

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Acting Chairperson
Board of Agriculture

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

FEBRUARY 1, 2019
8:30 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 312

HOUSE BILL NO. 1503
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Creagan and Members of the Committee:

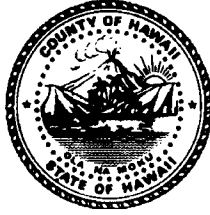
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1503, which establishes a two-year agricultural theft and vandalism pilot project to examine the effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural theft and agricultural vandalism in the county of Hawaii. The Department strongly supports this bill provided that it does not impact the priorities listed in the Executive Budget.

The Department of Agriculture has entered into a two-year contract with the Hawaii county prosecutor's office for one investigator to conduct agricultural theft and agricultural vandalism investigations. This has been very valuable and productive project with the limited staff performing investigations and outreach with farmers, law enforcement, and farmers markets. We encourage the continuation of the joint efforts being done to pursue prosecution agricultural related crimes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Harry Kim
Mayor



Wil Okabe
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i
Office of the Mayor

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 2603 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553
KONA: 74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Hwy., Bldg C • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740
(808) 323-4444 • Fax (808) 323-4440

January 30, 2019

Representative Richard P. Creagan, Chair
Committee on Agriculture
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Creagan and Committee Members:

Re: HB 1503 Relating to Agriculture (Agricultural Theft and Vandalism Pilot Project)
Hearing Date: February 1, 2019 – 8:30 AM; House Conference Room 312

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 1503.

For about a year, our Prosecuting Attorney's office has had an investigator working on agricultural crimes, and we have received positive comments from the agriculture community about his work. The preamble of this bill does a good job of explaining the vulnerabilities agriculture has to theft and vandalism, and our news media has documented farmers who have gone out of business because of their losses.

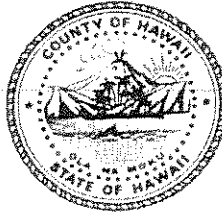
In order to continue the program, state funding is both desirable and appropriate. I hope you will act favorably on HB 1503.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry Kim
Mayor, County of Hawai'i

MITCHELL D. ROTH
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

DALE A. ROSS
FIRST DEPUTY
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY



655 KILAUEA AVENUE
HILO, HAWAII 96720
PH: (808) 961-0466
FAX: (808) 961-8908
(808) 934-3403
(808) 934-3503

WEST HAWAII UNIT
81-980 HALEKII ST, SUITE 150
KEALAKEKUA, HAWAII 96750
PH: (808) 322-2552
FAX: (808) 322-6584

OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1503

A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Rep. Richard P. Creagan, Chair

Rep. Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair

Friday, February 1, 2019, 8:30 a.m..
State Capitol, Conference Room 312

Honorable Chair Creagan, Honorable Vice Chair DeCoite, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture, the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Hawai'i submits the following testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of House Bill No. 1503.

This measure establishes a two-year agricultural theft and vandalism pilot project to examine the effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural theft and vandalism in the County of Hawai'i, and appropriates funds.

Agricultural theft and vandalism in the County of Hawai'i is not only an impediment to running a successful and profitable farming operation, but can prove harmful to consumers. If stolen produce makes its way to the consumer market, there is no way to ensure product safety.

Hawai'i County is the breadbasket of the State. Having the ability to identify and track the sources of agricultural products from field to table is crucial in the event a contamination is found to exist.

In 2011, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) halted the importation of all Mexican-sourced papayas into the United States. The FDA found salmonella in about 16% of imported papayas from Mexico and the finding of this human pathogen in papayas caused the FDA to stop the importation of a food source from the entire Country of Mexico. We cannot allow this to happen here in Hawai'i. At the time, 65% of all U.S. imported papayas come from Mexico.

Current agriculture vandalism/theft in Hawai'i County includes on-going theft of seasonal fruit, including coffee, avocados, lychee, rambutan, noni, etc. These actions resulted in tremendous economic hardships for the farmers and their families, and have created an ever-growing sense of uncertainty for Hawai'i County farmers that they may fall victim to vandals.

This pilot project will provide enforcement officers within Hawai'i County with the ability to focus on investigating and prosecuting these agricultural issues, as our over tasked police department does not have the capacity to provide a permanent officer to exclusively investigate agricultural crimes.

If this project were allowed to go forward, we would have the ability to:

1. Protect our agricultural industry- the economic engine of Hawai'i County;
2. Ensure the food safety of Hawaii Island agricultural products;
3. Support our famers and growers as they continue to be world-wide competitors with Hawai'ian grown products.

This pilot project has the capability to increase the safety and sustainability of our farming and agricultural industry by allowing farmers to focus less on the security of their crops and more on high quality products and safe farming techniques. By having committed investigators available when crime, vandalism or contamination of our agricultural products occur, we will be able to act swiftly and decisively to tackle the issue.

The Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Hawai'i, strongly supports the passage of House Bill No. 1503. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

HB-1503

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 11:55:53 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/1/2019 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Glenn Sako	Hawaii County Research and Development	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Legislators,

I fully support HB1503 to fund an ag theft investigator in Hawaii County. The police lack the time and resources to respond to theft reports and this is brought to my attention on a regular basis. Some residents come in for advice on crops to raise and they are reminded that certain crops require additional security because they are favorite targets by thieves. This includes litchi, avocado, mango, longan, rambutan, coffee, macadamia nut bags in the field, taro leaves for laulau, maile, etc. For livestock, goats, cattle and sheep are targeted.

