

TESTIMONY
HB 2832 HD1
LATE

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DUANE OKAMOTO
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 Fax: (808) 973-9613

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WATER, LAND, AGRICULTURE, AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
Wednesday, March 10, 2010
2:45 P.M.
ROOM 229

HOUSE BILL NO. 2832, H.D. 1
RELATING TO TARO SECURITY

Chairperson Hee and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 2832, H.D. 1. The purpose of this bill is to authorize the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to seek funding for projects that increase the cultivation and use of taro. The Department supports the intent of this bill, but defers to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) since it directly impacts this agency.

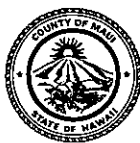
The department had recently participated in a statewide Taro Task Force headed by OHA and recognizes that this bill is a continuation of the Task Force's work.

Once again thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

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



COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov/council

LATE TESTIMONY

Director of Council Services
Ken Fukuoka

March 10, 2010

TO: Honorable Jessica Wooley, Vice-Chair
Committee on Agriculture

FROM: Councilmember Bill Kauakea Medeiros
Council Member

DATE: March 3, 2010

SUBJECT: **Support of HB 2832 hd1, RELATING TO TARO SECURITY**

I support HB 2832 because of the protection it would offer Kalo (Taro), it would also ensure wetland preservation, increase local food security, act as a economic stimulant and foster educational and cultural awareness. For these reasons, I urge to support this measure.

LATE TESTIMONY

9 in support
Petition

PLEASE SUPPORT HB 2832, RELATING TO TARO SECURITY
SCHEDULED FOR HEARING
WED MARCH 10, 2010 2:45 p.m. Room 229
WATER, LAND, AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

I support HB 2832, Relating to Taro Security, which would direct the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to seek funding for projects that will increase the cultivation and use of Hawaiian Taro. Please pass this bill – it is long overdue and I believe the State Legislature must take a stand and support efforts to grow taro.

We have a unique opportunity to bring in federal funds, create jobs in agriculture, increase revenue and food security, protect the environment, provide flood control for human health and safety, and promote Hawaiian culture. Mahalo.

PLEASE SUPPORT HB 2832!

Keoni Kealoha Deane
Name, Zip Code 96826

Perry Kaluhewa
Name, Zip Code 96744

Makaelani Cypher 96744
Name, Zip Code

Elle Cochran
Name, Zip Code 96741

Rae DeCoito 96820
Name, Zip Code

Dolly Tatuhi 96819
Name, Zip Code

Kent Fonoimouwa 96831
Name, Zip Code

Rocky Kaluhewa
Name, Zip Code 96817
MARCIA L. LYNCH
MARCIA L. LYNCH
Name, Zip Code

Koolau Poho Hce
Signature
KAKOIAI Taro

Perry Kaluhewa
Signature

Makaelani Cypher
Signature

Elle Cochran
Signature

Rae DeCoito
Signature

Dolly Tatuhi
Signature

Kent Fonoimouwa
Signature

Rocky Kaluhewa
Signature

Marcia L. Lynch
Signature

HO'OKAHI NO KA 'ĀWA A ME NA KĀNAKA

KAHEA

THE HAWAIIAN-ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE

Office
1149 Bethel St., Ste. 415
Honolulu, HI 96813
877.585.2432 toll-free ph/fx

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 37368
Honolulu, HI 96837

Marti Townsend
Support

www.KAHEA.org
kahea-alliance@hawaii.rr.com

H.B. 2832 Taro Security
Room 308, 3:00 pm
March 10, 2010

Aloha Representative Oshiro and members of the House Finance Committee,

Mahalo for this opportunity to express our **support for HB 2832**. This bill offers a great opportunity to further taro growing in Hawaii, which is something everyone can support. Passage of this bill will support projects that use taro to mitigate flooding and improve wetland function, and will also provide for much needed educational opportunities, community economic development, and job creation.

KAHEA is a network of nearly 10,000 people throughout the Hawaiian Islands and the world working to protect Hawai'i's unique natural and cultural resources, including the longstanding traditions of growing taro in Hawaii.

