

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committees on
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
and
WATER AND LAND**

**Wednesday, February 16, 2022
1:00 P.M.**

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Via Videoconference

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2664
RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TARO**

Senate Bill 2664 proposes to create a classification of agricultural public lands entitled “taro lands” and appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to create an inventory of lands classified as taro lands. **The Department offers the following comments and amendments on this bill.**

The measure proposes to require the Board of Land and Natural Resources (Board) to classify qualifying public lands as a fourth class of intensive agricultural use for “[t]aro lands of no particular productivity determination, but having cultural, social, economic, and food self-sufficiency value if preserved for wetland taro cultivation.” The measure prohibits a district boundary amendment for lands subject to this classification. In addition, the bill’s preamble makes numerous references to public conservation lands including a finding by the taro task force that “between five thousand and seven thousand acres of historic lo‘i lands may be found within state conservation districts based on maps developed by the office of Hawaiian affairs and department of land and natural resources during the 2014 legislative session, or less than 3 per cent of all department of land and natural resources lands.”

The bill provides that the Board, in conjunction with the Taro Security Task Force (Task Force), may create an inventory of lands classified as fourth class taro lands. The Department notes that the Land Use Commission may have more expertise and may be the more appropriate agency to work with the Task Force on the inventory function and therefore proposes the following amendment to SECTION 4 of the bill:

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT K. MASUDA
FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

SECTION 4. The [~~board of land and natural resources,~~] land use commission, in conjunction with the taro security and purity task force, may create an inventory pursuant to chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, identifying lands classified as fourth class taro lands[-] and submit the inventory to the board of land and natural resources for approval.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

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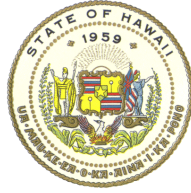
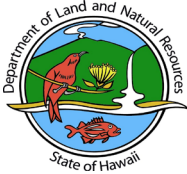
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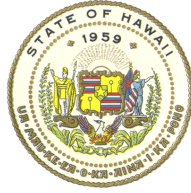
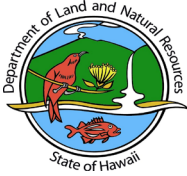
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CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

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 AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT AND
WATER AND LAND
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2664

February 16, 2022
1:00 p.m.
Room 229 and Videoconference

RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TARO

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

Senate Bill No. 2664: establishes a new class of public lands as taro lands to preserve wetland taro lands and supporting structures, and appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds for FY 23 for the Department of Land and Natural Resources to create an inventory of lands classified as taro lands.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, 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.



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

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

The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
The Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Water and Land

Re: **SB 2664 RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TARO**
Hearing: Wednesday, February 16, 2022, 1:00 p.m., Room 229 & videoconference

Position: **Strong Support**

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

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i stands in strong support of SB 2664. This measure would create a classification of agricultural public lands entitled "taro lands." It also appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources to create an inventory of lands classified as taro lands.

This measure will improve protections of lo'i kalo and ancient wetland agricultural structures on undeveloped state-owned or -acquired conservation lands for Hawai'i's long-term future food security and well-being.

The new classification designates Taro Lands as Fourth-class lands, having no particular productivity determination, but having cultural, social, economic, and food self-sufficiency value if preserved for wetland taro cultivation.

In our view, this bill is highly beneficial for food security, taro security, and diversity; accordingly, we respectfully request that this bill be passed by your Committees.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Melodie Adyja

Alan A. Burdick

Co-Chairs, Environmental Caucus of the
Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Email: legislativepriorities@gmail.com

SB-2664

Submitted on: 2/13/2022 2:09:45 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/16/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kimeona Kane	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha nui Kākou,

Please support this bill and honor haloa and our relationship and need we have for it. Kalo is a very important aspect of hawaiian life and culture and must be protected further before the remaining lo'i and terraces that are still in function, or waiting to be reopened, are saved for future mahi'ai who will be dependent on these lands. Please help to save these lands.

Mahalo,
Kimeona Kane

SB-2664

Submitted on: 2/14/2022 6:05:01 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/16/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Walter Ritte	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB 2664!

Walter Ritte

SB-2664

Submitted on: 2/15/2022 11:55:53 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/16/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Brian Miyamoto	Testifying for Hawaii Farm Bureau	Support	No

Comments:

The Hawaii Farm Bureau recognizes taro's importance in Hawaii's cultural identity and role in local food security. We support any effort to improve Hawaii's taro farmer's ability to not only sustain themselves but also to expand their long-term success.

SB-2664

Submitted on: 2/15/2022 12:51:24 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/16/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Nancy & Zeb Jones	Testifying for Hydroponics Alternatives LLC	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Senate Chair Gabbard, Senate Vice-Chair Nishihara, Senator Chair Inouye, Senate Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Committee Members:

We submit this testimony in SUPPORT of SB 2664, which relates to protecting taro/kalo. As a dietary staple crop and significant source of nutrients in the Hawaiian diet, kalo/taro represents an essential component of Hawai`i’s agricultural landscape and must be preserved. The language of SB2664 will include “taro lands” as a much-needed, additional land classification of agricultural lands and also ensure that the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) receives sufficient funding to generate an inventory and monitoring activities for such lands.

Our only suggestion would be to include the Hawaiian language term “kalo” within the Hawaii Revised Statutes definitions and to include this term by reference in any future drafts of SB2664.

For these reasons, we urge your honorable committee to please pass SB2664 out of your committees – that includes the term “kalo.” Mahalo again for this opportunity to present this testimony supporting SB2664.

With warm aloha,

Nancy & Zeb Jones

Cell: 808-228-3450