



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

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LATE TESTIMONY

March 21, 2012

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

TESTIMONY ON HR73/HCR101
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO IMPLEMENT AN
INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO PROMOTE THE PURCHASE OF HAWAII GROWN
AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES

HR74/HCR102
CONVENING AN AGRICULTURE POLICY TASK FORCE TO REVIEW AGRICULTURAL
POLICIES FROM OTHER STATES IN PROVIDING FOR HAWAII'S AGRICULTURE
INDUSTRY

HR75/HCR103
EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S EFFORTS
TO STIMULATE THE STATE'S AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY, INCREASE AND
DIVERSIFY AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT, AND PROMOTE FOOD SECURITY

Room 312
9:00 AM

Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Hashem, and Members of the Committee:

I am Dean Okimoto, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF). Organized since 1948, the HFBF is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community

HFBF is **in strong support** of this package of resolutions providing a framework for policy support of the agricultural industry.

Hawaii's State Constitution, State Policies as defined in HRS 226, various County General Plans and most recently the Governor's Platform of a New Day all speak to the importance of agriculture to Hawaii's future.

At the same time, efforts are often disconnected, with many pointing to the Department of Agriculture to carry out this mission. There may have been a time during abundant resources that such an order may have been reasonable. However, times have

changed and the demands on the Department expanded. Hawaii's support of agriculture cannot just lie in the Department's hands or that of the legislature but needs to be a collaborative public private partnership. Developing the relationships and commitments will be a significant first step to solidifying the foundation for Hawaii's agricultural future and therefore our level of self sufficiency and sustainability.

Discussions by the parties identified in HR74/HCR102 to craft a comprehensive plan that has a broad foundation, supported by the individual department budgets and goals and legislative priorities in 2013-2014 will be a major breakthrough in providing actual support to implementing the various policies speaking to supporting agriculture in the State.

We respectfully request your strong support of these resolutions.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this important matter.



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2012
9:00 AM
ROOM 312

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 101
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO IMPLEMENT AN INCENTIVE
PROGRAM TO PROMOTE THE PURCHASE OF HAWAII-GROWN AGRICULTURAL
COMMODITIES

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution 101. The purpose of this resolution is to request the Department of Agriculture to implement an incentive program to promote the purchase of Hawaii-grown agricultural commodities. The Department supports the intent of this resolution as it supports the efforts the Department has been making in this endeavor.

The Agriculture Development Division has been promoting its "Buy Local, It Matters" campaign with the aim of encouraging residents to support Hawaii farmers by making conscious decisions to purchase locally grown produce.

Furthermore, during the intersession, the Department collaborated with various governmental, nonprofit and private entities in response to HCR 167 from the 2011 Legislative Session. One of the goals as set forth by the resolution was to identify ways to assist local farms to become more competitive in the procurement process. Over the course of multiple discussions it was agreed that one solution to increase the amount of local product purchased by state institutions would be to exempt local agricultural



commodities from the procurement process. As a result, the Department proposed legislation in the form of House Bill 2432. While this bill has not survived the legislative process, we look forward to finding other avenues to promote the purchase of local agricultural commodities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.