

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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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 COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE
AND
WATER, LAND, & OCEAN RESOURCES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2009
9:00 AM
ROOM 312

SENATE BILL NO. 633, SD1
RELATING TO WATER

Chairpersons Tsuji and Ito and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 633, SD 1 which increases the representation of homestead farmers on the Molokai Irrigation System waters users advisory board.

SB 633, SD 1 proposes that an additional homestead farmer seat be created, the non-homesteader seat be retained and that each of the four currently named organizations continue to have a representative. Two new definitions have been added, one to define homestead farmer and another to define kupuna homestead farmer. We agree that an expanded board will better serve the needs of the water users, we agree with the added requirements that board members should be active system users and that board members should be engaging in commercial agriculture requiring an active general excise tax license, and we agree with the new definitions.

The 2008 Legislative Auditor's Report on the Molokai Irrigation System made a number of specific recommendations for the department to address. It was much less specific in addressing the role of the Advisory Board in that it only asked the department to "consider" adding additional homestead farmer seat(s) and to "Define homestead farmer as it relates to the advisory board..." **There was no mention in the audit recommendations of establishing a**

fixed percentage or number of homestead seats. However, based upon our communications with the current Advisory Board members, the department decided that we would undertake a fact-finding effort and based on the results, we would propose creating an additional seat for a homesteader and further define the composition of the Advisory Board.

We developed and mailed out a survey to 130 homestead and non-homestead water users. Forty-five surveys were returned (34.6%). Thirty-three surveys were returned by homesteaders and 12 by non-homesteaders. In-person or telephone interviews were conducted by the Deputy Director with 8 of the largest homestead and 8 of the largest non-homestead water users about their thoughts on expanding the Advisory Board and factors that should be considered.

While a minority of homestead and non-homestead water users among the 45 respondents felt there should be no changes to the present Advisory Board, a majority of water users felt: 1) there should be an additional homestead seat on the Advisory Board; 2) representatives should have no conflicts of interest; 3) DHHL should have a greater role on the Advisory Board; and 4) representatives need to be fair and objective.

We are pleased that these findings and our recommendations have been incorporated into SD1 and ask for your support of the bill as written.

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII



MICAH A. KANE
CHAIRMAN
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

KAULANA H. PARK
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRMAN

ROBERT J. HALL
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

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COMMENTS PROVIDED BY MICAH A. KANE, CHAIRMAN
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
WATER, LAND, AND OCEAN RESOURCES &
AGRICULTURE

ON SB 633 SD1, RELATING TO WATER

March 25, 2009

Chair Ito, Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committees:

The Hawaiian Homes Commission and Department of Hawaiian Home Lands submit the following comments for your consideration of this legislation that proposes to change the composition of the Molokai Irrigation System Water Users Advisory Board.

DHHL supports the purpose and intent of SB 633, but recommends sufficient discussion and consultation with the primary responsible parties. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.



Hawaii Farm Bureau
F E D E R A T I O N

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House Committees on Water, Land, & Ocean Resources and Agriculture

SB 633 SD1 Relating to Water

Chairman Ito, Chairman Tsuji and Committee Members;

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation on behalf of our farm and ranch families and organizations supports Senate Bill No. 633 SD1 which qualifies membership and increases the representation of homestead farmers on the Molokai Irrigation System Water Users Advisory Board (MISWUAB).

The HFBF supports this measure as it identifies and outlines a process to increase homestead representation while maintaining membership participation from the broader agriculture community.

The HFBF recognizes the importance of SB 633 SD1 as it addresses the auditor's recommendation to "consider" adding additional homestead farmer seat(s) and to "Define homestead farmer as it relates to the advisory board. This measure will not only help to foster and strengthen an already good working relationship between the advisory board and administration it also includes all users to have fair representation to participate in efforts to sustain and improve the Molokai Irrigation System (MIS).

Your support of SB 633 SD1 puts in motion a measure to allow greater homestead representation and allows the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA), the MISWUAB and MIS Users to move forward in focusing on issues directly impacting the farmers. The HFBF wishes to thank you for your continued efforts in protecting our resources and agriculture in Hawaii.