

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

APRIL 7, 2021

10:30 A.M.

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 92
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO CONSIDER
AMENDING THE ELIGIBILITY QUALIFICATIONS AND LEASE TERMS
FOR ITS AGRICULTURAL LOTS TO AID SMALL FARM BUSINESSES.

Chairperson Hashem and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SCR 92. This resolution requests that the Department of Agriculture consider amending the eligibility qualifications and lease terms for its agricultural lots to aid small farm businesses. The HDOA offers the following comments.

The HDOA's agricultural parks program is geared toward the bonafide and/or new farmers. This program has reasonable size parcels, many with necessary farming infrastructure. Our primary challenge for issuing new leases is a lack of good, vacant farmland. Our experience indicates that there is rarely a lack of qualified bonafide or new farmers applying for desirable parcels. Fair and open procurement policies then determine whom the Department begins lease discussions with. Accordingly, the



Page 2

Department does not believe amending the lease qualifications will improve the Department's ability to aid small farmers and fill vacant lands.