

HB446, HD1

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**TESTIMONY OF SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

**MARCH 15, 2017
1:15 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 446 HD1
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR A DIVERSIFIED AGRICULTURAL PARK**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 446 HD1, which makes an appropriation for a diversified agricultural park in South Maui. The department supports the intent of this bill provided it does not impact the priorities identified in the department's executive biennium budget.

One of the primary missions of the Department of Agriculture is the provision of affordable agricultural land for long-term leasing. The continued growth of diversified agriculture provides additional food security for the state's residents and visitors, as well as ensuring the protection of green space to preserve the natural beauty of our islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, March 9, 2017 3:44 PM
To: AEN Testimony
Cc: mmmmahalo2000@aol.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB446 on Mar 15, 2017 13:15PM

HB446

Submitted on: 3/9/2017

Testimony for AEN on Mar 15, 2017 13:15PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mike Moran	Kihei Community Association (KCA)	Support	No

Comments: Please support this measure. Huge amounts of AG land are now available now in our area. Let's devote some portion of that to a Kihei AG Park to grow food crops, hemp, bio crops or something else. Mahalo, Mike Moran for KCA

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From: [Steve Paselk](#)
To: [AEN Testimony](#)
Subject: Support of SB 446 South Maui AG Park
Date: Thursday, March 9, 2017 9:56:43 PM

I support State Agricultural Parks to provide farmers long term plots at reasonable lease rents to encourage and enable young and entry level farmers as well as experienced farmers. There is interest in healthy regenerative agricultural techniques and farmers are learning how to be successful economically using these techniques and are at the cusp of creating a revitalized local agricultural industry in Hawaii. A major problem is that agricultural land is not for sale at prices that a real farm business plan can justify to get a loan for. Former agricultural corporations are now development corporations and are using agricultural tax rates to land bank land until they can sell it over time for development rates. Ag zoned land on Maui is selling for \$150,000 per acre and \$15,000 per acre is probably what a real farmer could justify paying. Many people buying these gentleman estates on ag land are sincere about trying to grow some food but are certainly not intensive farmers earning their living from the land but successful people who have the ability to pay for privacy, views and country living. The exception is successful people with the means to purchase land and transition to a successful innovative farm. This leaves out young farmers who don't have the means to purchase land at development prices. The Hawaii Farmers Union United administers a Farmer Mentoring Apprentice Program to help entry level farmers and Agricultural Parks and Agricultural Land Trusts are the next critical step to putting young farmers on the land and to revitalize local agriculture. We need to ask if we are truly serious about the importance of growing food locally and if so we need to protect ag zoned land for real farming and ensure that farm land is sold at farm prices or turned over to agricultural land trusts. Ag land sold at development prices should pay a stiff capital gains penalty to discourage the practice. If corporations are unwilling or unable to farm agricultural land themselves and are unwilling to sell ag land at ag rates and are unwilling to have land trusts administer farm land for them then we need to look at eminent domain to keep farm land in ag. We need to stop pretending that estate developments selling at \$150,000 an acre are farms.

I understand that many farmers are able to lease under-utilized farm land at reasonable rents but usually don't have long leases to protect them if they are investing to regenerate the land. This is another reason to support agricultural parks.

On a practical note widening the scope of this bill to include the entire island of Maui

would open opportunities to chose the most fertile land available, with the best rainfall and water access and the best growing climate at the best prices. Another consideration is to provide opportunities for both organic and more conventional or transitional farmers by providing buffer zones to protect the organic farms.

Stephen Paselk, Paia