

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Acting Chairperson
Board of Agriculture

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

FEBRUARY 13, 2019
8:30 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 312

HOUSE BILL NO. 1505
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Creagan and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1505, which encourages the development and implementation of a “whole farm system approach” through a farm mentoring program to be established within the Department of Agriculture. There is an appropriation. The Department of Agriculture supports the intent of this measure provided it does not impact the Department’s priorities listed in the Executive Budget and offers comments.

The Department of Agriculture supports efforts to improve the capacity of new and existing farms to succeed in their endeavors. We support all forms of agricultural activities and practices. However, the Department of Agriculture is not structured for or has any practical experience with establishing and implementing an agricultural educational program. In turn, the Department would rely on the expertise that currently exists in the local community, such as the “Go Farm” program and the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.





UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

LATE

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture
Wednesday, February 13, 2019 at 8:30 a.m.

By
Nicholas Comerford
Dean, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
And
Michael Bruno
Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Vice Chancellor for Research
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1505 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Creagan, Vice Chair DeCoite, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 1505 relating to agriculture with the purpose of promoting whole farm systems and the education of farmers in those systems. The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) supports with amendment the intent of this bill and we respectfully provide the following information to substantiate our position.

The economic and sustainable practice of agriculture encompasses a number of central concepts that can be found in any sustainable farm system. These include: appropriate timing of farming methods and applications, conservation tillage, cover cropping, crop rotation, and appropriate scale of operation.

Agriculture has decades of experience in defining sustainable agriculture. The practices above are designed to overcome the mistakes made in the past. While the Green Revolution was, indeed, a revolution that brought us the ability to produce more food and feed the U.S. population at low cost compared to the rest of the world; it also brought us increased soil erosion and adverse environmental effects.

The above-mentioned practices have another thing in common. They are well-researched and supported through decades of experimentation. This bill does the following:

1. It gives the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture the responsibility of establishing a farmer apprentice mentoring program that will teach farmers how to improve soil health. CTAHR strongly supports this intention. Soil health is the key to

sustainable farming, soil organic matter is the key to soil health. The CTAHR GoFarm program is one example of such a program working state-wide that the department may want to look at as a model.

2. It requires the program to recycle locally available organic, diverse plant and animal agricultural nutrients, etc. The well-defined agricultural practices mentioned above meet these needs when done properly. Cover crops use plant and nutrient sources to soil build organic matter. Including livestock in the cropping rotation returns as much as 70% of the nutrients that livestock eat to the soil in an available form for the next crop. Manures can be worked into the soil if done properly. There is a wealth of data on organic and conventional farming systems that have passed the test of critical evaluation over time; and should be part of a well-designed training program.

CTAHR's criticism of this bill is that CTAHR does not support the teaching of Korean Natural Farming for crop production as a well-accepted farming practice, at this time. The bill states that CTAHR would define that system. The college will define it as not an approved agricultural system to be used in teaching future farmers at this time. We clarify the previous statement using "at this time". This system is poorly researched and poorly documented. CTAHR does not approve of teaching methods that are hearsay or based on personal testimonies. At that time, when this system passes the test of critical evaluation, CTAHR believes that this could be incorporated into appropriate training programs.

We support the intent of this bill and, if Korean Natural Farming is dropped from it as a responsibility of CTAHR, we offer strong support.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



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February 13, 2019

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON HB 1505
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Room 312
8:30 AM

Aloha Chair Creagan, Vice Chair DeCoite, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,900 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau supports the intent of HB 1505, which establishes a farmer mentoring program.

Hawaii's farmers and ranchers are aging. The average age exceeds 60 years old and if they were in other professions would be retired. Yet many of these farmers are those that provide to KTA, Safeway, Times, Costco, restaurants, and hotels and truly make a difference in reducing imports. Unfortunately for many, succession plans do not exist and as they retire, the lands go out of agricultural production. There is an urgent need for interns or apprentices that are willing to not only work on these farms but take over their operations.

