



COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

**SB2989 SD1**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Monday, April 4, 2022, 1:30 PM  
Room 308 and VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Chair Luke, Vice Yamashita, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the five county level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

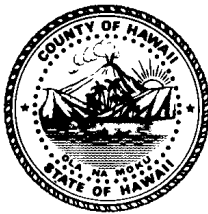
The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB2989 SD1** to require the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program. Healthy soils are necessary for ensuring we can continue to grow food on the land. Agriculture can be a beneficial contributor to managing the environment when the appropriate practices are deployed. This bill will provide the support to farmers and ranchers to encourage practices that increase soil health.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Nicole Galase  
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council  
Managing Director



REBECCA VILLEGAS  
Council Member  
District 7, Central Kona



PHONE: (808) 323-4267  
FAX: (808) 323-4786  
EMAIL: [Rebecca.villegas@hawaiicounty.gov](mailto:Rebecca.villegas@hawaiicounty.gov)

## HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

*West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A  
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.  
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740*

April 1, 2022

### TESTIMONY OF REBECCA VILLEGAS COUNCIL MEMBER, HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL ON SB 2989 SD1, RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Committee on Finance

Monday, April 4, 2022 1:30 p.m.

Aloha Chair Luke and Members of the Committee:

I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2989 SD1.

To help our State progress and reach our sustainability goals we must establish a healthy soil grant program, which shall:

- (1) Create a statewide soil health assessment with a list of practices specific to the State and that are most effective in improving soil health and building soil carbon stocks;
- (2) Provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils;
- (3) By \_\_\_\_\_, establish standards that shall apply to the healthy soils program and be based on the findings of the greenhouse gas sequestration task force established pursuant to section 225P-4 relating to minimum levels of soil carbon and water content and required soil health practices; and
- (4) Subject to available funding, issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.
  - (b) The long-term goals of the healthy soils program shall be to establish:
    - (1) Deadlines by which all awards issued by the department of agriculture shall meet the standards established pursuant to subsection (a)(3);
    - (2) Deadlines by which a plan for all state lands leased for agricultural use shall be required pursuant to the healthy soils program; and
    - (3) Programs incentivizing small farmers, ranchers, and landowners to take carbon positive actions on their respective lands.
  - (c) There is established a healthy soils program special fund to be administered by the department of agriculture and into which shall be deposited moneys appropriated by the legislature. The special fund shall be used to implement and operate the healthy soils program and issue awards.
  - (d) The department of agriculture shall submit a report detailing the status and progress of the healthy soils program and its recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session."

For the reasons stated above I urge the Committee on Finance to support this measure. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (808) 323-4267.

Mahalo for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Villegas', with a stylized, cursive script.

Rebecca Villegas  
Council Member, Hawai'i County Council

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2022 4:52:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Stayton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

I am writing as a Kauai family farmer in support of SB2989 SD1.

Healthy soil is the basis for establishing lasting soil that sustains communities, environmental services, farms, and farmers for generations. A Healthy Soils Program can prevent soil erosion by wind and water, which can further enhance air and water quality. It can also help address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils by restoring and improving their biodiversity. Overall, this would positively impact the quality of our environment.

Please support this bill.

Thanks for your consideration,

Susan

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2022 5:13:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- Soil biodiversity provides fertile ground for advancing global sustainability because it integrates so many challenges including climate regulation, water quality, pollution remediation, food and fiber production, and habitat for organisms aboveground and underwater.
- Healthy soil is by far the most biologically diverse part of Earth. The soil food web includes beetles, springtails, mites, worms, spiders, nematodes, fungi, bacteria, and other organisms. These organisms improve the entry and storage of water, resistance to erosion, plant nutrition, and breakdown of organic matter. These vital ecosystem services are often forgotten and even destroyed through intensive industrialized agriculture. We must move away from these practices and support biodiversity beneficial to soil health.
- Thank you for considering this important bill.

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2022 9:22:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Dinner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Let's give afarmers a fighting chance to feed our islands.