In support of the purpose of this bill, we suggest that the Committee amend the bill as follows:

1. Extend the life of the Taro Security taskforce for 5 years, until 2015.
2. Change "may" to "shall," directing the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to seek these important federal funds.
3. Add sufficient funds for a staff person to support the work of the taskforce
4. Direct the Departments of Agriculture and Land and Natural Resources inventory lands available for taro farming and reduce lease rent costs for taro lands, and

Mahalo,



Marti Townsend
Program Director

LATE TESTIMONY

TO: Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Jill Tokuda, Vice-Chair
Senate Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs Committee

FROM: Penny Levin

DATE: Tuesday, March 9, 2010
(Submitted by email)

Aloha honorable Chair and Committee members;

I am testifying as an individual and a taro farmer from Maui in support of HB2832 HD1 with amendments.

As a member of the Taro Security and Purity Task Force, it has been an honor to listen to the voice of so many taro farmers throughout the state and provide to this year's legislature our report *E ola hou ke kalo; ho'i hou ka 'aina le'ia: the taro lives; abundance returns to the land*, which outlines the work of the task force and its subsequent recommendations.

In 2008, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs provided funding which allowed us to meet only a single task outlined in Act 211 – to provide recommendations that address taro farmer concerns and improve taro farmer conditions in the state. Unfortunately, most of the project or program based initiatives either outlined in Act 211 or within the 2010 Report remain unimplemented for lack of funding originally earmarked by the state.

I urge you to include the following recommended amendments to move the accomplishments of Act 211 and the efforts of the task force forward:

1. Extend the life of Act 211 and the Taro Security and Purity Task Force until 2015 (5 years) in order to complete the range of tasks set forth in Act 211 and to provide guidance to the proposed projects under HB2832.

The task force and Act 211 will sunset on June 30, 2010. The 2010 Legislative Report outlines the significant work that lies ahead, including the remaining tasks of Act 211. Having started this effort and knowing the benefits to be gained, it is all of our kuleana – from legislators to agencies, taro farmers, consumers and practitioners - to support its success.

2. Task DOA and DLNR with reviewing their lands inventory and reducing lease rent costs for taro lands with a cap of \$100/ac/yr.

There is no shortage of state lands capable of supporting the production of taro. Access and high lease rents (compared to other agriculture lands) hinder efforts to support taro farming. The more taro farmers back on the land, the more benefit to the state through jobs, food, raw and value-added products, revenues and improved quality of life for local communities.

3. Funding - \$60,000/yr for a total of \$300,000 specifically to cover the costs of a grant writer/program coordinator for the task force to move its recommendations and the tasks of Act 211 forward as a program that can demonstrate measured change, rather than a piecemeal, small projects approach.

This small amount of funding from the state would allow the task force and OHA to access federal and private dollars for the larger effort. We understand that in this time of fiscal crisis it is important to place funding where it will create the greatest leverage of outside resources, a large number of jobs and a broad array of direct and indirect benefits and returns, including revenues, value-added businesses, and food for local tables. Support for HB2832 HD1 and the continuance of the Taro Security and Purity Task Force through extension of Act 211 is a well-leveraged decision – and \$60K per year is a *tiny* investment for such returns.

It is unreasonable to expect that taro farmers will be able to continue to farm and put food on people's tables *and* do the grant-writing, and multi-tiered coordination, planning and project implementation outlined by the task force report. This is a kakou effort – in and out of the taro patch. If everyone contributes to the work ahead, we will be successful.

Why support this bill and the above amendments? Consider the following as the legislature tries to balance the budget and create a path out of recession:

1. Jobs

In Maui County, one estimate places agriculture jobs at 12.5 people per 100 acres. This is typical of plantation style agriculture. The average taro farm is less than 5 acres but provides direct jobs for an average 2-5 people, or 40-100 jobs per 100 acres, not including poi processors, chip makers, kulolo makers, etc.

2. Economics and revenues

In 2009, a recorded 4.3 million pound of raw taro provided more than a million dollars in tax revenues to the state – from only 390 acres. This did not include lu'au leaf or other taro products. The more taro farmers on the land, the greater the revenues to the state and the greater our capacity to meet the full demands of Hawaii's markets, rather than depending on imports.

A survey conducted in 2005 indicated taro growers realized a 50-65% savings to family food budgets, freeing up money to meet other needs.

