
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ORGANIC AGRICULTURE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. Organic farming practices are beneficial to
2 human health and towards the preservation of environmental
3 quality because these practices emphasize sustainability,
4 enhance soil health, and promote the practice of growing
5 agricultural products without the use of toxic substances, such
6 as pesticides and fertilizers. While organic farming is an
7 important building block for maintaining and preserving the
8 State's scenic and environmental resources, it is also an
9 essential element in creating economic viability and preserving
10 the quality of life in rural and agricultural communities.

11 According to a national study, approximately two per cent
12 of the United States food supply is grown using organic methods
13 and the nationwide retail sales of organic food and beverages in
14 2005 totaled approximately \$12,800,000,000. There are over
15 ninety organic farms in Hawaii, which produce organic products
16 such as coffee, macadamia nuts, bananas, pineapples, ginger,
17 mangoes, citrus fruits, avocados, tomatoes, and salad greens.



1 The Hawaii Organic Farmers Association, an accredited third
2 party certification agency for the United States Department of
3 Agriculture's National Organic Program, estimates that organic
4 farming in Hawaii is a \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 per year
5 industry.

6 There is currently a high and increasing demand for organic
7 produce that exceeds the State's local organic food supply, and
8 to meet this demand, local produce markets and large mainland
9 chain stores must import organic produce from the mainland and
10 other countries. The importation of organic produce can result
11 in a higher number of invasive species that are inadvertently
12 brought into the State upon arrival, and can impact the State's
13 agriculture sector, economy, and sustainable food supply.

14 The purpose of this Act is to establish an organic
15 agriculture task force under the direction of the department of
16 business, economic development, and tourism to focus on the
17 promotion of organic agriculture as a key industry for the
18 State, and to appropriate funds to the task force to carry out
19 its purposes.

20 SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the department
21 of business, economic development, and tourism an organic



1 agriculture task force to focus on the promotion of organic
2 agriculture as a key industry for the State.

3 (b) The organic agriculture task force shall consist of
4 the following members:

5 (1) The director of business, economic development, and
6 tourism or the director's designee;

7 (2) The chairperson of the board of agriculture or the
8 chairperson's designee;

9 (3) Two members from the senate appointed by the senate
10 president;

11 (4) Two members from the house of representatives
12 appointed by the speaker of the house of
13 representatives;

14 (5) The dean of the college of tropical agriculture and
15 human resources at the University of Hawaii or the
16 dean's designee;

17 (6) The executive director of the agribusiness development
18 corporation or the executive director's designee;

19 (7) The president of the Hawaii Organic Farmers
20 Association or the president's designee;

21 (8) The president of the Hawaii Cooperative of Organic
22 Farmers or the president's designee;



- 1 (9) The director of the Hawaii Agriculture Research Center
2 or the director's designee; and
- 3 (10) The executive director of the Hawaii Farm Bureau
4 Federation.
- 5 (c) The organic agriculture task force shall:
- 6 (1) Examine the current status, activities, policies,
7 directives, and programs relating to the promotion and
8 development of organic agriculture in the State;
- 9 (2) Identify impediments to developing and promoting
10 organic agriculture in the State;
- 11 (3) Review other jurisdictions' activities, policies,
12 directives, and programs related to the promotion and
13 development of organic agriculture as a key industry;
- 14 (4) Explore any other options available to the task force
15 to promote and develop organic agriculture as a key
16 economic industry for the State; and
- 17 (5) Establish findings and recommendations on how the
18 State may best develop and promote organic agriculture
19 as a key industry.
- 20 (d) The members of the organic agriculture task force
21 shall select the chairperson of the task force and shall be



1 reimbursed for expenses, including travel expenses, necessary
2 for the performance of their duties.

3 (e) The organic agriculture task force shall submit its
4 findings and recommendations to the legislature, including any
5 proposed legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the
6 convening of the 2009 regular session.

7 (f) The department of business, economic development, and
8 tourism shall provide support services necessary to assist the
9 task force in achieving its purposes as required under this Act.

10 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
11 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
12 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 for
13 the organic agriculture task force to carry out its purposes,
14 including research and support services and reimbursement of
15 expenses for task force members.

16 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
17 business, economic development, and tourism for the purposes of
18 this Act.

19 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval;
20 provided that section 3 shall take effect on July 1, 2008.

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INTRODUCED BY:

Michael F. Ferguson



H.B. NO. 3277

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Report Title:

Organic Agriculture Task Force; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes an organic agriculture task force under the direction of the department of business, economic development, and tourism to focus on the promotion of organic agriculture as a key industry for the State. Makes an appropriation to the task force to carry out its purposes.