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2022 6:37:48 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chelle Galarza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I support having healthy soils and support this bil. Healthy soil is by far the most biologically diverse part of our Earth. The soil food web includes fungi, worms, spiders, beetles, springtails, mites, nematodes, bacteria, and other organisms. These organisms improve the entry and storage of water, plant nutrition, resistance to erosion, and breakdown of organic matter. These vital ecosystems are often destroyed and or forgotten through intensive industrialized agriculture. We must move away from the above practices and instead support biodiversity that is beneficial to soil health. Healthy soil is the basis for establishing lasting soil that is sustainable for generations! We need this soil to grow local foods on island. A Healthy Soils Program can enhance air and water quality on the islands. It can also help address a range of important issues we face related to damaged and degraded soils by restoring and improving their biodiversity. Overall, this would positively impact the quality of our environment. Please consider it a positive having healthy soil on the islands. Mahalo, Chelle Galarza

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2022 10:15:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
laurel brier	Kauai women's caucus	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A critical build to support regenerative agriculture which will address the climate crisis and promote food sovereignty in Hawaii and build a more resilient, healthy, and pono Hawaii



**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2022 10:05:27 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support, has many benefits.

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2022 10:11:00 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Helmut Klauer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Healthy soil is the foundation of food production

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2022 12:37:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robert Boudreaux	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Nutrient dense food production requires healthy soils and for too many years we have ignored this basic fact. This bill will not only rectify that error, but will put a program in place to insure that the foundation for proper agricultural production continues into the future.

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2022 4:29:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Theresa M Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this Bill.

Theresa Thompson

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2022 6:02:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Climate Protectors Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair, The Honorable Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: Hearing **SB2989 SD1 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.**

Hearing: Monday, April 4, 2022, 1:30 p.m., CR 308 and by videoconference

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

The Climate Protectors Hawai'i is a group focused on reversing the climate crisis and encouraging Hawai'i to lead the world towards a safe and sustainable climate and future. The Climate Protectors Hawai'i **SUPPORTS SB2989 SD1!**

**Healthy soils produce more healthy local food and sequester more atmospheric carbon, helping to mitigate the climate emergency. The purpose and intent of this measure is to establish a healthy soils program in the Department of Agriculture, which shall:**

- (1) Create a statewide soil health assessment with a list of practices specific to the State and that are most effective in improving soil health and building soil carbon stocks;
- (2) Provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils;
- (3) By \_\_\_\_\_, establish standards that shall apply to the healthy soils program and be based on the findings of the greenhouse gas sequestration task force established pursuant to section 225P-4 relating to minimum levels of soil carbon and water content and required soil health practices; and
- (4) Subject to available funding, issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

**Please pass this bill to improve the health of soils and the people and environment of Hawai'i!**

Mahalo!

Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)



#### Officers

Vincent Mina  
State President

Anabella Bruch  
Vice-President

Maureen Datta  
Secretary

Reba Lopez  
Treasurer

#### Chapter Presidents

Dash Kuhr  
Kohala, Hawaii

Drake Weinert  
East Hawaii

Steve Lund  
Puna, Hawaii

Andrea Drayer  
Ka'u, Hawaii

Maureen Datta  
Kona, Hawaii

Robert Boudreaux  
Hana, Maui

Reba Lopez  
Haleakala, Maui

Bobby Pahia  
Mauna Kahalawai, Maui

Kaipo Kekona  
Lahaina, Maui

Brynn Foster  
North Shore, Oahu

Christian Zuckerman  
Wai'anae, Oahu

Vincent Kimura  
Waimanalo, Oahu

Anabella Bruch  
Kauai

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the House Finance Committee,

The Hawaii Farmers Union United (HFUU) is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU strongly supports SB2989** and the development of a robust soil health program within the Hawaii Department of Agriculture.

The Hawaii Healthy Soils Program (HSP) is intended to house multiple incentives, like those for cover crops ([SB2990](#)) and compost ([SB3004](#)). This approach is similar to [California's Healthy Soils Program](#) which funds demonstration and implementation grants that support myriad conservation agriculture practices.

The forthcoming GHG sequestration task force report will further delineate best practices that can be incorporated into future incentives. The Hawaii HSP will serve as a mechanism to expand resourcing of these and similar incentives. Conceivably the HSP, similar again to CA's approach, could be stewarded by an expert support panel, akin to or utilizing the GHG sequestration task force.

