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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. Farmers are required to have an approved  
2 conservation plan in order to access federal farm bill funds and  
3 to be in compliance with local grading/grubbing ordinances.  
4 However, the number of people qualified to write conservation  
5 plans in Hawaii is not sufficient to meet the demand. This can  
6 leave many Hawaii farmers, who may have relatively small  
7 operations as compared to the mainland, waiting two to four  
8 years to receive a conservation plan. Without an approved  
9 conservation plan, farmers are technically out of compliance  
10 with local regulations, leaving them subject to significant  
11 penalties if those rules are enforced.

12           Data from the 2013-2014 fiscal year indicates that just one  
13 hundred seventy new conservation plans were developed in Hawaii,  
14 accounting for roughly 2.5 per cent of the seven thousand farms  
15 operating in the State. Based on a five-year effective period,  
16 just 12.5 per cent of the State's farms have a current  
17 conservation plan. Furthermore, larger landowners are more  
18 likely to have a conservation plan; the 12.5 per cent of farms



1 with conservation plans control approximately forty per cent of  
2 agricultural acres in Hawaii.

3 The current conservation plan application system is  
4 available only to United States Department of Agriculture  
5 Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employees and  
6 individuals working from local NRCS offices. The national NRCS  
7 policy prioritizes applications from farms seeking federal farm  
8 bill funding. A limited number of farmers, roughly one hundred  
9 forty, actively seek federal funding in any given year,  
10 resulting in ninety-eight per cent of Hawaii farms with limited  
11 planning support unable to obtain a conservation plan in a  
12 timely manner.

13 The development of an online interface for farmers and  
14 other agricultural professionals to input much of the data for a  
15 conservation plan will save time and money for all parties  
16 involved. The State of Idaho developed a similar online program  
17 for conservation plans called the Idaho One Plan.

18 The legislature finds that Hawaii could benefit from a  
19 similar program, to be called the "Hawaii one program".

20 If such a program is implemented, the wait time to process  
21 a conservation plan would be reduced substantially. A full and



1 comprehensive conservation plan, which currently requires  
2 approximately fifty hours of staff time to analyze, could be  
3 built modularly, thereby giving basic plans to those that need  
4 it or more comprehensive plans to other farms that require it.  
5 If the Hawaii one program is successful in setting up and  
6 rolling out the basic foundational pieces, focused primarily on  
7 soil erosion measures, the amount of technical staff time needed  
8 to process the application can be reduced to an estimated  
9 fifteen hours. Furthermore, through the creation of a focused  
10 and streamlined Hawaii one program conservation plan application  
11 system, farmers should be more likely to participate in  
12 obtaining a conservation plan. The Hawaii one program will help  
13 the roughly 87.5 per cent of farmers, farming sixty per cent of  
14 agricultural land, who do not have a conservation plan to obtain  
15 one.

16 The Hawaii one program would be based on existing standards  
17 and practices for soil conservation. The goal for the Hawaii  
18 one program is to build the software modularly with the  
19 potential to add topics like wildlife and pesticide management  
20 in the future.



1 Previously, there was progress between the department of  
2 agriculture and department of land and natural resources to  
3 develop an online conservation application; however, sufficient  
4 access to server space became an issue, and the subsequent  
5 recession of 2008 created funding cuts for both departments.  
6 The department of agriculture now has the capacity to house a  
7 host server, if required. Other non-governmental organizations  
8 have garnered financial and in-kind support from local partners,  
9 which could be used to complete the fundraising needed to  
10 develop and deliver the Hawaii one plan.

11 The purpose of this Act is to:

- 12 (1) Provide for the establishment and encouragement of the  
13 Hawaii one plan as a primary computer-based  
14 conservation planning process for all natural resource  
15 concerns to be accomplished through a steering  
16 committee containing private and state representation  
17 and inviting federal representation;
- 18 (2) Deem the information provided by those using the  
19 Hawaii one plan to be trade secrets, production  
20 records, or other proprietary information and keep the



1 information confidential and exempt from disclosure;  
2 and

3 (3) Appropriate funds for the implementation and operation  
4 of the Hawaii one program to provide conservation  
5 plans online.

6 SECTION 2. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by  
7 adding a new chapter to title 11 to be appropriately designated  
8 and to read as follows:

9 "CHAPTER

10 HAWAII ONE PLAN

11 § -1 Definitions. As used in this chapter, unless the  
12 context requires otherwise:

13 "Department" means the department of agriculture.

14 "Steering committee" means the Hawaii one plan steering  
15 committee.

16 § -2 Hawaii one plan steering committee; established.

17 (a) There is established the Hawaii one plan steering committee  
18 within the department for administrative purposes. The purpose  
19 of the steering committee shall be to assist with the design of  
20 the Hawaii one plan, identify the appropriate location to host  
21 the Hawaii one plan's server, and implement the Hawaii one plan.



1 (b) The steering committee shall consist of the following  
2 members:

3 (1) The executive director of the Hawaii Association of  
4 Conservation Districts or the executive director's  
5 designee, who shall serve as chair of the steering  
6 committee;

7 (2) The executive director of the Oahu Resource  
8 Conservation and Development Council or the executive  
9 director's designee;

10 (3) The chairperson of the board of agriculture or the  
11 chairperson's designee;

12 (4) The president of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation or  
13 the president's designee;

14 (5) The president of the Hawaii Farmers Union United or  
15 the president's designee;

16 (6) The managing director of the Ulupono Initiative or the  
17 managing director's designee;

18 (7) The president of the Hawaii Cattleman's Council or the  
19 president's designee; and



1 (8) Three representatives of the farming community to be  
2 chosen by the executive director of the Hawaii  
3 Association of Conservation Districts; and

4 The steering committee shall invite members of the United States  
5 Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service  
6 to participate as members of the steering committee.

7 (c) The steering committee's members shall serve without  
8 compensation but shall be reimbursed for expenses, including  
9 travel expenses, necessary for the performance of their duties.

10 (d) In the performance of its duties, the steering  
11 committee shall consult with appropriate private, nonprofit,  
12 community, and government stakeholders.

13 § -3 **Proprietary information; confidentiality.** The  
14 information provided by a user of the Hawaii one plan shall be  
15 deemed to be trade secrets, production records, or other  
16 proprietary information and shall be confidential and exempt  
17 from disclosure pursuant to chapter 92F."

18 SECTION 3. The Hawaii one plan steering committee shall  
19 submit a report of the funding status and implementation  
20 progress of the Hawaii one plan to the legislature no later than



1 twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of  
2 2016.

3 The steering committee shall also submit a follow-up report  
4 to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the  
5 convening of the regular session of 2017.

6 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$70,000 or so much  
8 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2015-2016 for  
9 implementation and operation of the Hawaii one program to  
10 provide conservation plans online.

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

13 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2015.  
14





**Report Title:**

Department of Agriculture; Hawaii One Plan; Conservation Plan;  
Steering Committee; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes the Hawaii one plan steering committee.  
Appropriates funds to develop and operate the Hawaii one program  
to provide conservation plans online. (SD1)

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