

HB 866, HD2

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor



RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

JAMES J. NAKATANI
Deputy to the Chairperson

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**TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Thursday, March 17, 2011
2:55 p.m.
Conference Room 229

**HOUSE BILL NO. 866 H.D. 2
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Nishihara and Members of the Committee:

House Bill 866 H.D. 2 proposes to amend Chapter 142 HRS by creating a new section to provide the opportunity for beekeepers to voluntarily register with the department of agriculture and provide information that may assist the department in compiling accurate information on Hawaii's beekeeping industry.

With the recent introductions of the varroa mite and small hive beetle into Hawaii, bee keepers on the Islands of Oahu and Hawaii have collectively lost thousands of hives over the past two years. The pests, currently only on the islands of Oahu and Hawaii, pose a serious threat to honey bees and agricultural production statewide. The department is in critical need of an apiary specialist and staff to develop programs to contain and control these and other serious pest of the honey bees that threaten honey bees, honey production and the pollination of crops such as macadamia nuts and coffee for agricultural production in Hawaii.

This information shall be kept confidential by the department. We recommend that the measure include an appropriation out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii for the sum of \$350,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2011-2012 and the same or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2012-2013 to establish an apiary program, including permanent positions as follows: 1) one apiary specialist; 2) one apiary planner; and 3) two apiary technicians.

The department strongly supports this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.



NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

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CATHY L. TAKASE
ACTING DIRECTOR

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture

From: Cathy L. Takase, Acting Director

Hearing: Thursday, March 17, 2011, 2:55 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 229

Re: Testimony on H.B. No. 866, H.D. 2
Relating to Agriculture

The purpose of this bill is to require beekeepers to register with the Department of Agriculture (DOA). The Office of Information Practices (OIP) takes no position on the bill's registration requirement but recommends that the bill's confidentiality provision be revised to enable the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to disclose statistics about the beekeeping industry.

At OIP's recommendation, the House Committee on Agriculture had amended the bill to make the registered beekeepers' names and business addresses publicly available. However, the bill still requires all other registration information to be kept confidential while allowing the DOA to compile statistics on the information. Confidentiality of registration information under this bill would necessarily restrict DOA from publicly disclosing statistics about the beekeeping industry since the statistics will be derived from such confidential registration data.

Therefore, OIP recommends that the bill's confidentiality provision be amended in either of two ways. First, OIP suggests that the bill's confidentiality provision (page 2, lines 8 through 13) be amended to require DOA to keep confidential registration information to the extent that this information falls within an exception to disclosure under chapter 92F. Alternatively, OIP recommends that the bill be amended to make confidential registration information that is

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individually identifiable so that the DOA can still disclose statistics and other data about the beekeeping industry without identifying the specific subject registrants.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE

March 15, 2011

Aloha Chair Nishihara and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Kaua'i Beekeepers Association mahalo for allowing us to provide testimony in support of HB 866 hd2. As you are already aware bee populations around the globe are in decline and suffering from a variety of maladies in which apiary activities have declined to the point of collapse in some areas. The state has not escaped this dire situation and without serious intervention by industry and government agencies significant negative consequence can be presumed to occur. HB 866 attempts to remedy this situation and addresses several areas of concern for apiarists, agricultural producers and others.

The Kaua'i Beekeepers Association supports the bill's intent to record through a registration program the critical data necessary to develop statistical information about apiary activity in the state. In addition to developing baseline information about the numbers of beekeepers, their hives and the output of their labors HB 866 provide a vehicle to invest in an agricultural product and process critical to a sustainable Hawaii. By allocating capital and human resources to support beekeepers HB 866 also facilitates the development of a statewide apiary program designed to promote bee health, support beekeeping activities and contribute to a diverse and sustainable agricultural future.

In closing, support for HB 866 will enable HDOA's staff to assist an industry suffering from the multiple assaults of varroa mite, small hive beetle and colony collapse disorder. By providing support for apiary activities, Hawaii's honey bees can continue to provide essential pollination services, value added products and help to ensure that Hawaii's rich agricultural heritage can flourish and sustain us into the future.

Mahalo again for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 866 hd 2 and best of luck in your deliberations and decision making.

With respect and aloha,

James G Trujillo

Chair, Kauai Beekeepers Association

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I understand the concern for recurring subsidy requests especially during these economic times. The previous feed grant was to serve as a bridge to long term financing. We did not depend on the feed grant alone. Personal sacrifices by the family were made to ensure employment to our loyal employees. However we were impacted by the Department of Budget and Finance's decision to withhold the last \$1 million from the appropriation and that administrative decision in 2009 affected our budget and fiscal projections.

We ask for your support of HB1570 HD2 and thank you for the opportunity to submit our testimony.

Respectfully,
Phyllis Shimabukuro-Geiser
President

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March 17, 2011

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON HB 1570 HD2
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Room 229
2:55 PM

LATE

Aloha Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Kahele and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, the largest non-profit agriculture advocacy organization in the state with approximately 1,600 farm and ranch family members is in **strong support** of HB1570 HD2, , the Livestock Feed Subsidy Bill.

Hawaii's livestock industry faces numerous challenges. One of their biggest challenges is the rising cost of feed for livestock production. These costs have been a contributing factor to the decline of the state's livestock industry.

In 2007, there were 5 dairies and 6 egg farms in Hawaii. Since then, 2 of those dairies and 4 off those egg farms have gone out of business. The remaining egg farms and dairies are currently threatened with closure, due to rising production costs. This is primarily due to feed costs.

HB 1570 seeks to revitalize Hawaii's livestock industries by reimbursing qualified livestock producers up to sixty percent of their farm's feed expenses. This bill will help keep fresh, locally produced milk, eggs, beef, pork and chicken available to the residents of Hawaii and will help to revitalize our dwindling livestock industry. A decrease or absence of livestock production increases the State's reliance on the importation of food and threatens the State's food security.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation urges your support and passage of this measure.