

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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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 61 / HR 50
URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ENSURE THE INCLUSION OF
SOCIAALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS AND RANCHERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT,
ADOPTION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND ENFORCEMENT OF FOOD AND
AGRICULTURE LAWS, RULES, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Chairperson Hashem and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution 61 and Resolution 50. These resolutions urging the Department of Agriculture ("Department") to ensure the inclusion of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of food and agriculture laws, rules, policies, and programs. The Department offers comments and concerns.

These resolutions contemplate a comprehensive review and incorporation of policies and procedures to ensure that socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers are not discriminated against in the development and implementation of the Department's policies and programs. The Department operates and enforces a nondiscrimination policy pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq., 78 stat.252) and other federal laws, that prohibit discrimination based on numerous criteria including race, color, gender, national origin. All departmental policies and programs must comply with those nondiscrimination guidelines.



The Department is uncertain if the laudable objectives of these resolutions seek to expand or enhance the protections afforded by its nondiscrimination policy beyond its current breadth and scope. The Department respectfully suggests that the measure is not necessary at this time since the Department's current policies and programs already incorporates those desirable standards for socioeconomic equality in agriculture.

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

Kuahiwi Ranch

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March 17, 2021

Support for HCR 61

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso, and Committee Members,

Please pass HCR61 in order to support the important conversation and take meaningful action towards equity in agriculture, especially in regard to the governance of agriculture in Hawai'i.

With the incoming Biden administration and our evolving national awareness of equity issues, it appears that equity in agriculture is finally being given the attention that such a fundamental issue deserves. Although Hawai'i is leaps and bounds ahead of the rest of the country in the diversity of its agricultural industry, there is still important progress that can be made to promote equity and thereby advance a stronger, more accessible and vibrant agricultural industry.

Sincerely yours,

Michelle Galimba

Michelle Galimba, VP

HCR-61

Submitted on: 3/17/2021 12:11:50 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Victoria Anderson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please pass this important resolution.

HCR-61

Submitted on: 3/17/2021 1:46:39 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kelsey Amos	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this resolution. Today we face immense challenges like climate change, ecosystem deterioration, economic inequality, and increasing severe weather and natural disaster. And we now know that how and what we grow has profound implications--good or bad--on the health of ecosystems, waterways & aquifers, and human communities.

We are also witnessing the growth and increasing currency of Hawaiian cultural values, practices, and political ethics of aloha aina and malama aina. People who have been historically excluded from access to land and decision-making roles in our food system are gaining confidence and demanding that their voices be heard in shaping Hawaii agriculture and the food system.

The demographics that this bill would help are groups that have the intellectual capital, backed by science, about how organic, regenerative, natural, and Hawaiian traditional farming practices (as well as Hawaiian land/ocean management practices) can improve soil and ecosystem health, thereby sequestering carbon out of the atmosphere and into the soil, and also ensuring watershed health--all while providing culturally coherent and dignified livelihoods and lifestyles.

HCR-61

Submitted on: 3/17/2021 7:16:22 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Nanea Lo. I'm from Papakāleia, O'ahu now residing in Māhili in the Hawaiian Kingdom. I'm writing in support of HCR61. Our agricultural sector suffers from the same kinds of systemic inequalities that we struggle with in every other aspect of our economy. As we look towards building a more robust and diversified agricultural economy, we need to do our best to confront these inequalities and make sure that we are supporting Native Hawaiians, women, people of color, and immigrants to actively engage in this food sovereign future!

Support HCR61.

me ke aloha 'Āina,
Nanea Lo

HCR-61

Submitted on: 3/17/2021 11:46:53 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Janet Pappas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear AGR and CPC Chairs, Vice Chairs and Committee members,

I support this resolution because the legislature has found there to be inequities in the Hawaii farming system. Persons wanting to farm in Hawaii may have educational, language or other social barriers (including discrimination) and do not receive the same critical information as others, therefore finding it difficult to succeed in agriculture. Some of these people may have been highly successful in their native countries, but they have difficulty navigating the system here. Others may be locally-born, but again, have found the doors closed to their participation.

I agree that extra effort should be given to this set of people as soon as they are identified so that they can get a boost and be on their way to a successful business. And, we need many more quality farmers in Hawaii if we are to succeed in our food sustainability and food security goals.

This is "just a resolution", but it may be that actual legislation is needed if we are to correct this justice and equity issues.

Please support this resolution (HCR61) to show that there is concern that valuable "people" resources are slipping through the cracks. We can't afford to lose anyone.

Thank you very much for listening and for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Jan Pappas - Aiea, Hawaii

HCR-61

Submitted on: 3/18/2021 11:02:28 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mary Lacques	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Testimony in strong support of HCR 61 which initiates a conversation about lack of access to agricultural lands and resources for women, farmers of color and particularly for displaced Hawaiian mahi'ai. The state needs to step up its agricultural policies since existing federal ones have failed.

Mahalo for introducing this critically important resolution.