



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Water and Land
And
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Friday, January 28, 2022 at 1:10 p.m.
By
Nicholas Comerford, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
And
Michael Bruno, PhD
Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2056 – RELATING TO SOIL CLASSIFICATIONS

Chairs Inouye and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Keith-Agaran and Nishihara, and members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land and Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 2056 relating to soil classifications.

As a Soil Scientist and past surveyor in the National Cooperative Soil Survey, and having soil surveyed the foothills of Mount Rainier and the Skagit River Valley in Washington, Dean Comerford has understood the importance and use of soils information in land use planning and agriculture. The Web Soil Survey (<https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>) provides digitized soil maps and interpretive information. In addition, the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources has an on-going research project in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management that is evaluating crop suitability for current and climate change environments for a limited variety of crops across the state. These resources may be of use.

The University of Hawai'i supports this bill and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER AND LAND, AND
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 28, 2022
1:10 P.M.
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2056
RELATING TO SOIL CLASSIFICATIONS**

Chairpersons Inouye and Gabbard and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2056 that requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to conduct a study of the suitability of the State's current soil rating system as developed by the Land Study Bureau. OP/SD may seek the assistance of the Department of Agriculture, the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, the Land Use Commission, and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. There is an appropriation, and a report is required prior to the 2023 legislative session.

The Department supports this measure and otherwise defers to OP/SD. We look forward to participating in a comprehensive review of soil quality indexes such as the Land Study Bureau which have significant roles in land use regulation, identifying what agricultural production resources need to be protected, and help to optimize public and private investments that support food sustainability and overall local agricultural production.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important measure.



DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
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ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER AND LAND AND
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2056

January 28, 2022
1:10 p.m.
Room 229 and Videoconference

RELATING TO SOIL CLASSIFICATIONS

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill No. 2056 requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) to conduct a study of the suitability of soil classification systems used to regulate agricultural lands in the State; requires OPSD to submit a report to the Legislature; and appropriates an undetermined sum of general funds for FY 23 to conduct the study.

B&F notes that the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and

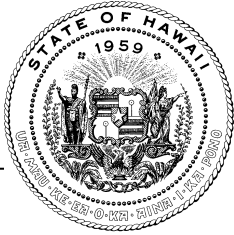
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE STATE OF HAWAII

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

SCOTT J. GLENN
CHIEF ENERGY OFFICER

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Testimony of
SCOTT J. GLENN, Chief Energy Officer

before the
**SENATE Committees on
Water and Land
And
Agriculture and Environment**

Friday, January 28, 2022
1:10 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

in support of
SB 2056
RELATING TO SOIL CLASSIFICATIONS.

Chairs Inouye and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Keith-Agaran and Nishihara, and Members of the Committees, the Hawaii State Energy Office (HSEO) supports SB 2056, which requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) to conduct a study of the suitability of the State's current soil overall (master) productivity rating system classified by the Land Study Bureau's (LSB) detailed land classification. SB 2056 also requires a report to the Legislature and appropriates funds.

HSEO's comments are guided by its mission to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy, and clean transportation to help achieve a resilient, clean energy, decarbonized economy.

HSEO agrees with Section 1 of SB 2056 that the LSB system "reflects the agricultural activities of plantation sugar cane and pineapple production that dominated Hawaii agriculture at the time of the study" and may no longer be appropriate to guide Hawaii's food and agricultural sustainability goals. Further, SB 2056 references the U.S. Department of Agriculture's national soil classification system as an example of other methods that can be used to classify agricultural soils more appropriately.

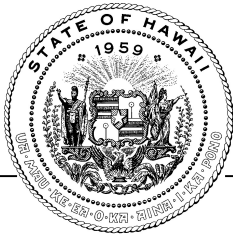
Current state law (sections 205-2 and 205-4.5, Hawai'i Revised Statutes) directs the permissibility of solar energy projects on Agricultural land based on the land's LSB rating. However, in some cases the practical use of the lands for agriculture, or co-location of crops or livestock with solar energy projects, is greater or less than indicated by the soils alone. For example, although the soils in one area may have a productivity rating that is higher than another area, the availability or lack of irrigation water may encourage or constrain the actual productivities of the various sites. The degree to which these factors are captured (or not) in the current system deserves review.

Therefore, HSEO believes that a study of the suitability of soil classification systems for the regulation of agricultural lands would contribute to a better understanding of Hawaii's agricultural lands, systems, potential, and needs.

HSEO defers to the appropriate agency for comment on this matter.

HSEO supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Supplemental Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
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Coastal Zone
Management
Program

Environmental Review
Program

Land Use Commission

Land Use Division

Special Plans Branch

State Transit-Oriented
Development

Statewide Geographic
Information System

Statewide
Sustainability Branch

Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS
Director, Office of Planning and Sustainable Development
before the
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND
AND
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**
Friday, January 28, 2022
1:10 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
in consideration of
SB 2056
RELATING TO SOIL CLASSIFICATIONS.

Chairs Inouye and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Keith-Agaran and Nishihara, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land and Agriculture and Environment.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **strongly supports** SB 2056. This measure would appropriate funds and require OPSD to conduct a study of the different agricultural rating systems, including the Land Study Bureau productivity rating system, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) soil inventory and other relevant soils rating systems, and determine recommendations for the use of soil classification systems for the regulation of agricultural lands in the State. The measure also provides that OPSD may consult and work with the Department of Agriculture, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, the Land Use Commission, and with USDA.

The measure indicates that since 1972, a period of fifty (50) years, there has not been a comprehensive soil study or agricultural soil mapping. Further, the Land Study Bureau classification system was based on older style agricultural activities, such as plantation sugar cane and pineapple production. Since that time, plantations have closed, and the type of agriculture practiced within the State has changed significantly.

OPSD believes that a review of the soils rating system is timely and would help to assure that the administration and regulation by State and counties preserve the 'best' agricultural lands. This would help to meet the State's food sustainability goals and to enhance meeting current challenges in agricultural land usage and cultivation by helping to preserve the best agricultural lands in the State for future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.