



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
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MEDIA RELEASE

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Governor Signs Measures to Support Agriculture

Honolulu- Governor Neil Abercrombie today signed into law several measures relating to agriculture, helping to develop a strong foundation to enhance the State's food and agricultural self-sufficiency. Senator Clarence Nishihara, chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, released the following statements regarding the enactment of Senate Bill (SB) 993, SB 586, House Bill (HB) 1263 and HB 353.

[SB 993](#), relating to agricultural loans, expands the Department of Agriculture's agricultural loan program by adding farm innovation loan programs and expanding the definition of a new farmer.

"One of the major concerns regarding sustainability of agriculture in Hawaii is a lack of agricultural entrepreneurs," said Nishihara. **"This measure helps provide Hawaii's emerging farmers with the capital they need to start their farming operations and be innovative in testing new crops or techniques."**

[SB 586](#), relating to agriculture, provides, under certain circumstances, an exemption from building code and permit requirements for nonresidential buildings or structures, including indigenous Hawaiian hale, on commercial farms and ranches located outside the urban district.

"These agricultural exemptions enacted in this measure support agricultural development and expansion by significantly easing the financial and administrative burdens that we have placed on our farmers and ranchers," said Nishihara.

[HB 1263](#), relating to irrigation, appropriates \$75,000 for the East Kauai irrigation system and \$45,000 for the Peekauai Ditch irrigation system, also known as the Menehune Ditch.

"Reliable irrigation systems are critical to Hawaii's agricultural industry," said Nishihara. **"These irrigation system investments will help ensure that Hawaii's agricultural crops have the opportunity to continue to flourish."**

[HB 353](#), relating to agriculture, appropriates \$250,000 in the 2013-2015 fiscal biennium for the Department of Agriculture to research and develop methods for the prevention and treatment of coffee

berry borer infestations. The measure also appropriates \$300,000 during the 2013-2014 fiscal year for the Department of Agriculture to fund efforts to control and mitigate the damage from coffee berry borer infestation.

“The coffee berry borer is an invasive species that has caused considerable damage to Hawaii’s coffee industry,” said Nishihara. “The enactment of this measure supports the State’s efforts in controlling the damage from the infestation and ensuring the survival of our coffee farms. “

(Photo Caption: Senators Clarence Nishihara, Ronald Kouchi, and Gilbert Kahele join their House colleagues and Governor Neil Abercrombie for the signing of several agriculture bills.) (Photo Courtesy: Senate Communications.)

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