

**LINDA LINGLE**  
Governor



State of Hawaii  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512

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

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

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2009  
10:00 A.M.  
ROOM 308**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 318  
RELATING TO VOG**

Chairperson Oshiro and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 318 which directs the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA), in consultation with the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture (UHCTAHR), to conduct research to 1) Determine the best methods of vog treatment and 2) Find crop varieties that are most resistant to the effects of vog. HDOA offers comments. We defer to the State Department of Defense as to the appropriateness of use of funds from the Homeland Security Grant Program for the proposed purpose.

UHCTAHR is already conducting similar research as called for in HB 318. HDOA does not have the research personnel to carry out this research in-house so if charged with this task, would likely have to contract the research to the UHCTAHR researchers doing the research now or to other research institutions.

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 318  
A BILL RELATING TO VOG

PRESENTATION TO THE  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

BY

EDWARD T. TEIXEIRA  
ACTING DIRECTOR OF CIVIL DEFENSE

February 27, 2009

Chair Oshiro and Committee members:

I am Ed Teixeira, Acting Director of Civil Defense, State Department of Defense. I am providing written testimony in opposition to House Bill 318.

We oppose Sections 3 of the proposed bill which increases the federal fund ceiling for the Department of Agriculture to receive funds under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

We strongly oppose Section 4 of the proposed bill that appropriates Homeland Security Grant Program funds for the Department of Agriculture to conduct vog treatments and vog-resistant plant research.

Funding for vog treatments and vog-resistant research should not be subject to the criteria of U.S. Department of Homeland Security Grant Program. Funding for these important measures should be made available with State general fund appropriations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony that opposes this bill.

Personal Testimony Presented before the  
House Committees on Finance  
February 27, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.

by  
Andrew G. Hashimoto

HB 318 – RELATING TO VOG

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Andrew Hashimoto, and I serve as Dean and Director of the University of Hawaii at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR). I am pleased to provide personal testimony on HB 318. This testimony does not represent the position of the University of Hawaii or CTAHR.

The purpose of HB 318 is to require the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to work with CTAHR to determine best methods of vog treatment and research vog-resistant varieties of plants. The bill authorizes federal funds to the DOA for each year of the biennium.

CTAHR supports the intent of this bill as it is a positive step in addressing far-reaching and critical agricultural economic issues.

In August 2008, CTAHR Cooperative Extension Service made available a publication on **Volcanic Emissions Injury to Plant Foliage** by Scot Nelson and Kelvin Sewake of CTAHR's Department of Plant and Environmental Protection Sciences. This publication provides an overview and history of the problem, effects of the increased volcanic output on foliar injury to plants in Hawaii, what can be done to moderate it, and what the state and federal agencies have done or are planning to do to help minimize damage to Hawaii's forests and agriculture. The publication is accessible via CTAHR's website at <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/oc/freepubs/pdf/PD-47.pdf>.

In addition, a new short video by Mike Nagao of CTAHR's Department of Tropical Plant and Soil Sciences on vog damage on selected crops on the Big Island has just become available for viewing.

Although CTAHR currently has limited funds to conduct studies on the effects of vog on flower crops, grasses and vegetables, in order to provide more effective long-term assistance to growers, CTAHR recommends the addition of a junior researcher position for Hawaii County CTAHR. Funding such a position would require \$70,000 in annual salary plus fringe benefit costs and \$15,000 in operating costs, for a total of \$85,000 annually. Funding is requested for a period of three (3) years, or a total of \$255,000 over the span of a proposed vog project. Appropriation of these funds would be a cost effective step to make a large impact in mitigating or resolving devastating and costly effects of vog that the bill proposes to accomplish.

The bill is in keeping with CTAHR's vision to actively help Hawaii diversify its economy, ensure a sustainable environment, and strengthen its communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



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## TESTIMONY

### **House Finance Committee HB 318 Relating to Vog**

Chairman Oshiro, and members of the Committee:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation is Hawaii's general agriculture advocacy organization. We represent commercial farmers and ranchers across the State. HFBF supports HB318 seeking to find solutions to continue agriculture under vog situations.

HFBF comes before you today in support of our commercial agricultural operations on the Big Island. Vog is unique to Hawaii. In recent years the severity and extent of its impact has increased and there is no indication of when and if it might cease. There is a potential that the impacts may spread further than the areas that are currently affected. This bill seeks to identify ways in which agriculture can continue under these conditions. As we seek to provide for self sufficiency, we believe this effort is important. This measure also seeks to utilize Federal funding.

HFBF respectfully requests that this measure be passed. Thank you for this opportunity to provide our input on this matter.