

JAN 23 2009

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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 business, economic development, and tourism to  
18 develop a business plan for the Hawaii organic food center, and  
19 to appropriate funds for the task force to carry out its  
20 purposes.

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



1 agriculture task force to develop a business plan for the Hawaii  
2 organic food center.

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 develop a  
6 business plan for the Hawaii organic food center, which shall  
7 include evidence of its conceptual viability. The Hawaii  
8 organic food center shall:

9           (1) Provide infrastructure support for the organic farming  
10                   industry;

11           (2) Establish a multi-function, cooperative center on Oahu  
12                   with a value-added product line and distribution  
13                   center;

14           (3) Establish operational organic farm land for fruit and  
15                   vegetable seed production; and

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

17           (d) The members of the organic agriculture task force  
18 shall select the chairperson of the task force from among  
19 themselves and shall be reimbursed for expenses, including  
20 travel expenses, necessary for the performance of their duties.

21           (e) The organic agriculture task force shall submit its  
22 business plan to the legislature, including any necessary



1 proposed legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the  
2 convening of the 2010 regular session.

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

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

11 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
12 business, economic development, and tourism for the purposes of  
13 this Act.

14 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval;  
15 provided that section 3 shall take effect on July 1, 2009.

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INTRODUCED BY:



**Report Title:**

Hawaii Organic Food Center; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes an organic agriculture task force under the direction of DBEDT to develop a business plan for a Hawaii organic food center; makes an appropriation to the task force to carry out its purposes.