As initial incentives, compost application and cover cropping were selected because they are among the top conservation agriculture practices incorporated into NRCS plans for Hawaii farmers and from discussion with conservation planners.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Vincent Mina President HFUU/HFUF

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
ON  
SENATE BILL NO. 2989, S.D. 1

**April 4, 2022**  
**1:30 p.m.**  
**Room 308 and Videoconference**

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

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

Senate Bill (S.B.) No. 2989, S.D. 1, adds a new section to Chapter 141, HRS, to establish a Healthy Soils Program (HSP) within the Department of Agriculture to: define the terms “healthy soils” and “healthy soils practice”; create a statewide soil health assessment with a list of practices specific to the State that are effective in improving soil health and building soil carbon stocks; provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement practices that contribute to healthy soils; establish standards that apply to the HSP based on the findings of reports completed by the Greenhouse Gas Sequestration Task Force; and issue awards and other financial incentives to implement practices that contribute to healthy soils. This bill also establishes the HSP Special Fund (HSPSF), appropriates an undetermined amount of general funds in FY 23 to be deposited into the HSPSF, and appropriates an undetermined amount of special funds out of the HSPSF in FY 23 to effectuate the HSP.



B&F notes that, as a matter of general policy, the department does not support the creation of any special fund which does not meet the requirements of Section 37-52.3, HRS. Special funds should: 1) serve a need as demonstrated by the purpose, scope of work and an explanation why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process; 2) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon the users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and the sources of revenue; 3) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity; and 4) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining. Regarding S.B. No. 2989, S.D. 1, there does not appear to be any significant source of revenues to support the HSPSF aside from appropriations from the general fund.

B&F also 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.

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2022 8:51:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elizabeth Hansen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

Please support this bill. We need to assist the farmers of today and the future.  
Mahalo,

Elizabeth Hansen  
registered voter,  
Hakalau HI 96710

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2022 8:10:00 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mark Henry Deakos	Hawaii Association for Marine Education and Research	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Chair, Vice Chair and Members,

As the President and Chief Scientist of the Hawaii Association for Marine Education and Research, I ask this committee to support SB2989 SD1, which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program.

Healthy soil is the basis for establishing lasting soil that sustains communities, environmental services, farms, and farmers for generations. A Healthy Soils Program can prevent soil erosion by wind and water, which can further enhance air and water quality. It can also help address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils by restoring and improving their biodiversity. Overall, this would positively impact the quality of our environment.

Soil biodiversity provides fertile ground for advancing global sustainability because it integrates so many challenges including climate regulation, water quality, pollution remediation, food and fiber production, and habitat for organisms aboveground and underwater.

Healthy soil is by far the most biologically diverse part of Earth. The soil food web includes beetles, springtails, mites, worms, spiders, nematodes, fungi, bacteria, and other organisms. These organisms improve the entry and storage of water, resistance to erosion, plant nutrition, and breakdown of organic matter. These vital ecosystem services are often forgotten and even destroyed through intensive industrialized agriculture. We must move away from these practices and support biodiversity beneficial to soil health.

Thank you,

Mark Deakos, PhD

President/Chief Scientist

Hawaii Association for Marine Education and Research

Lahaina, HI 96761





## House Committee on Finance

Monday, April 4th, 2022, 10:15a.m. Conference Room 308

### **Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action Supports: SB2989 SD1**

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) I am submitting testimony in support of SB2989 SD1.

SB2989 SD1 requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program.

HAPA supports a sound program and plan to build our soil structure, nutrient capacity and soil biodiversity. These practices prevent soil erosion by wind and water, which can further enhance air and water quality and have cascading positive impacts in our environment.

Healthy soil is the basis for establishing lasting soil that sustains communities, environmental services, farms, and farmers, for generations. In recent decades we have learned a great deal about the importance of microbial life, and soil biodiversity in over soil "health". As we realize the mistakes we have made over the last 60 or so years, moving our focus to more industrialized agriculture practices, we must move away from the outdated practices of sterilizing lands with pesticides and herbicides and killing the soil microbes and life<sup>1</sup>, and instead support the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are beneficial to soil health<sup>2</sup>.

In addition to important things like composting, crop rotation, covercropping and other ways that we can increase organic content, we need to be looking at rehabilitation of old and previously cleared and graded soils to restore soil biodiversity along with organic

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/pesticides-are-killing-the-worlds-soils/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.emnz.com/article/how-pesticides-affect-soil-microbes>

content. A well structured program would include qualified soil biologists that could bring these new scientific understandings about soil ecology into the program.

Soil biodiversity provides fertile ground for advancing global sustainability because it integrates so many challenges including climate regulation, water quality, pollution remediation, food and fiber production, and habitat for organisms aboveground and underwater.<sup>3</sup>

Healthy soil is by far the most biologically diverse part of Earth. The soil food web includes beetles, springtails, mites, worms, spiders, nematodes, fungi, bacteria, and other organisms. These organisms improve the entry and storage of water, resistance to erosion, plant nutrition, and break down of organic matter. These vital ecosystem services are often forgotten and even destroyed through intensive industrialized agriculture<sup>4</sup>.

HAPA believes that SB2989 SD1 can help to address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils, restore and improve soil biodiversity, while also improving the overall quality of our environment and working to sequester carbon. SB2989 SD1 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment.

Please pass SB2989 SD1.

Mahalo for your consideration,



Anne Frederick  
Executive Director

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/soil-biodiversity>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/nrcs142p2\\_050947.pdf](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs142p2_050947.pdf)



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921  
e-mail [info@hfbf.org](mailto:info@hfbf.org); [www.hfbf.org](http://www.hfbf.org)

April 4, 2022

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2989, SD1**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Room 308 & Videoconference  
1:30 PM

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

**The Hawaii Farm Bureau supports SB 2989, SD1**, which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program.

HFB strongly supports the concept of building soil structure and nutrient capacity. Caring for the soil is a cornerstone to having multigenerational farms that continue to provide for the people of Hawaii. Many of our farms add compost made off-site as well as utilize short-term fallow between crop cycles to increase organic content in their soils. HFB recognizes and supports the diversion of discarded food and other useful wastes away from landfills. The benefits of this and of composting are well-known.

Farming is a tough business. High production costs are a major driver of narrow profit margins for Hawaii's farmers. Land, water, labor, taxes, transportation, utilities, inputs, invasive species, and food safety regulations are all costs of doing business that often results in our farmers just being able to break even. HFB supports this initiative that could reduce the cost of production for local farmers. This is another mechanism that can help locally produced goods compete with imported products, strengthening our local economy.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important subject.



**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  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

**MONDAY, APRIL 4, 2022  
1:30 P.M.  
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2989 SENATE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Luke and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2989 SD1. The bill requires the Department to establish a healthy soils program, defining the terms “healthy soils” and healthy soils practices”, creating a statewide soil health assessment, providing farmers with outreach and technical assistance, establishing standards, and providing awards to incentivize farmers to implement appropriate farming practices contributing to healthy soils. The Department of Agriculture (“Department”) offers comments.

The Department appreciates the intent of this bill but has serious concerns about what is expected of the Department. We recognize that healthy soil can help maintain agricultural production with some reduction in inputs and increase of carbon sequestration, however the Department will require an unknown number of additional personnel with necessary experience to carry out technical and education assistance to farmers to implement certain farm management practices; the development, peer-review and assemblage of complex data and information requirements necessary to identify standards and practices “most effective at improving soil health and building soil



carbon stocks”; and the issuance of awards and financial incentives from the proposed special fund to implement certain farm management practices.

The measure also requires that the lands leased under the Department’s management jurisdiction are to meet “minimum levels of soil carbon and water content and required soil health practices”, and all other State lands leased for agricultural use are to be required to comply with the healthy soils program. This is an unexplained and unreasonable imposition on farmer lessees of State-owned agricultural lands who are being forced to comply with healthy soils standards while farmers on privately held lands appear to be encouraged.

The Department acknowledges there is another measure SB3325 HD1 that describes in detail a pilot program to be administered by the Department of Land and Natural Resources to incentivize carbon sequestration activities and improving soil health through incentive contracts that provide compensation to participating farmers and landowners.

The Department believes that the pilot program proposed in SB 3325 HD1 is a more comprehensive, collaborative, and better structured vehicle to implement a healthy soils program and the building of soil carbon stocks, but only if established under the control and guidance of OP/SD.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



To: The House Committee on Finance  
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org  
Date: Monday, April 4, 2022, 1:30pm

**In strong support of SB2989 SD1**

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the Finance committee,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **strongly supports SB2989 SD1** that would require the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program. This bill would incentivize regenerative farming, ranching, and land management practices that improve soil health and sequester carbon, as well as educating farmers and providing technical assistance to achieve these goals.

Supporting carbon sequestration efforts such as those delineated in this Healthy Soils Program is a win-win for the climate and local food production. To address the climate crisis, we need to move forward on efforts such as those described in SB2989 SD1, and we need to do them in earnest.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of this important legislation.

