

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

FEBRUARY 20, 2020
12:00 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 308

HOUSE BILL NO. 2275, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Luke and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill 2275, HD1. This bill establishes a grant program to assist beginning ranchers and farmers. The Department of Agriculture strongly supports this bill.

Hawaii's farmers now average over 60 years of age and many will soon be retiring or scaling down their operations. If Hawaii is to be more food self-sufficient, there is a need to get new farmers into the pipeline to assure greater production of locally grown crops and livestock. The proposed grant program will encourage and support beginning farmers and ranchers during the challenging start-up phase as they gain experience with markets, crop growing requirements, pests, diseases, regulatory requirements, business management and labor issues, etc. Data gathered from grant recipients will be used to assist other new farmers and ranchers by providing information such as common problems and issues as well as recommendations on best practices and "what I wished I had known before starting the business".

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



SCOTT T. MURAKAMI
DIRECTOR

ANNE EUSTAQUIO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 321
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

www.labor.hawaii.gov
Phone: (808) 586-8844 / Fax: (808) 586-9099
Email: dlir.director@hawaii.gov

February 20, 2020

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair,
The Honorable Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Finance

Date: Thursday, February 20, 2020
Time: 12:00 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 308, State Capitol

From: Scott T. Murakami, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: H.B. No. 2275 H.D.1 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

HB2275 HD1 proposes to amend Chapter 141 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), by establishing within the Department of Agriculture a grant program to assist beginning farmers and beginning ranchers with costs to start their farm or ranch operations.

DLIR supports this measure, provided it does not conflict with the priorities identified in the Governor's Supplemental Budget requests.

III. COMMENTS ON THE HOUSE BILL

Providing grants to beginning farmers and ranchers to assist with the costs associated with startup operations will help provide for opportunities to address the declining agricultural workforce. With funding provided by the Legislature, the Department along with its partners like the Department of Agriculture are able to invest in projects dedicated to encouraging agriculture industry workforce participation and promoting agriculture as a viable and important industry in our state.



February 18, 2020

Representative Sylvia J. Luke, Chair
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Comments in Support of HB 2275, H.D.1 Relating to Agriculture (Creates a grant program and appropriates funds for a program to assist beginning farmers and ranchers to start farm or ranch operations.)

Thursday, February 20, 2020, at 12:00 p.m., in Conference Room 308

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers and utility companies. LURF's mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express its **support of HB 2275, H.D.1** and of the various agricultural stakeholder groups who defend the goals of viable agricultural operations and the conservation and protection of agriculture, including important agricultural lands (IAL) in Hawaii. The bill conveys the need to support the efforts of beginning farmers and ranchers attempting to start operations which will improve the economic viability of the State's agricultural industry.

HB 2275, H.D.1. The purpose of this bill is to establish in the Department of Agriculture a grant program, and to appropriate funding for a program to assist beginning farmers and ranchers in meeting the operating costs to start their farm or ranch operations.

LURF's Position. LURF believes that the proposed grant and appropriation of funds for the grant program are consistent with the underlying intent and objectives of the IAL laws (Hawaii Revised Statutes [HRS], Sections 205-41 to 52), which were enacted to fulfill the mandate in Article XI, Section 3 of the Hawaii State Constitution, "to conserve and protect agricultural lands, promote diversified agriculture, increase agricultural self-sufficiency and assure the availability of agriculturally suitable lands." As noted in HRS Section 205-41, the intent of Act 183 (2005) was to develop agricultural incentive programs to promote agricultural viability, sustained growth of the agricultural industry, and the long-term use and protection of important agricultural lands for agricultural use.

Passage of the long-awaited IAL legislation would be pointless without implementation of these programs, incentives and inducements which require the cooperation and support of agricultural, business, and educational organizations, as well as government agencies, which this bill is intended to cultivate and promote.

LURF members include private property owners, farmers and ranchers who own, maintain, and engage in agricultural enterprises, and who consider incentives such as this grant program significant to the continued conduct of their operations and to help sustain and preserve their businesses into the future. The average age of Hawaii farmers is now 60 years old. Regrettably, interest in agriculture continues to decline due to misguided assumptions of the trade as entailing hard work for low pay, and requiring little, if any appreciable skills.

LURF believes efforts like the grant program and the appropriation of funds therefor would greatly assist in the perpetuation of the agricultural industry in this State by assisting the industry to help beginning farmers and ranchers start businesses and comply with onerous regulatory requirements; as well as providing knowledge and inspiring interest in agriculture, which will promote agricultural viability and improve Hawaii's long-term resilience and sustainability.

As the establishment of the proposed grant program significantly helps to promote economically viable agriculture and food self-sufficiency in Hawaii, LURF is in **support of HB 2275, H.D.1.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of this measure.



Pono Hawai'i Initiative

Josh Frost - President • Patrick Shea - Treasurer • Kristin Hamada
Nelson Ho • Summer Starr

Wednesday, February 19, 2020

Relating to Agriculture
Testifying in Support

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

The Pono Hawai'i Initiative (PHI) **supports HB2275, HD1 Relating to Agriculture**, which establishes a 5-year beginning farmer training program to be administered by the Department of Agriculture. This program will help give new farmers skills regarding cultivation along with production and business knowledge to help them develop achievable farming and business plans.

By creating a training program, the State can support future food sustainability goals and help bolster the local agriculture industry, creating jobs and diversifying Hawaii's economy.

For all these reasons, we urge you to move this bill forward.

Mahalo for the opportunity,
Gary Hooser
Executive Director
Pono Hawai'i Initiative



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Thursday, February 20, 2020 — 12:00 p.m. — Room 308

Ulupono Initiative supports HB 2275 HD 1, Relating to Agriculture.

Dear Chair Luke and Members of the Committee:

My name is Amy Hennessey, and I am the Senior Vice President of Communications & External Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-based impact investment firm that strives to improve our community's quality of life by creating more locally produced food; increasing affordable clean renewable energy and transportation options; and better managing waste and fresh water resources.

Ulupono supports HB 2275 HD 1, which creates a grant program to assist beginning farmers and ranchers to start new commercial farm or ranch operations.

Ulupono supports the development of the next generation of local producers statewide. This program seeks to provide much-needed capital for those looking to begin farming or ranching in the State of Hawai'i. The grant program seeks to bridge the gap that exists between newly trained and educated agriculturalists looking to start entrepreneurial operations within the State. Without the initial investments needed to start an agricultural operation, such as land purchase/rent, land preparation, seeds, equipment, and infrastructure, new farmers and ranchers will not be able to enter the local markets.

Providing that initial capital for new producers is key for the State in directly moving the needle toward food security and self-sufficiency.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Amy Hennessey, APR
Senior Vice President, Communications & External Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



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 20, 2020

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 2275, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Room 308
12:00 PM

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, 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 1,800 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 supports HB 2275, HD1, which establishes the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Grant Program under the Department of Agriculture and allows the Department to make grants to start new commercial farms and ranches.

The cost of establishing a new agricultural operation in Hawaii is very difficult if not impossible. Operating capital is not easy to obtain with the traditional methods of financing. As our farmers and ranchers are aging, we need to assist those that are able to successfully operate an agricultural operation such as college graduates or trainees that have graduated from a certified program. This grant program will help these new farmers and ranchers by reducing the cost of production so that their locally produced goods can compete with imported products, giving them a greater opportunity for success.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important subject.



MAUI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 308
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2020 AT 12:00 P.M.**

To The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair;
The Honorable Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair; and
Members of the Committee on Finance;

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2275 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Aloha, my name is Pamela Tumpap and I am the President of the Maui Chamber of Commerce, with approximately 650 members. I am writing share our support of HB2275.

The Maui Chamber of Commerce supports the bill to create a grant program and appropriate funding for a program to assist beginning farmers and ranchers to start farm or ranch operations. Agriculture is a very important industry to our community and our sustainability, but it is a very difficult industry to successfully start and sustain. There are many unpredictable factors and expenses to starting a farm or ranch, even for experienced agriculturalists and this bill will help to offset many of those expenses and spur new farm enterprises.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this matter and ask that this bill be passed.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.