Taro is symbolic of the heart of aloha. It is an ambassador for the state to the rest of the world. Its image graces hotels, tourism brochures, advertising campaigns, magazines and movies that sell Hawaii. In this capacity, the revenues it generates for the state are one-hundred fold.

3. Food self-sufficiency and security

At ratio of 1 to 0.75 exchange between raw taro and poi, taro growers provided over 3.2 million pounds of poi to consumers in Hawai'i in 2009. At a ratio of four servings per pound, this put 12.9 million meals on local tables.

The State of Hawai'i imports 85 to 90 percent of its food. All of the taro plant is edible; the entire crop represents a proportionally high contribution to local food self-sufficiency.

4. Environment

Traditional taro systems and practices provide a cost-effective means of improving and protecting soil and water resources and mitigating flood zones. Water passing through the taro patch supports native biota and reduces sedimentation to our nearshore reefs. Taro farming communities protect local watersheds. Taro patch systems assist in the long term replenishment of aquifers.

Importing taro, places the state at risk for introduction of new pests and diseases that are expensive to detect and control. Local taro production self-sufficiency eliminates this threat to the environment and agriculture and reduces the cost of biosecurity protection.

5. Culture and wellbeing

To celebrate and support the rich heritage of Hawaiian culture and knowledge through the preservation and perpetuation of taro and taro farming is an important part of how we survive as a whole. It represents a wealth of science and technology that arose out of the Hawaiian community and is still valid today.

Out of the taro farm comes a livelihood, an education, a classroom, a committed stewardship towards the land and water, a resilient community able to feed itself, and able to care for each other.

Out of the taro comes life!

There could be no better return on such a small investment than to support the continuation of the task force and the implementation of its recommendations.

Please support HB2832 HD1 with the above described amendments.

Mahalo nui loa.

Penny Levin

Taro farmer, Wailuku

Member, Taro Security and Purity Task Force

Kauai County Farm Bureau

Affiliated with Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation

P.O. Box 3895 • Lihue HI 96766

808-337-9944 (phone/fax) 808-652-3217 (cell)

kcfb@hawaiiantel.net

The Voice of Kauai's Agriculture

Comments Only



LATE TESTIMONY

March 9, 2010

ATTN: Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs
Senator Clayton Hee (Chair), Senator Jill Tokuda (Vice Chair) and Committee

RE: HB2832 HD1 – Relating to Taro Security
Testimony of Kauai County Farm Bureau; Roy Oyama, President

HEARING DATE: March 10, 2010 – 2:45pm, Conference Room 229

Kauai County Farm Bureau on behalf of our member farm and ranch families, affiliated with Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, respectfully submits the following comments on HB2832 HD1, authorizing the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to seek funding for projects that increase the cultivation and use of taro.

1. Kauai currently supplies **over 80%** of the total taro production in the state of Hawaii based on the 2008 statistics from the USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS). Approximately 60% of the state's taro is grown in Hanalei Valley.
2. KCFB respects and recognizes the role taro plays in the Hawaiian culture and, we also have members who represent commercial taro. We strongly believe that commercial taro culture can coexist with taro grown for cultural and traditional practices. In the area of commercial taro culture, it is important to recognize that commercial taro culture does not need to follow traditional methods to contribute to our state or be deserving of support. We'd like to ask caution, that this measure should not be interpreted to address all of taro culture in Hawaii. Taro practices outside of OHA oversight can exist.
3. There is a question whether OHA already has the authority to do what is stated in the bill. If that is not the case, we would respectfully request passage of the measure as stated, with clarification that this measure does not limit the needs of our commercial taro farmers.
4. If the goal of this measure is overall taro security for Hawaii, it is important to take a pragmatic view of the industry, and prioritize needs. There are significant outstanding needs which are already time sensitive. One such critical need identified for the Hanalei Valley taro farmers is the repair of their in-take, which has been in need of repair for the past 15 years. This past November the major flood diverted 100% of their water and the entire Hanalei Valley taro fields were without water. The taro farmers only have a temporary repair and the next flood will again divert their water from their fields putting a large volume of taro production at risk. Kauai Taro Growers will be seeking federal, state, county and private funding to help repair it.
5. This year has been extremely difficult for everyone. The public and the Legislature have been required to take extraordinary measures to ensure that the basic needs of Hawaii are met. The agricultural industry has taken proactive measures of taxing itself to ensure that production in the islands can continue. At the same time critical needs exist. For this reason, we believe that State funding of this measure may not be warranted at this time.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments. Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact KCFB President, Roy Oyama directly at 332-9426 or oyama_farm@yahoo.com.

