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MEETING OF THE HAWAII BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Testimony on Item L-1: Request Authorization for the Chairperson to Negotiate and Enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the City and County of Honolulu, Board of Water Supply, to transfer Capital Improvement Project Funding for the Kunia Wells IV Exploratory Well Project, Ewa, Oahu, Tax Map Key No.: (1) 9-4-003: 010.

Aloha Chair Case and Members of the Board:

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 interests of our islands' diverse farmers and ranchers so they can provide for their communities.

HFB strongly supports the transfer of CIP funds from the Department of Land and Natural Resources to BWS for the design and construction of one exploratory well to meet future potable water requirements for diversified agriculture.

Affordable and reliable water for irrigation is a basic requirement for sustainable agriculture. Across the country, irrigation systems are heavily subsidized. Currently, new infrastructure investments are occurring in the West to ensure water will be available for agriculture. Hawaii's farmers face expenses far beyond that of their continental or foreign counterparts due to input costs, utility costs, and water. There is no doubt that water infrastructure development has lagged the needs of population growth across the State. In addition to new development, repair and maintenance of aging infrastructure also need to be addressed. In addition to those meeting potable water needs, there is an equal need to address irrigation and other water requirements associated with agriculture.

HFB appreciates the support by the legislature in our past efforts to help Hawaii's farmers achieve compliance with the FDA Food Safety and Modernization Act. As the actual rule has been rolled out by FDA the immensity of the task is becoming evident. Basic requirements for water quality are clear. Untreated water that was considered the norm for agriculture may no longer be acceptable in certain cases based on the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act or FSMA. Nonpotable systems will require farmers to take additional measures that will increase costs.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure.