

**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. 255  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 255. The purpose of this bill is to provide funding to develop an agricultural water plan for Ka'u and south Kona. The department provides the following comments relating to this bill.

The Department of Agriculture (DOA) recognizes the importance of saving the State's existing irrigation infrastructure from further deterioration. The Agricultural Water Use and Development Plan (AWUDP) was created to identify these priceless resources and determine which can be salvaged, their current and future potentials for growth, what improvements are necessary to achieve growth, and identify agricultural water need. The Ka'u system is a named system in the AWUDP for study; however, with the amount of funding obtained so far, the DOA has yet to be able to study this system in depth. An appropriation for the AWUDP, as identified in the executive budget, would lead to further investigations of the Ka'u system and its potential to contribute to diversified agriculture and we ask for your support of our 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 255  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

House Bill 255 proposes to direct the Department of Agriculture in conjunction with the Agribusiness Development Corporation to develop an agricultural water plan for Kau and South Kona. While the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) recognizes the importance of long-range water planning for sustainable agriculture and food security, the Department nonetheless defers to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) on whether this measure impacts the Executive Biennium Budget request.

**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  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS



Legislative Testimony  
**HB 255, RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**  
House Committee on Agriculture

February 4, 2009  
Room: 312

9:00 a.m.

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB 255, which would direct the Department of Agriculture, in conjunction with the Agribusiness Development Corporation, to develop an agricultural water plan for Kaʻū and South Kona.

OHA understands that the intent of this bill is to generate a water plan that will beneficially affect many of our beneficiaries in this area. Not only will agricultural endeavors be enhanced by a clear understanding of the water situation in the area, but also we see that this information will be generated from a study.

This study will also generate a clearer picture of the hydrology in the area that has been and will be impacted by the recent and on-going volcanic eruption and agricultural pursuits in the area. We see this as an opportunity to assess the water quality and quantity in accordance with Hawaii Revised Statutes 174C-31 for this area. The activities required by this bill would shed light on many of the things that touch and concern our beneficiaries (not only farmers) on a regular basis.

We note that this study is solely agricultural in nature. We urge that no allocations or uses of water should be made or generated that do not flow to agricultural pursuits or lands zoned for such use.

In terms of funding, which OHA understands is tight this year, we ask if federal funds may be available such as from the noted Federal Emergency Management Agency of the Department of Homeland Security or if the study can be housed in and completed by the University of Hawai'i using graduate students under directed study of a professor.

OHA urges the Committee to PASS HB 255, taking the above considerations into account. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LINDA LINGLE  
Governor



ALFREDO A. LEE  
Executive Director

STATE OF HAWAII  
**AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
235 S. Beretania Street, Room 205  
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TESTIMONY OF ALFREDO LEE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE HOUSE  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2009  
9:00 a.m.  
ROOM 312

HOUSE BILL NO. 255  
RELATING TO IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 255. The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) provides the following comments.

The ADC's understanding is that the Kau irrigation system was identified as a system to be included in the Agricultural Water Use and Development Plan (AWUDP) when funding becomes available. Therefore, the ADC urges your support of the Executive Biennial Budget which already includes CIP funding for the AWUDP.



**TESTIMONY**

House Agriculture Committee

**RE: HB255: Relating to Agriculture**

Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Farm Bureau on behalf of its farm and ranch families and organizations supports HB255 providing funding to address irrigation needs in the Kau District.

With the exit of sugarcane in Ka'u, many lands were left vacant. Some macadamia nut fields were there but fallow fields became the more common viewscape. Agriculture provided the one employment opportunity for this remote location. However, just as the sugarcane operation experienced low productivity times due to lack of water, these newly formed farm operations also face the same challenges. While sugarcane did not use water for irrigation, significant amounts of water was used for the milling operation and the infrastructure supporting this operation is still in place, although in need of repair. This Bill will plan the rehabilitation and restoration of these systems.

The old Kau Mountain system and the Pahala Water Shaft are still intact and would provide adequate water if repaired and connected. In the South Kona Area several studies were conducted which indicate that ground water sources maybe feasible for small farming and livestock ranching.

This Bill will provide funds to install exploratory ground water wells in the South Kona Area and to renovate the existing water tunnel system in the Kau Area. It may explore the potential for using the Pahala Water Shaft for agricultural purposes.

We respectfully request your support in the passage of this measure. It will play a major role in providing for the viability of agriculture in this District. 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 255  
(Relating to Agriculture)

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

The Kona County Farm Bureau respectfully submits testimony regarding HB 255.

We wish to offer our strong support for the Act serving to direct the department agriculture together with the agribusiness development corporation to develop an agricultural water plan for Ka'u and South Kona.

The availability of agricultural water is not only important to sustain current agricultural opportunities in these districts, 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

**wooley1-Christopher**

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**From:** Michelle Galimba  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 03, 2009 9:48 AM  
**To:** AGRtestimony  
**Subject:** HB 255

Aloha,

As a rancher in Ka'u I strongly support the intent of HB255. Investment in agricultural water infrastructure is sorely needed in Ka'u and any efforts that the state can make to support development of agriculture in Ka'u would be most welcome.

Sincerely

Michelle M. Galimba  
Kuahiwi Ranch/Kuahiwi Contractors, Inc.

Naalehu HI 96772  
Cell: (808)

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