From: Teves, Glenn [TevesG@ctahr.hawaii.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2010 8:07 AM
To: WTLTestimony
Cc: Sen. Clayton Hee; Sen. Colleen Hanabusa; Sen. Russell Kokubun; Jim Cain; Jerry Konanui; penny levin; Walter Ritte; Dain P. Kane; Arlina Agbayani; KeokiKaloman@aol.com; Alapaki Luke; Lurlyn Scott; Christine Kobayashi
Subject: SUPPORT HB2832 HD1
Attachments: DSC00578.JPG

Dear Senator Hee and Committee,

The same solutions that created our present economic crisis will not solve them. We need to draw upon our Hawaiian roots of self-sufficiency, and our ancient knowledge of resource management, to find the path to our future prosperity. As a Molokai taro grower and Vice Chair of the State Taro Security and Purity Task Force, I firmly believe that our future lies in our past. The production of food is what made the Hawaiian great, not only in the Pacific, but the world. We couldn't raid and pillage nearby civilizations because there weren't any, so we had to rely on our innate knowledge of land and sea to create a self-sufficient food production system second to none, and definitely the most productive taro system in the Pacific and the world. It is on this base that we need to build our future. As a farmer, I have seen the potential of dryland taro production, and I believe we can produce upwards of 50-75000 pounds of taro to be used for all kinds of products; not only poi and kulolo, but drinks, energy bars, pasta, bread, and everything we need to feed our islands. I attach a picture of one of 20 pound taro I produced last year that exemplifies some of the potential I'm talking about. In the future, wetland taro will be a gourmet product, and the Mercedes or the Jaguar of Hawaiian taro. I hope you will believe in HB2832 enough to support it because it will be the first step of moving in the right direction for our state. It will address many of our problems, social, economic, and environmental and will instill character, pride, and self-worth in many of our citizens.

MAHALO,

Glenn Ioane Teves
Hawaiian Homes Farmer
Hoolehua, Molokai





Luella Costales
Comments only

2343 Rose Street, Honolulu, HI 96819
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Neighbor Islands: 1-800-482-1272
Fax: (808) 848-1921; e-mail: info@hfbf.org

TESTIMONY

Re: HB2832HD1 Relating to Taro Security

Chair Hee and Members of the Committee:

HFBF on behalf of our member farm and ranch families and organizations provides the following comments on HB2832 HD1, authorizing the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to seek funding for projects that increase the cultivation and use of taro.

1. We believe **OHA already has the authority to seek funding and address the identified uses of the funding.** HRS 10-3(5), states as one of the functions of OHA,

“Applying for, receiving, and disbursing, grants and donations from all sources for native Hawaiian and Hawaiian programs and services”

We therefore, feel this measure may be redundant.

2. HFBF respects and recognizes the role taro plays in the Hawaiian culture and support the protection of taro for cultural and traditional practices. At the same time, we have several members who are commercial taro growers. We strongly believe that commercial taro culture can coexist with taro grown for cultural and traditional practices. We believe it is important to recognize that **commercial taro culture does not need to follow cultural and traditional methods.** This measure should not be interpreted to address all of taro culture in Hawaii. Taro practices outside of OHA oversight can exist.
3. This year has been extremely difficult for everyone. The public and the Legislature have been required to take extraordinary measures to ensure that the basic needs of Hawaii are met. The agricultural industry has taken proactive measures of taxing itself to ensure that production in the islands can continue. We strongly believe that **State funding of this measure at this time is not warranted.**

HFBF believes there are enormous opportunities for commercial production of taro. This can happen while cultural and traditional practices are protected and preserved. Our commercial taro growers have significant needs, some of which need to be addressed in a timely manner if we do not want to lose the majority of taro that is consumed in the State. Infrastructure repair to an intake breach which threatens water delivery into Hanalei valley is an example of such a need. If the goal of this measure is truly taro security, we urge a pragmatic look at the needs of the industry. Please contact Luella Costales at 848 2074 if there are any questions.



