SB 157
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL BURNING

Statement for
Senate Committees on
Agriculture, Energy and Ocean Resources
Planning and Environment

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SB 157 would add to the existing statutes the prohibition of agricultural burning of sugarcane and pineapple. The statement on this bill does not represent an official position of the University of Hawaii.

We assume that a major impetus to the drafting of this bill comes from the problems experienced in leeward and central Oahu where ash and smoke may impact nearby residential areas. Since sugarcane is burned once every 2 years and drip irrigated pineapple fields are burned once every 4 years the smoke problem while certainly a concern, occurs very infrequently. Stricter controls limiting burning schedules to optimal weather conditions may mitigate the direct problem without the necessity of total prohibition and the resulting economic repercussions. If such controls, however, cannot be assured then prohibition of burning near residential and resort areas may be appropriate as the smoke, ash, and particulate matter produced are not only a nuisance but may be a health hazard as well.