



LATE TESTIMONY

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HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR

TESTIMONY ON SB 2802
RELATING TO HUNTING ON PRIVATE LANDS

Room 016
9:01 AM

Aloha Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, and Members of the Committee:

I am Randy Cabral, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,900 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau strongly supports SB 2802, requiring hunters to obtain written permission from landowners or occupiers or holders of private lands to hunt on those lands.

This bill does NOT in any way prohibit hunting on private lands. What it does do is separate the legitimate hunter from the criminal trespasser.

This bill is necessary because the current situation is extremely dangerous for both the landowner and the hunter. Over the last several years, incidents of livestock slaughtering, theft, vandalism, crop destruction, and poaching have become commonplace on farms and ranches on every island. These illegal activities must be stopped; however, the current laws relating to hunting are confusing and not easily enforced. Criminals have learned that there is no practical enforcement of the laws to prevent armed thieves and vandals from trespassing, stealing, and destroying other's livelihoods. If caught, these miscreants claim to be hunters and state that they had verbal permission to be on the property.

The burden should never be on the rancher or farmer to prove that he *did not* give permission to a gun-wielding trespasser to access his property.

Without knowing the intent of an armed trespasser on his property, a farmer or rancher may reasonably believe that the trespasser is there to steal his equipment, his livestock, or his crops. He may even think that his home and family are threatened and this could lead him to take steps to protect them. This scenario is just too dangerous for both a legitimate hunter and the farmer, and it can be avoided by the simple act of obtaining prior permission, in writing, so there is no confusion or misunderstanding.

A legitimate, law-abiding hunter would have no justification to object to this measure since he is already required by law to have permission from the landowner.

For many years, the Hawaii Farm Bureau has worked with police, prosecutors, and the Department of Land and Natural Resources to find a solution to trespass, theft, and vandalism problems. We respectfully request that this committee pass SB 2802 to clarify and help enforcement of the current laws that ALREADY prohibit trespass and prohibit hunting without permission. Please don't let another year go by without addressing the concerns of our farmers and ranchers. We sincerely believe that this can be done without penalizing legitimate hunters.

Thank you very much for your support of Hawaii's farmers and ranchers.