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Lt. Governor



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Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS**

**APRIL 4, 2018  
10:30 A.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 211**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2099 HD1 SD1  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 2099 HD1 SD1 that requires the Department of Agriculture to conduct a study on the feasibility of authorizing the Department to establish and designate “ag-tech” zones in the Kalihi-Palama, Kakaako, and Moanalua areas. The Department is to request the assistance and resources of the departments of Land and Natural Resources, and Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; the University of Hawaii; the Hawaii Community Development Authority; and the City and County of Honolulu. There is an appropriation and the feasibility study is to be submitted to the 2019 Legislature. The purpose of an “ag-tech” zone is to promote technological innovation in agriculture to increase food production in a more effective and environmentally responsible way that also contributes to State revenues. The Department of Agriculture offers comments.

The Department is concerned about redirecting our very limited departmental resources away from current duties and responsibilities to undertake the many tasks specified in this measure in a comprehensive and realistic manner. The Department supports all forms of agricultural production including small-scale niche operations. The Department supports the development and integration of technology to all agricultural practices to help reduce irrigation needs, increase yields and quality, and to reduce the



need to apply soil supplements and pesticides. While there is some crop and animal production and businesses prosper in their unique situations in urban Honolulu, the resources that are to be allocated to the endeavor expressed in this bill should reflect its likely contribution to Hawaii's overall food self-sufficiency.

A quick online search on urban farming and agriculture technology in Honolulu shows that MetroGrow in Kakaako grows lettuce and micro greens for restaurants and organic food retailers. The Institute for Human Services in Iwilei has a rooftop aquaponics and hydroponics operation that produces 100 pounds of leafy vegetables per month and about 50 pounds of tilapia every two months. Most of their product is made into meals for their clients. Smart Yields is a recent technology startup that seeks to improve small to medium sized indoor farms increase productivity by combining field environmental sensors with real-time data monitoring, and digital record-keeping to correlate crop performance with environmental conditions.

Relevant to the purpose of this bill and its application in urban areas of Honolulu is a 2016 report from the Center for a Livable Future at Johns Hopkins University. The report concluded that growing food in cities has benefits, and urban farming plays a role in community health and development, but it is insufficient as a unique tool to address food insecurity and dietary quality.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

**HB-2099-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2018 4:20:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2018 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for Oahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

To the Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair; the Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means:

Good morning. My name is Melodie Aduja. I serve as Chair of the Oahu County Committee (“OCC”) on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on **HB2099 HD1 SD1**, regarding a Feasibility Study; Ag-tech Zones; Department of Agriculture; and an appropriation.

The OCC on Legislative Priorities is in favor of **HB2099 HD1 SD1** and support its passage.

**HB2099 HD1 SD1** is in accord with the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i (“DPH”), 2016, as it requires the Department of Agriculture to conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of ag-tech zones within the City and County of Honolulu; and appropriates funds for conducting the feasibility study.

Specifically, the DPH Platform provides that “[a]griculture in our state must be preserved and its future strengthened. Sufficient prime agricultural lands must be maintained for the health, economic well-being and sustenance of the people. We believe in an integrated approach to agricultural innovation and sustainability.

This approach includes, but is not limited to, the adoption of the native Hawaiian concept of ahupua'a, an integrated approach to land management. This could also include the development of economic, land and ocean use policies that foster sustainable crops both for local consumption and for export, policies to foster agriculture-related infrastructure at shipping points, and increased inspection to protect against invasive species and to encourage reduced holding times.

As an island state, securing affordable food for all is a priority. We support healthy, sustainable, and diversified local food production, and “Buy Local” strategies to

assure greater food security and food safety.” (Platform of the DPH, P. 2, Lines 76-78, 82-86, 97-99 (2016)).

Given that **HB2099 HD1 SD1** requires the Department of Agriculture to conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of ag-tech zones within the City and County of Honolulu; and appropriates funds for conducting the feasibility study, it is the position of the OCC on Legislative Priorities to support this measure.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Melodie Aduja

Melodie Aduja, Chair, OCC Legislative Priorities Committee

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**HB-2099-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2018 8:43:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2018 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Joseph OConnell	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-2099-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 6:03:10 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2018 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments: