


APT Committee

From: jacinthow001@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2022 11:55 PM
To: APT Committee
Subject: Bill 105 Testimony
Attachments: Bill 105 Testimony County Dept. of Ag.docx; Mayor Economic Stimulus Breakdown Revised.doc; Summary of Meeting with Mayor Charmaine Tavares.doc

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Hi APT Committee,
Please see attached testimony for Bill 105. I will be calling in to the APT Committee 1:30pm Thursday meeting to testify.
Thank you,
William Jacintho

To: APT Committee
Chair Sinenci, Vice Chair Johnson, and APT Committee Members
apt.committee@mauicounty.us

Re: STRONG SUPPORT for Bill 105, TO ESTABLISH POLICIES RELATED TO THE DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
(APT-65)

Good afternoon, Chair Sinenci, Vice Chair Johnson, and APT Committee Members,

My Name is William Jacintho. I've been involved in almost every aspect of Agriculture all of my life from a young age working on neighboring farms, Maui Pine, UH Maui College for 35 years in the Ag Careers Program, Community involvement, Maui Cattlemen's Association President, and owning and managing our Ranch and Nursery.

I am in strong support of the proposed legislation, and I am urging the County Council to support Bill 105 to establish policies related to the Department of Agriculture. I support the bill because we need the roles and responsibilities of the Department to be clearly defined in order for it to be successful and work for our community.

I have included a back history at the end of my Testimony, as well as links and attachments to the work many of us in the Ag industry have been working on to move Agriculture forward, from meetings dated back to 2008. I'm basing some of my testimony on this, especially the meeting on June 7, 2012 at the Maui Beach Hotel. Ten years ago.....many farmers met, and I must say, all of the concerns that were brought up and discussed that day, are in Bill 105. I had a WOW moment..... We're finally moving forward with what over a hundred farmers in attendance that day needed, and wanted for survival back then. Thanks to the Industries collaborative efforts and Community support Agriculture should have, we are moving forward.

I do want to make a point that I think would be good to consider moving Section E-4 on page 3, from the middle of the Bill to the first page, and the first statement: "Working as a community liaison and advocate for farmers and the agricultural sector." It's up to the Council Committee, but I do feel it's important to make that point that the position of the New Department is to focus on being a liaison and advocating for the Ag Industry.

This legislation was created in collaboration with the community impact working group, who worked very hard, many days and nights, to create a framework based on the needs of the community and the agricultural sector. Through outreach and various surveys, these areas of need and reporting requirements were drafted, and I support this legislation because it is what we need from the Department, to create a more sustainable and self-sufficient food system that benefit residents, the economy, and our delicate island ecosystems.

The points in this legislation had lots of community feedback before they were solidified and will help guide the Department through different transitions in leadership that the Department will face over the course of the years. The reporting requirements will help with the huge need for comprehensive data collection and will allow the Department to track its successes, evaluate the ever-changing needs of the

ag sector and also help everyday stakeholders and policy makers, such as yourselves, make more informed decisions. The policies being proposed in Bill 105 are also very thorough and comprehensive, and as a community I helped work with, we feel that the Department will benefit from this guidance and it will allow it to make the biggest positive impact possible.

This legislation is also in alignment with the strategic plan that has been submitted to the administration and council and the prior legislation that has been approved for the Department. I thank you for all the support the Council has shown for the Department of Agriculture to date, and urge you all to continue that support and approve this bill.

I've sent this to many people over the years, and there has been no serious takers in Government to try to address or solve these issues. I have to admit, that some have tried, but it is overwhelming, and realistically, everyone has to make a living and feed their family than get bogged down with all that ag needs to succeed.

Here goes.....

Don't mean to overwhelm you, but I have a bunch of stuff we have been working on for years, along with other Ag Commodities, from the Maui Cattlemen's Association side. You might find the Maui Agricultural Design Conference in Huelo interesting, and compare it with the Ag Work Skills Panel discussion.

