
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that new farmers face
2 tremendous obstacles in starting a farm. For example, many new
3 farmers face high infrastructure costs to provide water, sewer,
4 and electrical services to the land. Farmers who lease land
5 encounter difficulties in terminating leases when housing is
6 situated on the leased land, while farmers who purchase private
7 land face the prospect that lessees will demand lease to fee
8 conversion.

9 Not surprisingly, even with the increasing interest in
10 farming, the number of new farmers nationwide has declined by
11 twenty per cent over the past five years. Further, the average
12 age of a Hawaii farmer is higher than the national average, and
13 that gap is increasing.

14 The legislature finds that the State, as owner of thousands
15 of acres of agricultural land, can play a major role in
16 addressing the barriers faced by prospective farmers by creating
17 state-owned small farming communities. Agricultural areas with
18 two to five acre lots, each with a clustered off-grid housing



1 unit, leased to the farmer, can address many of the challenges
2 faced by prospective farmers, while also addressing potential
3 infrastructure, eviction, and inefficiency problems for the
4 landowner.

5 The purpose of this Act is to encourage farming in the
6 State by establishing a five-year energy independent farming
7 community pilot project to provide support to persons who want
8 to be farmers.

9 SECTION 2. (a) The University of Hawaii, college of
10 tropical agriculture and human resources, agribusiness incubator
11 program shall establish a five-year energy independent farming
12 community pilot project.

13 (b) The energy independent farming community pilot project
14 shall:

- 15 (1) Be owned by the State;
- 16 (2) Be managed by a manager, who shall be appointed by the
17 dean of the University of Hawaii, college of tropical
18 agriculture and human resources;
- 19 (3) Contain land, housing, and shared facilities;
- 20 (4) Lease land and homes to tenants who shall use the land
21 for agricultural purposes;



1 (5) Utilize state funds or bonds to fund the initial land
2 improvements, including construction of roads,
3 buildings, and wells;

4 (6) Charge lease rents in amounts designed to finance the
5 capital costs, maintenance, and management of the
6 energy independent farming community pilot project;
7 and

8 (7) Be energy and water independent, including using
9 photovoltaic panels, atmospheric water generators,
10 solar water heaters, septic waste water systems, well
11 water, and any other technological developments
12 related to energy and water independence.

13 (c) The energy independent farming community pilot project
14 may configure the land to allow for housing and shared
15 facilities to be located in the center of the community with
16 each house adjacent to the tenant's respective farm.

17 (d) The University of Hawaii may adopt rules pursuant to
18 chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, for the purposes of this
19 Act.

20 SECTION 3. The University of Hawaii shall submit interim
21 reports to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to



1 the convening of the regular sessions of 2017, 2018, 2019, and
2 2020, and a final report to the legislature no later than twenty
3 days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2021. The
4 reports shall contain information on the progress made toward
5 implementing the energy independent farming community pilot
6 project, the estimated amount of bonds required to finance the
7 project and infrastructure, status of the pilot project,
8 accomplishments of the pilot project, and proposed legislation,
9 if any. The final report shall also include a recommendation on
10 whether the pilot project should be made permanent.

11 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
12 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$100,000 or so much
13 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 to fund
14 one full-time equivalent manager position (1.0 FTE) for the
15 energy independent farming community pilot project.

16 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the University of
17 Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

18 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
19 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$50,000 or so much
20 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 for the



1 planning of an energy independent farming community pilot
2 project.

3 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the University of
4 Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2016, and
6 shall be repealed on June 30, 2021.



Report Title:

Energy Independent Farming Community; Pilot Project;
Agriculture; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes, within CTAHR's agribusiness incubator program, a five-year energy independent farming community pilot project. Appropriates funds. Repeals 6/30/2021. (SD1)

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