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LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU
State of Hawaii
State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street, Room 446
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Written Testimony

HB2412

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Testimony by the Legislative Reference Bureau
Ken H. Takayama, Director

Presented to the House Committee on Agriculture and
Committee on Economic Revitalization, Business, & Military Affairs

Friday, January 29, 2010, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 312

Chairs Tsuji and McKelvey and Members of the Committees:

Good Morning Chairs Tsuji and McKelvey and members of the Committees on Agriculture and Economic Revitalization, Business, & Military Affairs.

I am Ken H. Takayama, Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 2412. The Bureau takes no position either for or against this measure, but has the following observations and concerns:

1. If the Legislature wants us to conduct this study, we will do the best we can with the resources that we have.
2. Section 2 of the bill directs the Bureau to "analyze the environmental impacts on businesses and communities as a result of the reduction in services provided by the Department of Agriculture's plant quarantine and commodities branches", and then goes on to include 6 enumerated areas. Read literally, section 2(a) appears to require the preparation of an environmental impact statement or assessment.
3. The Bureau does not have the scientific and technical expertise to conduct any sort of formal environmental impact analysis.
4. If this measure passes, we will do the best we can to obtain data and information from agencies and organizations identified in section 2(b) of the bill, and other relevant sources.

5. As is normally the case with studies by the Bureau, our study would reflect the efforts of generalists rather than experts or specialists.
6. For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request that the Committees amend section 2 of the bill to more closely align the parameters of the study directed with the abilities of the Bureau.
7. Suggested language is submitted for the Committees' consideration.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify.

Arlina Agbayani

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, January 28, 2010 4:03 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: mnakahata@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB2412 on 1/29/2010 9:00:00 AM
Attachments: HB2412 LRB rpt on hdoa layoff env impact agr.pdf

Testimony for AGR 1/29/2010 9:00:00 AM HB2412

Conference room: 312
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Mae Nakahata for Luella Costales
Organization: HFBF
Address:
Phone: 808 2819716
E-mail: mnakahata@gmail.com
Submitted on: 1/28/2010

Comments:
Testifier will be Luella Costales



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TESTIMONY

HB 2412: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Chair Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation on behalf of our farmer and ranch families and organizations support HB2412, directing the LRB to analyze and report on environmental impacts of reductions in services by PQ and Commodities Branches of the Hawaii Department of Agriculture.

Hawaii has been severely impacted by the reduction in services by PQ and Commodities. Farmers and ranchers along with some in the business community have experienced the impacts. However, like in many cases, the majority of people in the State are oblivious to what has happened. The reduction in inspections resulting in an astronomical drop of intercepts at the ports has increased our risk of a major pest invasion detrimental to Hawaii's agriculture and/or environment. Many hearings have been held on this matter throughout the State. While some numbers were presented, many of the data was subjective so an objective analysis will be valuable.

At the same time HFBBF sees a value in requiring the LRB to advance beyond an analysis to identifying mitigative actions to minimize impacts. These could include a more aggressive position in seeking of Federal and County collaboration, private-public partnerships, reorganizing of agencies to ensure core functions are given priority and other fee for service opportunities.

There are numerous bills already being considered this year to mitigate these impacts. However, there continues to be some in the community that either demand the same level of services or seek legal remedy to bypass inspections. Even as our environmental challenges are great, it is important that we not lose sight of our core goal to protect Hawaii's food and energy security along with environment. The Hawaii's Biosecurity Plan passed in 2008 provides a roadmap of critical functions. Throughout the analysis, this document should serve as a guide to LRB in conducting their work.

HFBBF strongly supports this effort but urges an amendment to identify implementation actions in 2011 as part of the overall study. If there are any questions, please contact Luella Costales at 848 2074. Thank you.

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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON AGRICULTURE
AND
ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION, BUSINESS, AND MILITARY
AFFAIRS**

**HOUSE BILL 2412
RELATING TO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**PRESENTED TO THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE
STATE OF HAWAII**

JANUARY 2010

Dear Chairman Tsuji, Chairman McKelvey & Members of the Committees:

STRONG SUPPORT.

My name is Loren Mochida, General Manager of THP in Keaau, Hawaii. THP is a processor and exporter of Hawaiian Premium papayas to CONUS and Japan and represents over 50 papaya growers. I am also a Director on the Hawaii Papaya Industry Association (HPIA) Board.

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) worked with the papaya exporters to Japan and created an Identity Preservation Protocol (IPP) in 2001, to guarantee that the exported papayas were non-transgenic. With this certification from HDOA this allows all papayas into the Japan market to be distributed as soon as it arrives. These inspections are done by Agriculture Commodities Marketing Specialists (ACMS) in HDOA and they issue the IPP certification letter for all Japan shipments.

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It will be awhile before the industry will be able to ship the transgenic papayas to Japan. So the IPP certificates produced by the HDOA Inspectors are very important to reduce delays of our present papaya shipment. HDOA laid off two (2) full time ACMS in Hilo. Since then the Hilo office was left with only one part time ACMS and no coverage if this person is sick or on vacation.

The absence of this person will create a hardship on the Japan Exporters in that the HDOA will have to send an untrained inspector from Oahu for the certification. These inspectors will have to commute when the part time ACMS is not available. So to send inspectors from another island to Hilo will be paid by the exporters. The cost of the ACMS time and airfare will definitely add more expense to the exporters in Hilo.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 2411.

Arlina Agbayani

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2010 1:45 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: christym@rocketmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB2412 on 1/29/2010 9:00:00 AM
Attachments: HB 2412 012910.doc

Testimony for AGR 1/29/2010 9:00:00 AM HB2412

Conference room: 312
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Christy A. Martin
Organization: CGAPS
Address:
Phone: 8087220995
E-mail: christym@rocketmail.com
Submitted on: 1/27/2010

Comments:

Note: tried to submit earlier, but may not have gone through (if it did, please discard & use the attached letter instead)-mahalo.
committee requests 5 copies



The House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
Friday, January 29, 2009
9:00 a.m., Conference Room 312
State Capitol

Aloha Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Wooley and Committee Members,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) **supports HB 2412,**
Relating to the Department of Agriculture.

CGAPS is concerned about staffing shortages at the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA), particularly in the department's Plant Quarantine (PQ) branch. PQ staff are responsible for protecting Hawai'i from invasive pests by inspecting arriving domestic and interisland agriculture products and other high-risk cargo. In addition, the recent loss of the canine program to inspect for brown tree snakes, Hawai'i is at an all-time high level of risk. PQ staff also inspect and certify agriculture products for export, ensuring a healthy agriculture industry.

CGAPS is also concerned about shortages affecting the department's Plant Pest Control branch (PPC), including their biocontrol program and work controlling existing pests such as little fire ants, varroa mites and noxious weeds.

With adequate funding, PQ might be able to detect the next brown tree snake when it arrives, and might be able to prevent another strain of 'ōhi'a rust from entering the state and decimating 'ōhi'a forests. With adequate funding, PPC might be able to work on the biocontrol EA for strawberry guava. Instead, strawberry guava is left to spread, resulting in a nearly 30% loss of water from our soils, streams, and groundwater systems in areas where strawberry guava has invaded native forests.

The loss of ability to prevent, detect and control invasive species has a high and permanent cost, and we must do everything possible to assist those that do this work. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Christy Martin
CGAPS PIO