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LATE

March 28, 2016

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND AND AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON SR 114

RECOGNIZING THE WHITMORE PROJECT'S MISSION TO REVITALIZE HAWAII'S LOCAL AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY AND REQUESTING THE AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION TO CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO ACQUIRE LAND AND PROVIDE LOCAL FARMERS WITH LONG-TERM LEASES.

Room 224
3:00 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara, 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 interest of our diverse agricultural community.

HFB supports SR 114, which recognizes the Whitmore Project' mission and ADC's efforts to acquire land and provide long term leases to Hawaii farmers.

The Whitmore Project is a comprehensive plan that will help revitalize our local agricultural industry by bringing farmers and the state together to increase local food production, create jobs, engage in partnerships, and to provide affordable housing.

ADC was initiated by the agricultural industry as the closure of plantations escalated and there was a need to identify mechanisms that could quickly place farmers on lands that were destined to be idle.

HFB believes that ADC has a tremendous amount of power and has a responsibility in continuing to assist Hawaii's transition from plantation agriculture to smaller diversified agricultural operations.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau believes that in order for agriculture to flourish in Hawaii and reach their full potential, land availability and long-term leases at affordable and predictable lease rental rates are critical. The acquisition by the state of agricultural lands will significantly increase the available agricultural land under the State's control and will provide farmers with long-term leases that will enhance the economic viability of Hawaii's agriculture industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.