There have been four major meetings "about fixing Ag", and some call it the "Ag Wheel". These Issues do not take off and move forward, because there hasn't been someone who will commit to the Agriculture Industry, and see that they are addressed and dealt with.

Background:

On Monday, August 4th, 2008, Amber Starr and I participated in a meeting with Mayor Tavares that addressed all Ag commodities issues and concerns. The Maui County Farm Bureau took the lead, and organized categories of concern, and the organizational part didn't move forward. The Maui Cattlemen's Association formed these same committees within our Association, so we would line up with the Farm Bureau. The Farm Bureau leadership has not been active in addressing all of these issues brought forward, but MCA has been moving forward, working along with other Ag Commodities, and still need support in all areas. See attached notes from the meeting.

On Saturday, April 4th, 2009, Sol Ko'ohalahala had a round table discussion at the Cameron Center, as a continuation of the August 4th 2008 meeting, in addressing the concerns, and to connect farmers to restaurants and freight carriers. It was a great discussion, but it too, didn't move forward from there. (No notes, other than it tried connecting farmers with buyers present at the meeting, but didn't address the hurdles involved in Ag production.)

On July 28-August 1, 2010 there was a Maui Agricultural Design Conference in Huelo. Lots of discussion and planning for the future of ag was discussed. Not sure where this is now, but the feed back I've gotten from some attendees, was that the action of it too, is floating somewhere. (here is the link to the work they did, but it might not be working anymore, as some people have tried the link, and it hasn't connected)

http://h-cx.com/Hawaii_Local_Exchange/Maui_Ag_Design_Conference_files/Maui%20Ag%20Design%20Conf%20-%20Preliminary%20Report.pdf

On June 7, 2012, Over 100 Ag people (mostly farmers, including Molokai were there, maybe you did too) attended a full day Agriculture Work Skills Panel discussion at the Maui Beach Hotel. This was to determine the work skills needed to strengthen Agriculture. In addition to work skills in Ag, many unrelated needs for Ag's success were brought up titled "the Parking Lot", where we would go back to it and bring them forward to the appropriate people, since it was a work skills workshop from dept of Labor. The notes from the day are in, and we are still again, waiting for the next move. These notes and results are available at, http://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/files/2013/06/AgSkillPanelReport_web.pdf

2012. When Don Guzman was elected to Council, he became Chair of the Ag committee. It was great, because Don had already worked with the farm and ranch community, during the response to the 2011, BF 70 proposed Homesite bill. Seeing the many concerns the Agriculture Community had, Don wanted a group of Independent Agriculture Producers to work with, on the issues/hurdles that are keeping Diversified Ag from being successful. As a result, Producers who were active in the BF 70 issue organized themselves, and began working on the issues Don brought forward. It seems we have made some headway, by being able to present facts and experiences to the full Council.

Local Ag is very broken, and needs lots of help for it to survive. If it doesn't survive, our Programs in the High Schools and at the college does not survive either. Students go through the Ag program, jump into their boots, and face the hurdles head on. They become disappointed.....struggle....and get out of it, and work for industry where educated Ag Skills are in very high demand.

We've had various Chairs from the State Dept. of Ag, but they haven't stayed on long enough to tackle this huge job. We've also had many County Council Ag Chairs, but they've not been able to take this huge challenge on, nor stayed on very long. If the goal is to have more sustainable food grown here in the years ahead, Leadership really has to help take ownership of Diversified Agriculture, and care about where it is going. We don't believe in leaving the little guys behind. These are the ones that are going to grow the food.

Thank you,

William G. Jacintho

**Mayor's Economic Stimulus Agriculture Meeting
Monday, August 4, 2008**

Introduction: Farmers representing their respective Commodity or Group spoke about their concerns affecting the agricultural industry. The following attempts to categorize each comment.

Drought/Water

- Drought period currently being experienced
- Declaration of Emergency should be considered
- The Water Department should carefully review the current situation to consider calling water restrictions. Upcountry residents are volunteering to conserve water by 5%.
- The Water Department will reassess the situation to consider using back up wells.
- Biggest problem is that the heat is bringing production down by 75% .
- With the drought situation, plants are dying and failing to produce flowers like they normally do.
- With 4 Tropical Growers located Upcountry, the water situation an issue.
- There is a cut back on landscaping projects due to economic crisis and water cut backs.
- Possible solution is to produce drought tolerant native plants.
- There is an Issue with water disposing a white residue from chlorides
- Use of drought tolerant production key during drought period.
- There are water meter issues for ranchers who want water but cannot be issued meters.
- Water meter assigned for Agriculture use should not to be split with residential use.
- If agriculture water rates could remain stable famers could better cope with other rising costs.
- Water still an issue with water restrictions.
- Water is the biggest obstacle with proof in dry fields throughout Pulehu Road.
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Invasive Species

- Farmer's production decreases when new insects and plants and feral animals are introduced to Maui via imports from the mainland and foreign countries.
- Need assistance with control of invasive species.
- Ranchers are experiencing problems with dealing with invasive species, such as fireweed and tumbleweed which began over 10 years ago and exploded since. They need help in combating the problem.
- Dealing with economic rising cost
- Dealing with State Funding that mandated a 8% cut in this fiscal year.
- Focusing on protecting the health of water sheds.
- Focusing on Ag target such as Coqui Frogs

- Currently implementing the Coqui Free certification program
- Prevention/early detection is most cost effective way to deal with invasive species.
- Requesting huge increase for inter-island quarantine.

Marketing/Cost of Production/Doing Business/Transportation/Labor/Housing

- The Onion crops are growing well but competition from the Walla Walla Sweets and the Vaidelia Sweets do drive prices down.
- Suggested to market farming products expanding on internet to sell to outside Hawaii.
- Largest of consumption of pineapple is here on Maui.
- Need to educate local people to **BUY local**.
- Suggested providing students with internship to nurture as farmers.
- Having students have hands on experience will allow them to be enthusiastic.
- Because the economy is bad, consumers won't pay extra for locally grown Onions.
- Working with strengthening relationship with Ag community, suggesting hosting an Ag Awareness Day focusing on Ag related species so public aware of issue.
- Will allow plant providers, growers and wholesalers with marketing incentive to communicate to public that problem does not exist
- Opportunity for "Home Grown" approach where Maui Businesses can buy from Maui Businesses
- Fertilizer cost gone up almost double within the past year and that is reducing profits.
- Pineapple industry struggling with extreme high cost of production increasing 60 to 80%.
- Cost of fertilizer currently up.
- Trying to find alternative forms of fertilizer with tests currently being held.
- With rising cost, Farmer's cost of production have been steadily increasing.
- Suggested short term impact on relief to provide tax breaks on diesel fuel.
- Cost of fuel and materials is a huge obstacle.
- It is the high price of freight that affects all the flower growers. Export sales are in demand. Freight makes it prohibitive. Most flower growers will not use Superferry based on times of shipments. Coalitions would need to be formed to make anything work.
- The high cost of delivery and shipping cost is a problem. As a solution farmers should work together to share shipping or consolidate goods, will bring cost down.
- Suggested that shipping use of SuperFerry could be more feasible.
- Struggling to get pineapple off of Maui due to shipping cost and delay of delivery to the mainland. Matson cancelled direct shipments from Maui, with shipments taking 15 days to reach Mainland destinations. All surface shipments must go to Honolulu via Young Brothers, then transfer to Matson.
- Labor force availability a problem
- Suggested utilizing student training working with MEO to transport students.

- Labor and housing is an issue all farmers are facing.
- Looking for cost effective savings beginning with labor and materials.
- Suggested sharing of labor, considering labor pool.
- Asking for County to consider Ag labor housing

Agritourism

- The Tourism industry dependant on Tropical Growers.
- Suggested to bring Tourism Industry together to have on site farm tours (Agritourism).
- Tourism marketing budget is large, can work with Tourism industry for marketing farm products

Soil/Compost/Sustainability/Biodiversity

- Anticipating waste (such as fish waste) being used as resource for fertilizer.
- Proposed having regional compost sites for farmers.
- Soil erosion an issue for all farmers. Must use cover crops to reduce erosion and to enrich the soil.
- Suggested having Michael Shuman to introduce thoughts on farmers situation
- Reducing the amount of material coming in from off island can help sustain local Businesses.
- Goal on Maui is to help Maui become energy self sufficient.

Collaboration

- Suggested that different sectors of Ag should work together, collaborate and not compete against each other
- Different sectors could work together to collaborate shipping to reduce charges.
- Councilmember Gladys Baisa key to assisting Alii Lavender and suggested to contact her for assistance.
- Suggested that maybe Sub-Committee's be forms to address issues.
- With more than 90% of islands produce coming from off island, suggested we look at ourselves as collaborators instead of competitors.
- Considering buying parts in general in bulk.

Permitting/Ordinance

- Asking County to expedite permitting process for farmers.
- Asking County to assist with Ordinance not being so strict, such as not being able

- to sell products from other farms.
- Theft/Trespass/Liability

Vacuum Cooling Plant

- Provided awareness to Ag community of Vacuum Cooling Plant in upper Kula.
- Facility provides cooling for produce, mainly leafy greens
- Looking for more participants to use facility
- Currently working on getting a Grant to do improvements to maximize use of the facility.
- Currently only 30,000 lbs. of produce go through plant.
- Looking to add food safe set up to facilitate all kinds of produce.
- Cold storage also offered as a service.

Summary of Meeting with Mayor Charmaine Tavares

Who: Agricultural (Commodity) Groups
Where: Mayor Hannibal Tavares Community Center, Pukalani, Maui
When: Monday the 4th of August, 2008

Groups in attendance (in alphabetical order):

Ali'i Kula Lavender, Aloha `Aina, Coffee Growers, CTAHR, Farm Services Agency, Flower growers, HC&S, Invasive Species Committee, Maui Cattleman's Association, MCFB, ML&P, Monsanto, NRCS, Onion growers, State Dept. of Agriculture, MCC Sustainable Living Institute of Maui, MALP Maui Association of Landscape Professionals, (Rory Frampton) Ag Lot Development, (Netra) Maui Sustainable Farm Coalition, (Irene Plunket) Speaking on behalf of truck farmers unable to attend.

The following are the major issues and concerns discussed:

Maui Cattleman's Association (MCA)

- 1) Liability
 - Agricultural theft
 - Trespassing
- 2) Ag Water
 - Stabilized Agriculture water rate
 - Agricultural water meters
 - Status of transmission line and State Department of Agriculture: Brian Kau
- 3) Invasive Species Control
 - Early detection and rapid response
- 4) Labor
- 5) Diversification
 - Ag tourism/ TVR's
- 7) Fuel Costs
- 8) Shipping
 - Lack of covered staging/storage area at Kahului Harbor
 - Increasing shipping costs

Asked the Mayor if we could form sub committees for follow up with the meeting concerns—She said yes of course—I guess the lead person will be Clark Hashimoto. Farm Bureau is beginning to form these with their board members who represent the various commodities.

Ali'i Kula Lavender

- 1) Expedited permitting process
- 2) Work on ordinances
- 3) Ag industry should work together to implement change

Aloha `Aina

- 1) Agricultural Water
 - White residue on plants– water is alkaline?
- 2) Labor Force
 - Program to develop a pool of labor
 - Partnership with MEO for transporting workers
- 3) Regional Compost Sites
- 4) Soil Amendment
- 5) Fertilizer storage area on island for bulk orders of fertilizer
- 6) TVR's for Agricultural Tourism
- 7) Fish and Food Enzyme digestive system for fertilizer
- 8) Author Michael Schuman – Small Mart. Good resource book.
- 9) Food Share idea
- 10) Vacuum Cooler available

Coffee Growers

- 1) Water
 - Chlorine vs. Chloramine
- 2) Compost Potential
 - Food waste turned into liquid fertilizer (compost tea)
- 3) Reduced tax on diesel
- 4) TVRs can help subsidize Ag

College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR)

- 1) Invasive Species
 - New position in Kula to specialize in invasive species
- 2) More Ag Parks
- 3) Collaboration with Ag industries, County, etc...
- 4) Cost of production workshops
- 5) Informed use of water

Farm Service Agency

- 1) Offering emergency loans (3.85% interest rate)

Flower Growers

- 1) Dry weather affecting production
- 2) Chicken and dairy operations are beneficial for fertilizer purposes
- 3) Storage of water from Ag-water meters. Store when in excess, use storage when dry.

Hawaii Commercial & Sugar (HC&S)

- 1) Water
- 2) Fertilizer Prices increasing
- 3) Energy expansion facility
 - Assist with permitting process

Invasive Species Committee

- 1) Focus is on Health of Watersheds
- 2) Prevention
- 3) Cut of Funding limits mobility and ability
- 4) Ag related controls—Banana Bunchy top, Stinging Caterpillar, Coqui frog, West Nile virus, Pampas Grass,

Landscape Association MALP

- 1) Water
- 2) Maintenance, food comes first so landscape suffers.

Maui County Farm Bureau (MCFB)

- 1) Water restrictions
Water Department's response:
 - Hamakuapoko wells for Ag Water needed
 - Ag will be exempt from mandatory restrictions
- 2) Fuel Costs
- 3) Invasive Species
 - Animals and Plants
- 4) Define difference between Rural zoning and Agricultural zoning

Maui Land & Pine (ML&P)

- 1) Shipping and Operational Costs
- 2) Educate people to support local farmers

Monsanto

- 1) Short Term ideas
 - Pool orders to decrease cost
 - Ag labor – Sharing of labor pool
 - Ag labor housing
- 2) Long Term ideas
 - Storage of water during periods of excess supply
 - Ag training for Agricultural Careers (Incubator)

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

- 1) Lack of Water
 - NRCS cannot fund without water
- 2) Agritourism

Onion Growers

- 1) Decreasing revenues- customers not paying the higher price for Maui Onions, when less expensive onions are available.

State Department of Agriculture – Commodity Branch

- 1) Food Safety Certification (required by wholesalers)
- 2) Access to potable water for produce

Vacuum Cooling Plant

- 1) Needs people to use the facility that is available

Matrix of Issues:

| Issue | Times mentioned | By whom |
|--|-----------------|--|
| Water | 12 | MCA, Aloha `Aina, Coffee Growers, Flower Growers, HC&S, Invasive Species Committee, Landscape Assn., MCFB, Monsanto, NRCS, State Dept. of Ag |
| Collaboration b/w sectors and within Ag-businesses | 6 | Aloha `Aina, CTAHR, Flower Growers, MCA, Monsanto, NRCS |
| Fuel/Fertilizer Cost Increase | 5 | MCA, Coffee Growers, CTAHR, HC&S, MCFB |
| Ag Tourism/TVR's | 5 | Aloha `Aina, Coffee Growers, NRCS, Ali'i Kula Lavender |
| Invasive Species | 4 | MCA, CTAHR, Invasive Species committee., MCFB |
| Labor | 4 | MCA, Aloha `Aina, ML&P, Monsanto |
| Permitting Process/ Zoning | 3 | Ali'i Kula Lavender, HC&S, MCFB |
| Public Education to buy Local | 2 | ML&P, Onion Growers |
| Food Safety | 2 | Aloha `Aina,, State Dept. of Ag |
| Shipping Costs | 2 | MCA, ML&P |
| Ag Parks | 1 | CTAHR |
| Agricultural Theft/Trespassing | 2 | MCA, Coffee Growers |
| Fish and Food Fertilizer | 1 | Aloha `Aina |
| Food Share | 1 | Aloha `Aina |
| Composting | 2 | Aloha `Aina, Coffee Growers |