



# Hawaii's Thousand Friends

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COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Rep. Hermina Morita, Chair  
Rep. Danny Coffman, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND & OCEAN RESOURCES

Rep. Ken Ito, Chair  
Rep. Sharon Har, Vice Chair

Bill No. 1351

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HB 1351

RELATING TO PRIVATE AGRICULTURAL PARKS

Committee Chairs and members:

Hawaii's Thousand Friends, a statewide non-profit land and water use organization, opposes HB 1351 that allows owners of contiguous parcels within the agricultural district to establish private agricultural parks.

The bill states that a new law is necessary to "encourage owners of neighboring agricultural lands to enter into cooperative private agreements..." because government regulation and oversight stifles cooperation between adjoining neighbors. Since a private agricultural park will register with the Dept. of Agriculture what is the department's oversight role?

HTF opposes creating any law that allows enterprises to act outside of existing laws and government oversight. Without government oversight partners of a private agricultural parks can pretty much operate however they want while claiming the activity meets the definition of power generation, cold water processing and "any other lawful activity within the private agricultural park for the benefit of one or more of its members."

Since the park is private and there will be no government oversight who and what defines "lawful activity?" Will private agricultural parks be exempt from Chapter 343, building permits and oversight by the PUC?

We especially oppose the elimination of the Water Commission's oversight since the use of Hawaii's ditch systems, streams and even "falling water" will be used to create hydropower within a private agricultural park. As trustee the State cannot abrogate its responsibility to protect all Hawaii's water resources for the people of Hawaii.

Hawaii's Thousand Friends opposes the use of public land in the creation of an enterprise that will operate outside the purview of State and County oversight and laws.

HB 1351 establishes a bad and harmful precedent and must be held in committee.