

**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 AGRICULTURE**

**MARCH 13, 2020  
8:30 A.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 312**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2703, SD1  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Creagan and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Senate Bill 2703, SD1. 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.





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

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 321  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

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

March 13, 2020

To: The Honorable Richard P. Creagan, Chair,  
The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the House Committee on Agriculture

Date: Friday, March 13, 2020  
Time: 8:30 a.m.  
Place: Conference Room 312, State Capitol

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

**Re: S.B. No. 2703 S.D.1 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

**I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

SB2703 SD1 proposes to amend Chapter 141 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), by establishing within the Department of Agriculture a grant program with an unspecified appropriation to assist beginning farmers and beginning ranchers with costs to start their farm or ranch operations.

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

**II. COMMENTS ON THE SENATE BILL**

The DLIR notes there exists an increasing student interest in agricultural careers as reflected in a significant increase in the membership of the Future Farmers of America (FFA). With funding provided by the Legislature, the DLIR has been able to invest in projects dedicated to helping groom agricultural student leaders and future agriculture industry participants.

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 and aging agricultural workforce. The DLIR will continue to work with the Department of Agriculture, Department of Education, and University of Hawaii CTAHR to promote agriculture as a viable and important industry in Hawaii.



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

March 13, 2020

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2703, SD1**  
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 1,800 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 SB 2703, SD1**, which creates a grant program and appropriates funding for a program to assist beginning farmers and ranchers to start commercial farm or ranch operations.

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 provide our opinion on this important matter.



**MAUI**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 312  
FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020 AT 8:30 A.M.**

To The Honorable Richard P. Creagan, Chair;  
The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair; and  
Members of the Committee on Agriculture,

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2703 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 SB2703.

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.



Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
Friday, March 13, 2020 — 8:30 a.m. — Room 312

**Ulupono Initiative supports SB 2703 SD 1, Relating to Agriculture.**

Dear Chair Creagan 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 SB 2703 SD 1**, which creates a grant program and appropriates funding for a program to assist beginning farmers and ranchers to start 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 Hawaii. The grant program seeks to bridge the gap that exists between newly trained and educated agriculturalists looking to initiate 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*

**SB-2703-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2020 5:16:15 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Nicole K Galase	Hawaii Cattlemen's Council	Support	No

Comments:



March 11, 2020

Representative Richard P. Creagan, Chair  
Representative Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Agriculture

**Comments in Support of SB 2703, S.D.1 Relating to Agriculture (Creates a grant program and appropriates funds for a program to assist beginning farmers or ranchers to start a commercial farm or ranch; effective 07/01/2050.)**

**Friday, March 13, 2020, at 8:30 a.m., in Conference Room 312**

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 SB 2703, S.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.

**SB 2703, S.D.1.** The purpose of this bill is to establish in the Department of Agriculture a grant program, and to appropriate funding for the program to assist beginning farmers and ranchers in meeting the operating costs of starting a commercial farm or ranch.

**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 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 establishment of commercial farms or ranches, which would 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 State's agricultural industry by assisting with efforts to help farmers and ranchers start businesses and comply with onerous regulatory requirements; by providing invaluable knowledge, skills, resources and tools; and by 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 SB 2703, S.D.1.**

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



**SB-2703-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2020 5:46:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Andrea Quinn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**SB-2703-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 9:26:16 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Amy Brinker	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

## AGRtestimony

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**From:** Joy Gold <joy@joygoldunlimited.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2020 12:44 PM  
**To:** AGRtestimony  
**Cc:** Larry Jefts (ljefts@aloha.net)  
**Subject:** SB2704sd2, Sustainable Agriculture, Hse AGR Hearing, March 13 - 8:30am  
**Attachments:** LJF\_SB2704sd2\_\_Sustainable\_Ag\_HseAGR.pdf

Aloha,

On behalf of Larry Jefts, owner and operator of Larry Jefts Farms, LLC, please accept the attached testimony for:

SB27042, Relating to Sustainable Agriculture  
Hse AGR Hearing  
Friday March 13, 2020 – 8:30am  
Room 312

Please call me at 368-1146 if there are any questions about the testimony submittal.

Thank you,  
Joy Gold

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Joy Gold Unlimited, Inc.  
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**LATE**

**SB-2703-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 9:40:00 PM  
Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2020 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Naomi Melamed	Individual	Support	No

Comments: