

DAVID Y. IGE  
Governor

JOSH GREEN  
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS 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 PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

**FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 2021  
11:00 A.M.  
Via VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HCR 33 / HR 26  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO  
ESTABLISH A KONA AREA AGRICULTURAL WORKING GROUP  
TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND HOUSING**

Chairperson Hashem and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution 33 and Resolution 26. These resolutions request the Department of Agriculture ("Department") to establish a Kona area agricultural working group to promote agriculture, economic development, and housing. The Department offers comments and strong concerns.

These resolutions contemplate a complex collaboration of state, county, and private expertise to devise a comprehensive integration of resources and services to establish a framework for the development of agriculture, affordable housing, and public infrastructure while promoting environmental and cultural practices. The Department lacks the resources, staffing, and expertise to oversee this effort that has been compounded by the demands for cutbacks imposed by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as demonstrated by the proposed dramatic reductions in our staff position counts and operating budget. To accomplish an all-encompassing planning effort such as this, the Department would require significant additional funding to hire a consultant(s).



The objectives of these resolutions are substantially akin to devising a master or regional plan for agriculture, housing, and infrastructure in the Kona area. As such, we believe it more appropriate to request the County of Hawaii, as the appropriate planning authority, to lead the effort as they have a Kona Community Development Plan which was adopted in 2008. This plan touches on many of the issues listed in these resolutions. They would be a better fit as the County has more experience, familiarity, and local knowledge in regional economic development. The Department respectfully suggests rather than using the Keahole Agricultural Park as the impetus for developing a comprehensive regional development plan, that the County of Hawaii be requested to identify what it believes to be key issues, constraints, and opportunities in economic development, housing, agriculture, and other priorities, with the input of the agencies and organizations identified in these resolutions. Then, perhaps, the County can determine what parts of the existing Kona Community Development Plan should be updated to reflect current situations and possible solutions that are realistic from a capital and operating cost perspective. Under this scenario, the Department could provide input to the agricultural aspects of the study, without being burdened with oversight of other issues such as energy, housing, homesteading, wastewater treatment, potable use, and transportation, in which it has no expertise.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on these resolutions.



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 | Honolulu, HI 96813  
P: 808-533-1292 | e: info@hawaiiifood.com

#### Executive Officers

**Joe Carter**, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Chair*  
**Charlie Gustafson**, Tamura Super Market, *Vice Chair*  
**Eddie Asato**, The Pint Size Corp., *Secretary/Treas.*  
**Lauren Zirbel**, HFIA, *Executive Director*  
**John Schlif**, Rainbow Sales and Marketing, *Advisor*  
**Stan Brown**, Acosta Sales & Marketing, *Advisor*  
**Paul Kosasa**, ABC Stores, *Advisor*  
**Derek Kurisu**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*  
**Beau Oshiro**, C&S Wholesale Grocers, *Advisor*  
**Toby Taniguchi**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*

---

TO:  
Committee on Agriculture  
Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 19, 2021  
TIME: 11am  
PLACE: Via Videoconference

RE: HCR33 / HR26 Requesting the Department of Agriculture to establish a Kona area working group to promote agriculture economic development and housing.

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

Hawaii's local agricultural sector has tremendous potential for growth, especially in the Kona area. The working group created by this measure can help realize that potential. Increasing agricultural development and local food production makes our state more resilient and economically stable. We encourage you to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**HCR-33**

Submitted on: 3/17/2021 10:52:25 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2021 11:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kaikea K. Blakemore	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support