Soil health is only one aspect of being a successful farmer. Knowledge of regulations, finances, and marketing are just a few of the areas that are required to ensure that farmers are viable. We respectfully request that the **mentorship include other areas of training so the intern or apprentice will be provided a well-rounded experience of what it takes to be a successful farmer in Hawaii.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Vincent Mina
State President

Kyle Studer
Vice-President
Ka'u, Hawai'i

David Case
Secretary
Kona, Hawai'i

Briana Rodrigue
Treasurer
East Hawai'i

Anabella Bruch
Director Emeritus
Kauai

James McCay
Waimanalo, Oahu

Dash Kuhr
Kohola, Hawai'i

Brynn Foster
North Shore,
Oahu

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawai'i

John Dobovan
Haleakala, Maui

Steve Lund
Puna, Hawai'i

Ray Maki
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Matt
VanPaepeghen
Hana, Maui

Robert Pahia
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Kaipo Kekona
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Yuri Zhuraw
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Christian
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February 12, 2019

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1505 (FARMER APPRENTICE MENTORING) BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2019 AT 8:30AM IN CONFERENCE ROOM 312

Aloha Chairman Creagan and Members of the House Agriculture Committee,

HFUU is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy, nonprofit representing over 1,500 family farmers and their supporters organized as 13 Chapters in the four Hawai'i Counties. HFUU's Haleakala Chapter originated the very successful Farmer Apprentice Mentoring (FAM) program in 2015-2016 serving Maui County. Now funded with grants through our affiliated 501(c)(3), Hawaii Farmers Union Foundation, the FAM program has mentored and graduated 38 apprentice farmers on Maui. As explained in this legislation, the FAM program immerses beginning farmers in a "whole farm system" approach to agriculture under the guidance of experienced farmer mentors.

HB1505 also notes that Hawai'i currently imports about 85% of its food at an annual cost of over \$3 billion or \$7,000 per household. Increasing the number of farmers who grow food is a key component of the long-term solution to the Hawai'i local food production deficit. Growing new farmers is also a key facet of the HFUU statewide strategic plan.

Our planning goals are simultaneously aligned with the shared vision of increased food security and agricultural self-sufficiency for all counties and the State of Hawai'i. The FAM program responds to three major priorities for the State's food security needs including growing more farmers, increasing the supply of Hawai'i's skilled agricultural workforce and contributing to increased local food production on small family farms through hands-on farm immersion component. We now seek to expand this successful, locally funded, pilot program as an expanded, statewide program administered with more reliable funding through the Department of Agriculture.

HAWAII FARMERS UNION UNITED

Vincent Mina, President

The Hawai'i Farmers Union United and its Chapters are a nonprofit corporation formed under Hawai'i law and Section 501(c)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code. HFUU advocates for the sovereign right of farmers to create and sustain vibrant and prosperous agricultural communities for the benefit of all Hawai'i through cooperation, education and legislation. Because HFUU is an agricultural advocacy organization, donations to it are not tax deductible

HB-1505

Submitted on: 2/11/2019 2:49:11 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/13/2019 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Autumn Ness	Hawai'i Center for Food Safety	Support	No

Comments:

HB-1505

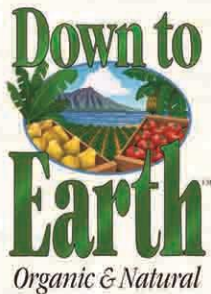
Submitted on: 2/12/2019 7:01:14 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/13/2019 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:

Love Life!



HB 1505 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE
House Committee on Agriculture
February 13, 2019, 8:30am State Capitol

Aloha Rep. Richard P. Creagan, Chair, Rep. Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Down to Earth Organic and Natural testifies in support of HB 1505.

Down to Earth Organic and Natural has six locations on Oahu and Maui. Since we opened in 1977, we have supported healthy lifestyles and preservation of the environment by selling local, fresh, organic and natural products, and by promoting a vegetarian lifestyle.

We are strongly in support of HB 1505 and the establishment of a strong farmer apprentice mentorship program to encourage, inspire, and produce a new generation of farmers who are dedicated to sustainable, regenerative methods who appreciate the vital importance of soil health. A strong whole farm system apprenticeship and mentoring program will help ensure food security, economic opportunity, and sustainability of our land.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.

Alison Riggs
Public Policy & Government Relations Manager
Down to Earth

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