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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO 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 is a \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 per year industry in  
5 Hawaii.

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

15 The purpose of this Act is to establish an organic  
16 agriculture task force under the administration of the  
17 department of agriculture to develop a business plan for the  
18 Hawaii organic food center, and to appropriate funds for the  
19 task force to carry out its purposes.

20 SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the department  
21 of agriculture an organic agriculture task force to develop a  
22 business plan for the Hawaii organic food center.

1 (b) The organic agriculture task force shall consist of  
2 the following members:

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

5 (2) The chairperson of the board of agriculture or the  
6 chairperson's designee;

7 (3) Two members from the senate appointed by the senate  
8 president;

9 (4) Two members from the house of representatives  
10 appointed by the speaker of the house of  
11 representatives;

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

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

17 (7) The president of the Hawaii Cooperative of Organic  
18 Farmers or the president's designee;

19 (8) The director of the Hawaii Agriculture Research Center  
20 or the director's designee; and

21 (9) The executive director of the Hawaii Farm Bureau  
22 Federation.

1 (c) The organic agriculture task force shall develop a  
2 business plan for the Hawaii organic food center, which shall  
3 include evidence of its conceptual viability. The Hawaii  
4 organic food center shall:

5 (1) Provide infrastructure support for the organic farming  
6 industry;

7 (2) Establish a multi-function, cooperative center on Oahu  
8 with a value-added product line and distribution  
9 center;

10 (3) Establish operational organic farm land for fruit and  
11 vegetable seed production; and

12 (4) Conduct farm tours and host farmers markets.

13 (d) The members of the organic agriculture task force  
14 shall select the chairperson of the task force from among  
15 themselves and shall be reimbursed for expenses, including  
16 travel expenses, necessary for the performance of their duties.

17 (e) The organic agriculture task force shall submit its  
18 business plan to the legislature, including any necessary  
19 proposed legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the  
20 convening of the 2010 regular session.

1 (f) The department of agriculture shall provide support  
2 services necessary to assist the task force in achieving its  
3 purposes as required under this Act.

4 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
5 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$500,000 or so much  
6 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2009-2010 for the  
7 organic agriculture task force to carry out the purposes of this  
8 Act.

9 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
10 agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

11 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050;  
12 provided that section 3 shall take effect on July 1, 2050.

**Report Title:**

Hawaii Organic Food Center; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes an organic agriculture task force under the direction of department of agriculture to develop a business plan for a Hawaii organic food center; makes an appropriation to the task force to carry out its purposes. Effective 7/1/50.  
(SD1)