



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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I was pleased to hear in Governor Lingle's State of the State Address the call to support local agriculture which would benefit the state by keeping money in the local economy, provide jobs, promote self-sufficiency, and protect green space.

Although not mentioned, purchasing locally grown meats, produce and goods also reduces the influx of invasive species that arrive on imported products and in the cargo spaces of the planes and ships that transport them. Buying local actually protects local agriculture from having to deal with new pests.

However, in Governor Lingle's 5-Point Economic Action Plan, she clearly stated her desire to repeal or weaken the 2008 Cargo Fee law, which allows the state to charge a 50 cent fee on every 1,000 lbs of imported goods expressly for invasive species prevention at ports and the building of inspection facilities on each island. The fee is needed because more than 80% of our goods are imported, and due primarily to a lack of capacity, less than 2% of incoming cargo is inspected.

Buy local, support the cargo fee law, see capitol improvement projects at ports on each island, and protect the environment--it is all tied together.

(END)

Christy Martin is the Public Information Officer for the statewide Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS), a public-private partnership working to protect Hawaii from invasive species.