

EACP Committee

From: Warren Watanabe <warrenmcfb@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 08, 2020 12:42 PM
To: EACP Committee
Subject: testimony
Attachments: Sinenci testimony 9-8-20.docx

Aloha,

Our apologies for this late submittal of our testimony for this afternoon's meeting. Agenda item (EACP-1). Thank you.

Warren

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September 8, 2020

TESTIMONY

ENVIRONMENTAL, AGRICULTURAL, AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION
COMMITTEE

September 8, 2020

1:30 p.m.

**Re: INTEGRATED PEST AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ON
COUNTY PROPERTY (EACP-1)**

Chair Sinenci and Members of the Committee:

My name is Warren Watanabe, Executive Director of the Maui County Farm Bureau, an agricultural advocacy organization representing Maui's commercial farm and ranch families and organizations. We appreciate the committee and Council's efforts to advance agriculture in the County.

Farm Bureau opposes the proposed ordinance, limiting the use of certain pesticides and fertilizers on County property. Farm Bureau appreciates the exemption for the County Ag Parks included in the latest version and the recognition of the need of pesticides for the management of invasive species. However, our concern is about the inaccurate perception created by this proposal for important tools in the management of pests and to provide nutrients to crops.

Farm Bureau policy extensively discusses our position on Agricultural Chemicals; it states that we support:

"Agricultural chemicals are important in continuing to supply consumers with an abundant, safe, nutritious, high quality and reasonably priced food supply. We are committed to continuing the use of agricultural chemicals in a safe and judicious manner so as to protect the health and safety of producers, our employees, our families, our communities and the environment".

It goes on to state: We support:

“USDA and EPA should work cooperatively to find alternatives for pesticides that, as a result of regulatory action, have lost registrations and uses. And that

Pesticide regulation authority be limited solely to federal and state governments.”

As stated in our policy, we view agricultural chemicals as an important part of our toolbox that when used correctly, protects our environment, workers and consumers. Limiting regulatory authority to Federal and State jurisdiction is to prevent a patchwork of regulations across the State, resulting in a disparity of tools available to farmers and ranchers to continue viable operations. Our farmers and ranchers already face challenges such as that which you heard recently, Young Bros. shipping rates. Neighbor island farmers and ranchers face costs not borne by their peers on Oahu. While we recognize that this proposal applies only to County lands, it provides a precedent that places the agricultural industry on the defense and in a position not faced by their peers from other Counties or imports outside Hawaii.

Farm Bureau agrees that improper use of any pesticide is problematic. Proper training and continuous research into finding safer alternatives must be prioritized. Premature cancellation of use can bring about unintended consequences.

Farm Bureau respectfully requests this body to encourage education by everyone as a priority for safeguarding the health and welfare of Maui’s people and the environment. Responsible stewardship by users of pesticides and fertilizers on both private and public lands will be the best path forward in the interest of our community today and in the future.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our position on this important matter. If there are any questions, I can be contacted at 281-9718 or warrenmcfb@gmail.com.