

  
OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS  
‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai  
Legislative Testimony

**HB756 HD2**  
RELATING TO THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE  
Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ka ‘Oihana Mahi‘ai a me ke Ao Kūlohelohe  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ke Kuleana Hawai‘i  
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

Malaki 18, 2021

1:00 p.m.

Hālāwai Keleka‘a‘ike

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB756 HD2, which would add the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) chairperson as an “ex officio” voting member to the Board of Agriculture (Board). Allowing DHHL a seat on the Board will provide needed representation for native Hawaiian agricultural beneficiaries as an important part of Hawai‘i’s growing small-scale agricultural community.

**DHHL’s unique mission, purpose, and activities will provide the Board with a valuable and important perspective that may benefit both DHHL agricultural lessees as well as our islands as a whole.** DHHL began with agricultural homesteads on Moloka‘i, and facilitating agricultural homesteading continues to be a major part of DHHL’s mission to enable native Hawaiians’ return to the land: DHHL currently represents the interests of 16,470 agricultural beneficiaries and 43,569 acres of agricultural lands.<sup>1,2</sup> DHHL’s Agricultural Program Plan also seeks to increase the issuance of agricultural homestead lots for lessees.<sup>3</sup> HB756 HD2 will therefore provide a needed voice on the Board for DHHL as a major and long-standing stakeholder in our islands’ agriculture landscape, to ensure that the interests of its beneficiaries are adequately considered, and to facilitate their contribution to our islands’ economic resilience and food self-sufficiency.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committees to **PASS** HB756 HD2. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

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<sup>1</sup> DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS, FOR INFORMATION ONLY—DHHL AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM PLAN SURVEY RESULTS 6 (2021).

<sup>2</sup> Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Island Plans, available at <https://dhhl.hawaii.gov/po/island-plans/> (last accessed Mar. 14, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Agricultural Program Plan, available at <https://dhhl.hawaii.gov/po/program-plans/agriculture-program-plan/> (last accessed Mar. 14, 2021).

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**

P. O. BOX 1879  
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TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM J. AILA, JR, CHAIRMAN  
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION  
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT &  
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS  
HEARING ON MARCH 18, 2021 AT 1:00PM VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**HB 756, HD2, RELATING TO THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

March 18, 2021

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

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) strongly supports this bill which designates one of the at-large positions on the Board of Agriculture as the Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission (HHC) with a sunset on 6/30/2024. The HHC approved a similar measure, but it was not included in the Governor's administrative package.

DHHL supports any version of this bill, but if the preference is the House Draft 2 version of the bill then DHHL asks that the at large member be the Chairperson of the HHC or the Chairperson's designated representative. The original version of the bill allowed for an odd number of board members. The House Draft 1 and House Draft 2 versions of the bill maintain the even number of board members.

DHHL requests that the sunset date be removed because representation of the Chairperson of the HHC is no different than the Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, the Director of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism or the Dean of the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources or their designated representatives.

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.

DAVID Y. IGE  
Governor

JOSH GREEN  
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA  
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

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

**MARCH 18, 2021  
2:00 P.M.  
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 756 HD2  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairpersons Gabbard, Shimabukuro, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 756 HD2. This measure redesignates one of the at-large positions on the board of agriculture ("Board") as an ex officio position, to be filled by the chairperson of the Hawaiian homes commission ("DHHL Chairperson"). The Department of Agriculture ("Department") offers the following comments.

The Department has concerns regarding restructuring the makeup of the Board to accommodate requests of specific stakeholder groups seeking exclusive representation on the Board. This measure seeks to add 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.

Boards for state agencies are legislatively created to provide policy insight and oversight by subject matter experts and important stakeholders representatives who ensure the broadest input from all of the agricultural community. Currently, the Board consists of members that provide geographic representation for the counties of Hawaii, Maui, and Kauai, at-large members for stakeholder representation, and 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 provides effective board governance for the Department.

Redesignating an existing at-large position and replacing it with an ex officio position for the DHHL Chairperson is not a preferred means to achieve the objectives of the measure. While ensuring formal representation of a limited constituency of the agricultural community to the exclusion of other important stakeholder groups, it creates a precedence and opportunity for others stakeholder groups to request preferential representation by a separately designated member of the Board and precludes broader representation of stakeholder interests.

Board members are statutorily eligible to serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. The Governor recently re-appointed two current at-large board members to continue serving for their respective statutorily allowed second terms. Those appointments are undergoing the advise and consent process during this legislative session. Redesignation of an existing at-large position prior to completion of eligible service by an incumbent member may be an undesirable disruption to board effectiveness.

Should the Legislature be inclined to adopt this measure, the Department requests that implementation of the at-large member re-designation be delayed to coincide with the termination of eligibility of current board members to avoid disruption to the current make-up and effectiveness of the board.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

**HB-756-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/16/2021 2:52:57 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jennifer Azuma Chrupalyk	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Remember the recent auditors that Saiki got rid of? Perhaps you want to fix the corruption in the Dept of Agriculture prior to extending the corruption to Hawaiian Homelands. We have enough corruption within DHHL to deal with already. We don't need a bogus Ag Dept to add to the mess.

**HB-756-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/17/2021 9:01:05 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Dana Keawe	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I oppose sb756 hd2

**HB-756-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/18/2021 6:29:54 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2021 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Thomas T Shirai Jr	Testifying for The Kawaihapai Ohana	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Chair Shimabuko & Committee Members,

I am testifying both as an Individual and The Kawaihapai Ohana in Strong Support of HB 756 HD2. Some of those lands are DHHL Lands and it's appropriate from representation on this important committee which impacts those lands. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony of Strong Support for HB 756 HD2.

Thomas T Shirai Jr

Mokuleia, Waialua