Sherry Pollack  
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2022 9:13:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rodger Hansen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill – We need to protect our land for farming.

Mahalo,  
Rodger Hansen  
registered voter, Hakalau HI 96710

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2022 12:27:11 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
carol lee kamekona	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- Healthy soil is by far the most biologically diverse part of Earth. The soil food web includes beetles, springtails, mites, worms, spiders, nematodes, fungi, bacteria, and other organisms. These organisms improve the entry and storage of water, resistance to erosion, plant nutrition, and breakdown of organic matter. These vital ecosystem services are often forgotten and even destroyed through intensive industrialized agriculture. We must move away from these practices and support biodiversity beneficial to soil health.

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2022 7:23:09 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
penny levin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha;

As an older farmer, I strongly support HB3197. The average age of a farmer is over 60 years old and farming is changing, or should I say rejuvenating; returning to real care for the soil. If we are to build a next generation of farmers who pay great attention to regenerating our island soils, to producing food for local consumption and reducing our dependence on imports, we must gather and make accessible the resources and mentors necessary for them to be successful. At the same time, farmer mentors should be those who actually farm boots on the ground with experience in the many challenges of farming. This bill provides the means to accomplish that. Please support this bill.

mahalo

Penny Levin

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2022 8:13:46 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dennis F Lokmer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge strong support for this bill.

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2022 8:38:41 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Koon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this important bill. Mahalo!



**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2022 9:32:11 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cara Oba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i is a state with a variety of soils and ecosystems that requires our own set of research and standards for our unique set of circumstances. This bill supports that kind of learning and development so I support this bill. Let's learn how to do the best for our land and with our farmers to ensure food and water security for future generations.

Mahalo!

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2022 12:04:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of SB2989 SD1, which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program.

I am concerned about our aina and would like to see more regenerative practices to restore its health. Between agribusiness, invasive species, topsoil erosion and urban development which is not always the best for the land, the soil needs to be healed through composting, cover crops, the addition of beneficial microorganisms and insects, and other means that will restore balance. This will not only be good for the soil, but for all biodiversity in supporting more life through healthy nutrition. A Healthy Soils Program is a good start for this kind of practice throughout the state.

Healthy soil is the basis for establishing lasting soil that sustains communities, environmental services, farms, and farmers for generations. A Healthy Soils Program can prevent soil erosion by wind and water, which can further enhance air and water quality. It can also help address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils by restoring and improving their biodiversity. Overall, this would positively impact the quality of our environment.

Soil biodiversity provides fertile ground for advancing global sustainability because it integrates so many challenges including climate regulation, water quality, pollution remediation, food and fiber production, and habitat for organisms aboveground and underwater.

Healthy soil is by far the most biologically diverse part of Earth. The soil food web includes beetles, springtails, mites, worms, spiders, nematodes, fungi, bacteria, and other organisms. These organisms improve the entry and storage of water, resistance to erosion, plant nutrition, and breakdown of organic matter.

These vital ecosystem services are often forgotten and even destroyed through intensive industrialized agriculture. We must move away from these practices and support biodiversity beneficial to soil health.

Please do what you can to codify SB2989 SD1 into law. Mahalo for considering my views and for your hard work.

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2022 7:33:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tammy Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly encourage you to please support this movement towards sustaining healthy soils, for they are the key to our species surviving well together on this planet. Please know that there is a worldwide movement of support for requiring a minimal amount of organic matter in the soils to stop desertification and to reverse the damage done so far. We can restore healthy soils, if we act now. We can do so much to preserve the fertility of this land and it is all of our duty. It is the right thing to do for the health of the future.

Thank you,  
Tammy Davis

147 Royal Drive

Kapaa, HI 96746

**SB-2989-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2022 8:03:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/4/2022 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Nanea Lo. I come from Papakōlea, O‘ahu. I'm a Kanaka Maoli born and raised in the Hawaiian Kingdom. I'm writing in full support of SB2989 SD1.

Healthy soil is the basis for establishing lasting soil that sustains communities, environmental services, farms, and farmers for generations. A Healthy Soils Program can prevent soil erosion by wind and water, which can further enhance air and water quality. It can also help address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils by restoring and improving their biodiversity. Overall, this would positively impact the quality of our environment. Support SB2989 SD1.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo