
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND
NATURAL RESOURCES TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO TARO GROWING LANDS
AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR TARO SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

1 WHEREAS, kalo, the Hawaiian word for taro, is a culturally
2 significant plant to the kanaka maoli, Hawaii's indigenous
3 peoples and to the State; and
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5 WHEREAS, in 2008, the Legislature recognized kalo's role in
6 the State's history and well being by designating kalo as the
7 state plant; and
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9 WHEREAS, In 2008, the Legislature also passed Act 211,
10 which created the Taro Security and Purity Task Force that
11 directed the taro farmers, Department of Agriculture, Department
12 of Land and Natural Resources, University of Hawaii, Hawaii Farm
13 Bureau Federation, and Onipa'a Na Hui Kalo representatives to
14 seek solutions to challenges facing taro, taro farmers, and taro
15 markets for a period of two years; and
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17 WHEREAS, the problems articulated by taro farmers are
18 multi-faceted: the key to expanding the capacity for taro self-
19 sufficiency in Hawaii is access to and affordability of taro
20 lands. The task force found that the State retains numerous
21 lands within its jurisdiction that were former taro lands or are
22 capable of becoming wet or dry taro producing lands on all
23 islands, many of which are prioritized for other uses. It also
24 found that lease rates were inconsistent and in some cases
25 unduly expensive due to the influence of the value of adjacent
26 developed lands, therefore making the land unaffordable to
27 existing or future taro farmers; and
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1 WHEREAS, the task force found that some agricultural
2 leases, both public and private, were as low as \$30 per acre per
3 year, but as high as \$2,000 per acre per year when they were
4 adjacent to highly valued residential properties or conservation
5 land; and

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7 WHEREAS, the high cost of leases renders unaffordable
8 critical fallowing practices that improve soil health and reduce
9 apple snail populations and fungal diseases in taro soils; and

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11 WHEREAS, taro farming is a practice learned on-farm,
12 through family, and by example, making lease criteria that
13 require specific educational levels or financial status a
14 challenge for taro farmers from qualifying for leases,
15 particularly among young farmers; and

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17 WHEREAS, the State should strive to improve access to taro
18 growing lands and opportunity for taro self-sufficiency; now,
19 therefore,

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21 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
22 Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
23 of 2010, that the Legislature urges the Department of Land and
24 Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture to:

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26 (1) Reevaluate their inventory of lands for potential
27 taro-growing lands;
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29 (2) Develop more affordable and reasonable lease rent
30 rates;
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32 (3) Establish accessible criteria for qualifying taro
33 farmers; and
34 (4) In partnership with the Taro Security and Purity Task
35 Force, facilitate the expansion of taro production and
36 food self-sufficiency; and

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38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
39 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
40 Agriculture, Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural
41 Resources, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Office of



1 Hawaiian Affairs, Chairperson of the Taro Security and Purity
2 Task Force, and to the Onipa'a Na Hui Kalo organization.
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