The producer is already tired after a full day of work on the farm. Then he has to watch his crop so no one comes at night to steal it.

Please support this bill to help our agricultural producers. Thank you.



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 1, 2019

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON HB 1503
RELATING 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 interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau strongly supports HB 1503, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture to establish a 2-year Agricultural Theft and Vandalism Pilot Project to examine the effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural theft and agricultural vandalism in the County of Hawaii.

Agricultural theft can be tough to prove and even tougher to prosecute. While we agree that this measure may not resolve implementation of our current agricultural theft laws or enforcement efforts, it will provide the prosecutors another tool to help prosecute individuals suspected of agricultural theft. HFB continues to work with both the police and prosecutor's office to find ways we can work together to help deter, apprehend, and convict individuals that are committing agricultural theft.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

LATE

HB-1503

Submitted on: 2/1/2019 7:04:57 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/1/2019 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Warren Watanabe	Maui County Farm Bureau	Support	No

Comments:

Ag Crime is a major challenge to agricultural viability across the State. Police resources are taxed, placing ag incidents at low priority for response despite its' major impact on farms. Farmers on Maui have experienced theft of not only agricultural products but equipment, coupled with vandalism. Most recently it has escalated to blackmailing of farmers. We respectfully request for this measure to include a pilot program on Maui, leveraging state, county and private resources to develop a comprehensive program to address this issue.

Please support this issue including the suggested amendment.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

**Representative Richard P. Creagan, Chair
Representative Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair**

LATE

House Bill No. 1503

**Testimony of Shannon Mears
Manager, Government Affairs
Young Brothers, LLC**

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

POSITION:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1503. On behalf of Young Brothers, LLC (“Young Brothers”), **I submit this testimony in support.**

DESCRIPTION:

This measure would require the Department of Agriculture to establish a 2-year Agricultural Theft and Vandalism Pilot Project to examine the effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural theft and agricultural vandalism in the County of Hawaii.

RATIONALE:

Young Brothers supports the entirety of House Bill No. 1503.

As the foremost interisland freight handling and transportation company in the State, Young Brothers recognizes and is proud of the important role that it and its employees play in linking Hawaii’s farms and ranches to local kitchens and dining tables. For this reason, Young Brothers makes a special commitment to support local agriculture by offering shipping discounts on locally grown fruits, vegetables, flowers, and livestock, and discounting the cost of shipping fertilizer, feed, and other farming supplies. Our twelve (12) regularly scheduled roundtrip sailings between Honolulu and ports across the State guarantee that these agricultural products and supplies get to the farmers, ranchers, and people in the State in a timely manner.

Young Brothers sees House Bill No. 1503 as playing an important role in the continued support of the agricultural industry in the State. Farming and ranching operations, both large and small, can fall victim to vandalism and theft that immediately hurts those individuals and ultimately hurts the people in the State who need their

products by causing increased costs or delays. This bill represents a sensible approach to assess how best to protect farmers and ranchers, and ultimately the people in the State, from such theft and vandalism.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Shannon Mears
Manager, Government Affairs



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
Friday, February 1, 2019 — 8:30 a.m. — Room 312

Ulupono Initiative Supports HB 1503, Relating to Agriculture

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

My name is Murray Clay and I am Managing Partner of Ulupono Initiative, a Hawai'i-based impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life for the people of Hawai'i by working toward solutions that create more locally produced food; increase affordable, clean, renewable energy; and better management of waste and fresh water. Ulupono believes that self-sufficiency is essential to our future prosperity and will help shape a future where economic progress and mission-focused impact can work hand in hand.

Ulupono supports HB 1503, which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a two-year agricultural theft and vandalism pilot project in the County of Hawai'i, because it aligns with our goal of creating more locally produced food.

In our conversations with farmers and ranchers, one issue that keeps coming up is agricultural theft and how there is little enforcement and punishment for offenders. Agricultural lots are a prime target for thieves as there are many open entry points, farms are often located in rural and isolated areas, and punishments are minor relative to other crimes. For farmers that can afford to, they have to spend money on security infrastructure, monitoring, and manpower to defend their agricultural operations. Profit margins for agricultural operations are already tight and if a business loses revenue from theft or vandalism and has to invest heavily in security, this could push more local farmers and ranchers out of the agricultural sector. Ultimately, this underrated issue is one that hurts our ability to increase locally grown food in our state.

As Hawai'i's local food issues become increasingly complex and challenging, organizations need additional resources and support to address and overcome them. We appreciate this committee's efforts to look at policies that support local food production.

We believe that by collaborating, we can help produce more local food and support an economically robust homegrown agriculture industry, which strengthens our community with fresh, healthy food. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



Respectfully,

Murray Clay
Managing Partner

HB-1503

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 1:12:07 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/1/2019 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ken Love	Hawaii Tropical Fruit Growers	Support	No

Comments:

The Hawaii Tropical Fruit Growers is in Full support of this bill. Not a week goes by where we don't receive a dozen calls or emails regarding theft from orchards on the Big Island and sometimes on the other islands. Full funding for this would help to make a significant dent in the theft from small farmers fighting to stay sustainable in the face of ever increasing costs and diminishing profits.

Ken Love

Executive Director

HB-1503

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 2:38:14 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/1/2019 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mark Shultise	LavaRock Farm	Support	No

Comments: