

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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**TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS AND
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2021
1:02 P.M. – 2:30P.M.
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 882
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairpersons Shimabukuro and Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 882. This measure adds the Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission (“DHHL Chairperson”) to the Board of Agriculture (“Board”). The Department of Agriculture (“Department”) offers the following comments.

The Department has concerns regarding expanding the Board to accommodate requests of specific stakeholder groups seeking additional representation on the Board. This measure adds the DHHL Chairperson to the Board to represent the interests of agricultural homestead lessees. The agricultural homestead lessees on Department of Hawaiian Homes Lands (“DHHL”) are a relatively small subset of the estimated 7,328 farming operations in the State.

Currently, the Board consists of three members that provide geographic representation for the counties of Hawaii, Maui, and Kauai, four at-large members for stakeholder representation, and three ex-officio members that ensure input regarding the State’s interest in supporting and promoting land, water, economic development, and industry standards and education agriculture. Together with the Chairperson of the Board, the Board consists of voting members that provide effective board governance for the Department.



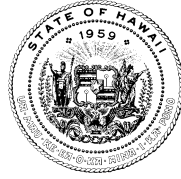
Boards for state agencies are legislatively created to provide policy insight and oversight by subject matter experts and representatives of important stakeholder communities. The number of members is an important consideration to optimize and ensure fair, efficient decision making and an odd number of members is favored to mitigate against the potential for inaction due to gridlock. Ordinarily, expansion of membership on boards overseeing government agencies is appropriate when such addition significantly enhances and contributes to the board's ability to provide policy guidance to enable the Department to accomplish its mission and core responsibilities.

Adding the DHHL Chairperson as an additional ex-officio member increases the total number of board members and creates a precedence and opportunity for others stakeholder groups to request further expansion of the Board and compromise its ability to govern efficiently. The stakeholder-oriented representation on the Board sought by DHHL may be more appropriately achieved by occupying one of the existing at-large positions rather than creating a new ex-officio one.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII

JOSH GREEN
LT. GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII



WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
CHAIRMAN
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

TYLER I. GOMES
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRMAN

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS**

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TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM J. AILA, JR, CHAIRMAN
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS &
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
HEARING ON FEBRUARY 9, 2021 AT 1:02PM VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

SB 882 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

February 9, 2021

Aloha Chair Shimabukuro, Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committees:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) strongly supports this bill which adds the Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission to the Board of Agriculture. The Hawaiian Homes Commission approved this measure, but it was not included in the Governor's administrative package.

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture headed by the Board of Agriculture works to support, enhance, promote, and protect Hawaii's agriculture and aquaculture industries. The Hawaiian Homes Commission Act authorizes DHHL to lease agricultural lands or lands used for aquaculture purposes. As the State looks to increase food security across the State, the interests of agricultural homestead lessees should be represented on the Board of Agriculture.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

SB-882

Submitted on: 2/3/2021 1:45:19 PM

Testimony for HWN on 2/9/2021 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This is a move that should have occurred decades ago.

February 09, 2021

Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Chair
Senator Jarrett Keohokolole, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Water and Land

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

Re: SB 882 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Adds the Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission to
The Board of Agriculture

Aloha Chairs Shimaburkuro and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Keohokolole and Nishihara and members of both Committees,

My name is Homelani Schaedel, a beneficiary residing in Malu'ōhai homestead in Kapolei.

I appreciate and consider this bill as a long overdue invitation extended to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) Chairperson or the Chairpersons' designate to have a seat at the table with other members of the Board of Agriculture.

As of December 31, 2020, there are 1,093 active agricultural leases to beneficiaries across our state, and 19,084 agricultural applicants on the Waitlist. It is imperative for DHHL to be at the table with members of the Board of Agriculture to collectively seek solutions, promote self-sufficiency for all farmers, and reduce our dependency on shipped products.

I ask for your support and passage of this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to present my testimony.