initiatives to grow and buy local produce and will sustain the farm employment by allowing existing farms to increase their production with adequate irrigation water availability. Increased "home grown" production will reduce threats of invasive species from places across the ocean and increase our level of biosecurity.

Since the crafting of this Bill, new information has been received and an updated version of the Bill is attached. We appreciate the Legislature's continued commitment to agriculture. We recognize the fiscal challenges facing the legislature this year but believe that the investment in irrigation infrastructure is critical for the State to meet its vision for long term sustainability.

We respectfully request your support of HB243 with the suggested amendments. 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 243  
(Relating to Irrigation Systems)

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

The Kona County Farm Bureau respectfully submits testimony regarding HB 243.

The Kona County Farm Bureau is in support of this Act serving to appropriate funds for capital improvement projects for irrigation systems throughout the State.

The availability of agricultural water is not only important to sustain current agricultural opportunities, but also to increase the local farmers' ability to expand Hawaii's 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

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](http://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 243, RELATING TO IRRIGATION SYSTEMS**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds for the repair and maintenance of irrigation systems.

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.

Sufficient funding is needed to maintain and improve Hawaii's irrigation system, which is the lifeline for any agricultural operation.

It's vital that Hawaii's crops receive a steady and dependable supply of water so our agriculture industry may 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

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February 3, 2009

TO: Honorable Clift Tsuji, Chair  
House Committee on Agriculture

FROM: Joseph Pontanilla, Council Member

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

DATE: Wednesday February 4, 2009

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB 243 RELATING TO IRRIGATION SYSTEMS**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure. The purpose of this act is to appropriate funds to maintain and improve irrigation systems within the State. I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I **support HB 243** for the following reasons:

1. To insure that the irrigation systems in Upcountry Maui and on Molokai are improved and receive steady and dependable supply of water.
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. Funds provided by this legislation will enhance irrigation system capability and forward effort in address of these concerns.

I urge your support of this measure.