

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
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**TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2021
1:00 P.M.
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 1235
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 1235 which establishes two positions on the Board of Agriculture ("Board") and specifies one shall be a resident of the island of Moloka`i and one shall be a resident of the island of Lana`i. The department has strong concerns and offers the following comments.

It appears that this measure seeks to ensure representation of the of the Moloka`i and Lana`i agricultural communities on the Board by establishing positions that are geographically based. The Board was established with members from each of the four Counties to address that concern from its inception. Historically, the Board member representing Maui County has represented the interests of the entire county, including Moloka`i and Lana`i, very effectively. Additionally, a member in one of the at-large positions on the board at this time is employed by an agricultural operation on Lanai, and this member is very knowledgeable of controlled environment agriculture which is an example of agricultural technology and innovation at its highest level in Hawai`i. The same member also has a diverse experience of agricultural production and food systems on the Island of Hawai`i. Keeping the four at-large positions provides the most diverse representation of agricultural knowledge and experience. Currently any person as a resident of Moloka`i or Lana`i can apply to be considered and nominated as an at-large member of the Board of Agriculture.

Within the department there is an exclusive opportunity for residents of Moloka`i to have a voice and decision-making vote as a member of the Moloka`i Irrigation System Water Users Advisory Board for the Moloka`i irrigation system water service. It has been a challenge for the department to fill vacant advisory board positions with Moloka`i



residents and for the reasons above the department believes the current four at-large positions and ten members of the board of agriculture provide the desired diversity in statewide representation of knowledge and perspectives for providing broad operating policies for the department.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Council Chair
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez

Presiding Officer Pro Tempore
Tasha Kama

Councilmembers
Gabe Johnson
Kelly Takaya King
Michael J. Molina
Tamara Paltin
Shane M. Sinenci
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura



Director of Council Services
Traci N. T. Fujita, Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

February 7, 2021

TO: Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: Alice L. Lee
Council Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alice L. Lee".

DATE: February 8, 2021

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF SB 1235., RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to establish two new positions on the Board of Agriculture, with one a resident of the Island of Moloka'i and the other a resident of the Island of Lanai.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I SUPPORT this measure because it justifiably provides better representation for the County of Maui on the Board of Agriculture

For the foregoing reason, I SUPPORT this measure.

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February 7, 2021

TO: The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: Gabe Johnson
Councilmember

DATE: February 5, 2021

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF FEBRUARY 8, 2021; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
SB1235, RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to include representation of the outer islands of Maui County for the State Board of Agriculture.

As a resident of Lānaʻi and a farmer, I know first-hand how important it is to have a representative from the island of Lānaʻi on this board.

Each island has its own unique needs and concerns that can be addressed at the State level.

For the aforementioned reasons, I **support** this measure.



PO Box 1177 Koloa HI 96756
808.652.5286 hawaiiSEED.org

February 6, 2021

**Hawai`i SEED in Support of 1235
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

We support establishing 2 new positions on the board of agriculture and specifying that 1 shall be a resident of the island of Molokai and 1 shall be a resident of the island of Lanai. All of our neighboring islands are unique and deserve representation by a resident who understands agricultural systems, the needs of their home island, and are without conflict of corporate interest. The positions should be filled by someone with longstanding relationship to the community.

Sincerely,
Jeri Di Pietro, President
Hawai`i SEED



The Molokai Farm Bureau serves as Molokai's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community. We are also an arm of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, organized in 1948 and comprised of 1800 farm families statewide.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
February 8, 2021 @ 1:00Pm, Via Videoconference

**TESTIMONY ON SB 1235
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE – Board of Agriculture seat for Molokai**

STRONGLY SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara and Respected Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Nate Oswald and I'm the President of the Molokai Farm Bureau, serving our members here on the island of Molokai.

Molokai's agricultural environment, needs and realities are much different than the larger islands that currently hold *designated* seats on the Board of Agriculture.

Hoping for a voice through another island that may have completely different outlooks, challenges or opportunities, or through an at-large seat – is not a plan – it is not a commitment to Molokai that our concerns or ideas will be heard or included in discussions and decisions at such a pivotal level.

Molokai's agricultural infrastructure, resources, economies of scale, challenges to imports and exports, access to supplies and inputs, opportunities for growth, or pipelines to end markets are all drastically more complex and uniquely more fragile and costly.

Compounding this we understand the immeasurable serious and long-term impacts agriculture (and all sectors of Hawaii) will face as we walk through this pandemic together.

For these reasons and more, **there has never been a more important time for ALL ISLANDS to have a voice at the table** on the Board of Agriculture – for agriculture to remain a sustaining sector in our state and local island economies.

We respectfully and STRONGLY SUPPORT SB 1235, and thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the members of the Molokai Farm Bureau,

Nate Oswald

Nathaniel Oswald
President, Molokai Farm Bureau

RESTRICTED

SB-1235

Submitted on: 1/30/2021 6:55:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/8/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michael deYcaza	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support

SB1235 Testimony Submission
Rayleen Egami

I, Rayleen Egami, along with the support on behalf of college-based cohorts in sustainable food community systems, strongly support and endorse SB 1235- Relating to Agriculture; the establishment of two additional board members to the board of agriculture. Hawaii is a state known for its strong ties to agriculture, this is reflected in the Hawaii state constitution. Furthermore, the indigenous peoples of Hawaii relied on agricultural cultivation in order to proliferate the indigenous population exponentially, with no externalities. Aloha 'aina and malama 'aina are strong cultural values that a diversified population share in unity; in commonality. We must extend a position to include our ohana in Molokai and Lana'i in contributing mana'o to strengthen our state, especially in a manner related to the foundation of sustenance: agriculture. With sincerest respect to all lawmakers considering, Rayleen Mitsuko Lehua Egami.

SB-1235

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 8:33:23 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/8/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cory Harden	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha legislators,

Please support having representation from all islands. We're better together!

mahalo,

Cory Harden