NHBA/NHLC Peacemaking Project
1164 Bishop Street #1205 Honolulu Hawai'i 96813
Telephone: (808) 521-2302
Email: lateale@nhlchi.org

Laulani Teale Supports intent

March 10, 2010

Re: Testimony In Support of HB 2832, Relating to Taro Security

Aloha Kākou,

My name is Laulani Teale, and I am the Project Coordinator for the Native Hawaiian Bar Association/Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation Peacemaking Project. Our project works with families and communities throughout Hawai'i in providing supportive services (ho'oponopono, facilitation, agreement-building and review, legal support for cooperative agreements, negotiation support, networking support and other services) for culture-based, cooperative prevention and resolution of conflict.

Our project strongly supports the intent of HB 2832, as we believe that it provides means for important strengthening of traditional farmers, and thereby for the community's needs for health, culture and food security. Given the overall importance of food production in Hawaii, we do not believe that this money should be taken from other farmers; therefore, we additionally ask that specific additional funding be provided for the measure. From a peacemaking perspective, we feel that this is critical, as farmers should not be made to compete for resources. All who grow our food locally (without damage to the land, people, biodiversity and traditional practices) deserve to be a priority, especially in times of uncertainty and economic challenge.

Our project works with a number of farmers who could benefit greatly from this measure. As a peacemaker, much of my work involves identifying sources of stress that have the potential to contribute to conflict, and for the taro farmers I work with, severe financial pressures are a major source of that stress. HB 2832 would help this problem greatly.

Our project additionally supports the amendments recommended by Penny Levin in her February 19th testimony. We ask that you sincerely consider the input of all who testified. We urge you to strive to find ways to broaden the overall basis for support for the farming community, especially directing that support toward the encouragement of sustainable aloha 'āina practices while alleviating the burden of stress on all local farmers to the greatest degree possible.

Mahalo nui for your attention to this important matter.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,

Laulani Teale

Laulani Teale, MPH
NHBA/NHLC Peacemaking Project Coordinator



Waikiki Hawaiian Civic Club
E HUKI LIKE!

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2832 HD1,
RELATING TO TARO SECURITY

Hearing Date and Time: March 10, 2010, 2:45pm

Conf. Room: House Conference Room 229

Submitted by: Malia Nobrega, President, Waikiki Hawaiian Civic Club (malianob@gmail.com)

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2832 HD1, relating to taro security.

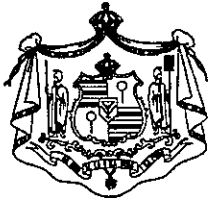
Waikiki Hawaiian Civic Club supports this bill because as stewards of our aina it is our responsibility to malama (care for) our kuaaana (older sibling), our mea ola (biodiversity), our meaai (food), and our aina (land). We are here not only for our people today but for generations to come.

We would like to congratulate the taro security and purity task force for their work in producing the 2010 Legislative Report entitled, E ola hou ke kalo; ho'i hou ka 'aina le'ia: the taro lives; abundance returns to the land. This report outlines the work of the task force and it's many recommendations regarding land and water, food security, threats, diseases, communication, education, public awareness, economics, culture, etc.

These recommendations need to be implemented immediately and cannot sit on a shelf in a nicely printed report. They need to come to life.

We also support the following amendments to this bill-

- Extends the life of the task force for five years (2015) to support implementation of tasks outlined in Act 211 and recommendations in the 2010 report;
- The department of land and natural resources and the department of agriculture, in conjunction with the taro security and purity task force, shall:
 - (1) re-evaluate agency lands inventories for potential taro-growing lands, and using local knowledge of the location of historic dry and wetland taro cultivated areas, and the needs of taro, designate said lands with taro production as their highest priority use by 2012;
 - (2) develop a consistent and affordable lease rent rate schedule specific to taro farmed lands by 2012;
 - (3) set a cap on lease rents at no more than \$100 per acre, irregardless of adjacent land use values;
and
 - (4) review existing qualifying criteria for farm leases and develop a consistent, accessible criteria for taro farmers to qualify for taro land leases by 2012; and
 - (5) develop a mechanism by which the taro lands list, opportunities for lease of these lands, qualifying criteria, and agency supports are consistently, accurately and easily available to taro farmers organizations and individual interested in growing taro by 2012.



Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs
P. O. Box 1135
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96807

LATE
TESTIMONY

TESTIMONY OF LEIMOMI KHAN, PRESIDENT
IN SUPPORT OF

HB 1684, HD2 - RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AGRICULTURE, AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Senator Clayton Hee, Chair

Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 20, 2010, 2:45 p.m., Conference Room 229

Aloha Chairperson Hee, Vice Chairperson Tokuda, and members of the Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 1684 HD2, which would revise penalties appropriate to the harm caused by the intentional introduction and spread of invasive species to the economy, natural environment, and the health and lifestyle of Hawai'i's people.

Hawaii accounts for more than 70 per cent of the Nation's recorded extinctions and more than one quarter of its rare and endangered species, and it is home to over 10,000 native animal and plant species which are in constant danger due to the influx of illegal animals, plants and insects. Hawai'i's native ecosystems are threatened by the importation of illegal life forms.

Thus, the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs supports penalties for those who import illegal pests and animals. Since 1992, it has adopted resolutions urging the State of Hawaii to Enforce Stricter Measures Against the Importation of Plants, Animals, and Insects, to include stricter penalties against those who violate quarantine laws and laws regulating the introduction of alien plants, insect and animal species.

Article 11, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, states, "For the benefit of present and future generations, the State and its political subdivisions shall conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural beauty and all natural resources, including land, water, air, minerals and energy sources, and shall promote the development and utilization of these resources in a manner consistent with their conservation and in furtherance of the self-sufficiency of the state. All public natural resources are held in trust by the State for the benefit of the people". We strongly believe that the penalties called for in HB 1684 HD2 is consistent with the public purpose enshrined in our constitution and is a logical step in implementing the 2009 Hawaii Invasive Species Program Summary Report by the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, which identified the need for, "Better laws and rules to support effective enforcement action to prevent the arrival, establishment and spread of invasive species". We urge passage of this legislation.

LATE TESTIMONY

Aloha Chair Hee and committee members,

I am writing in full support of hb2832, and on behalf of taro growers and the taro community around the state, wish to extend a warm mahalo for your support as we seek to increase the production of taro. As you know, the Taro Security and Purity Task Force, with the support and funding of OHA, spent the last year visiting taro growing communities around the state, seeking input on how we can work together to both support long time growers, and encourage and provide opportunities to a new generation of taro growers. Together, with input from many stakeholders, we have forged and strengthened many relationships and put together a comprehensive overview of the steps necessary to move forward in our quest to increase the supply of taro for Hawai'i. Waipi'o kupuna Uncle Ted Kaaekuahiwi said it best, "To grow taro you need land, water and people." It is important to understand that all of the facets involved in the process of growing taro are inter-dependent of each other, and each component must be healthy in order for the farmer to be successful.

SB2915 the original legislation put forth by the taro farmers, and passed unanimously by the 2008 legislature, contained funding in the amount of \$325,000 to be matched by OHA. Due to a line-item veto by the Governor, the Task Force proceeded with limited funding provided by OHA and accomplished the first step in supporting the taro community. We observed traditional protocol, we took the time to kahea, to introduce ourselves and state our intentions, and we listened. In doing so, we have gained trust and there is an atmosphere of hope. The task force report is a complete and holistic view that comes from the taro community, and outlines the steps necessary to make sure it thrives. There is a lifetime of work contained in the pages of the report, and it is vital that we now translate the many solid recommendations on policy and programs into action. There are many who are dedicated to seeing this through, and we look forward to working with OHA and all other stakeholders on implementing the plan.

It is important that the State of Hawai'i show commitment to this process as well. In this time of economic distress, resources are limited. Balancing the state budget is foremost on your minds. But we must also recognize the importance of creating jobs for both the short and long term, and in this unprecedented economic crisis lay the opportunity to diversify our economy. Local food production is a huge untapped area of potential economic growth. I urge you to let those of us who are motivated help shoulder this heavy load. Match our commitment to this process. We must be creative as we search for the resources that are necessary to move forward, and we will continue to explore the many options that are available, as well as exploring the partnerships that can lead to success. I am confident, that if we work together, we will ensure that taro will remain a solid foundation for Hawai'i's agriculture.

There were several bills that we put forth this session whose aim is to help in our efforts to implement the task force report, we have been advised that in the

interest of time, only one bill would be heard. In order to strengthen this bill, and to ensure that our intent of effectively supporting the taro community and taro farmers is realized, I would like to offer the following amendments to hb2832:

1. Extend the life of the task force for five additional years.
The Taro Security and Purity Task Force is set to sunset on June 30, 2010. While we have accomplished much in setting a road map to increased taro production, much remains to be done in respect to implementing the many programs that will help in this effort. Extending the life of the task force will ensure that this very powerful working group will remain together and focus our efforts to continue the process.
2. Direct DOA and DLNR to identify suitable taro growing lands held by the state and establish a program to make such lands available to taro growers.
There is no shortage of lands suitable for growing taro, however access to these lands is limited. Getting people on land and making the lands productive will have a great economic benefit to the state.
3. Provide funding in the amount \$300,000 to be matched by similar funding by OHA.
The funding will be used to establish a program within OHA to ensure that the many recommendations contained in the task force report will be carried out. The proposed funding will enable program development and implementation, as well as support the effort to search and apply for funding that will continue this process to support the taro growers. A programmatic approach to moving forward, in combination with continued involvement and leadership from the taro community will be the most effective route to ensure that the efforts put forth over the past year and a half will bear fruit. Currently the state of Hawai'i spends about 1% of its budget on agriculture. Combining this small amount of funding with the motivated efforts of the taro community, while seeking additional funding sources, results in increased benefits for the cost.

In closing, I would again like to extend a warm mahalo for your unwavering support.

Me ke aloha,

Jim Cain, Chair, Taro Security and
Purity Task Force

March 10, 2010

LATE TESTIMONY

To: Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs

From: Vincent Dodge

Re: HB 2832, HD1, Relating to Taro Security
Hearing on March 10, 2010
Room 229, 2:45 PM

Chair Hee and Committee Members:

As a cultural practitioner and part-time kalo farmer, I support HB 2832—though I prefer the original version of the bill before it was amended in the House. Strengthening the growing of kalo is a must for the food security of our island home. The Taro Purity and Security Task Force has unified taro growers large and small over many concerns on which they agree. Divisiveness has and will continue to cripple us all.

I would suggest the amendments on the attached page as a way of strengthening HB 2823.

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer testimony.

LATE TESTIMONY

(c) Extends the life of the task force for five years (2015) to support implementation of tasks outlined in Act 211 and recommendations in the 2010 report;

(d) The department of land and natural resources and the department of agriculture, in conjunction with the taro security and purity task force, shall;

- (1) re-evaluate agency lands inventories for potential taro-growing lands, and using local knowledge of the location of historic dry and wetland taro cultivated areas, and the needs of taro, designate said lands with taro production as their highest priority use by 2012;
- (2) develop a consistent and affordable lease rent rate schedule specific to taro farmed lands by 2012;
- (3) set a cap on lease rents at no more than \$100 per acre, irregardless of adjacent land use values; and
- (4) review existing qualifying criteria for farm leases and develop a consistent, accessible criteria for taro farmers to qualify for taro land leases by 2012; and
- (5) develop a mechanism by which the taro lands list, opportunities for lease of these lands, qualifying criteria, and agency supports are consistently, accurately and easily available to taro farmers organizations and individual interested in growing taro by 2012.

From: chris kobayashi [waioli2@hawaiiantel.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2010 12:35 PM
To: WTLTestimony
Subject: testimony for strong support for HB2832 HD1, WTL March 10 2:45pm, Rm 229

March 10, 2010

Aloha to Senator Hee and committee on WTL

I am writing to ask that you please support the growing and culture of taro by implementing the Taro Security and Purity Task Force report and the amendments offered by Jim Cain, chair of the task force.

Thank you,
Chris Kobayashi
Taro farmer and member of the Taro Security and Purity Task Force
808-826-7836

TESTIMONY
HB 2832 HD1
LATE
(END)