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# SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A TWO-YEAR AGRICULTURAL CRIME PILOT PROJECT TO EXAMINE AND ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROSECUTING AGRICULTURAL CRIME CASES, INCLUDING THOSE OF AGRICULTURAL THEFT, VANDALISM, AND TRESPASS, IN THE STATE.

1           WHEREAS, agricultural crimes, which include agricultural  
2 theft, vandalism, and trespass, are a persistent issue affecting  
3 farmers and ranchers of the State; and  
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5           WHEREAS, according to a recent publication by the United  
6 States Department of Agriculture and Hawaii Department of  
7 Agriculture in 2019, there were nearly nineteen thousand  
8 incidents of theft, vandalism, and trespassing on farms in the  
9 State; and  
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11           WHEREAS, these incidents cost Hawaii farms approximately  
12 \$14,400,000, or ten percent of the estimated 2018 Hawaii net  
13 farm income, in theft and vandalism losses and security costs;  
14 and  
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16           WHEREAS, some individuals trespass onto farm property,  
17 often armed with weapons and accompanied by dogs, to illegally  
18 hunt, which can be particularly dangerous and destructive for  
19 farming operations and can result in destroyed crops, lost  
20 livestock, illegal drug use, litter, and discarded animal  
21 carcasses on farm property; and  
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23           WHEREAS, agricultural crimes, including agricultural theft,  
24 vandalism, and trespass, increase the costs of production and  
25 decrease the chances for farming and ranching operations to  
26 succeed; and  
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28           WHEREAS, despite the prevalence and cost of agricultural  
29 crimes, many incidents go unreported and few result in  
30 convictions; and  
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1 WHEREAS, of the nearly nineteen thousand incidents in 2019,  
2 only nine hundred seventy incidents were reported to law  
3 enforcement, which resulted in seventy-nine arrests and sixty-  
4 seven convictions; and

5  
6 WHEREAS, recognizing the challenges that local farmers face  
7 regarding agricultural crimes, the Legislature passed Act 217,  
8 Session Laws of Hawaii 2019, which established a two-year  
9 Agricultural Theft and Vandalism Pilot Project to examine the  
10 effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural theft and vandalism  
11 cases in the counties of Hawaii and Maui, and included cases of  
12 theft and vandalism that affect individuals who are not full-  
13 time farmers or ranchers; and

14  
15 WHEREAS, this body believes that it is time to expand the  
16 Agricultural Theft and Vandalism Pilot Project statewide as it  
17 will provide resources to suppress incidences of agricultural  
18 crimes and losses to farmers, ranchers, aquaculturists, and  
19 floriculturists in the State; now, therefore,

20  
21 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second  
22 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024,  
23 that the Department of Agriculture is urged to establish a two-  
24 year Agricultural Crime Pilot Project to examine and assess the  
25 effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural crime cases, including  
26 those of agricultural theft, vandalism, and trespass, in the  
27 State; and

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29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture  
30 is also requested to:

- 31
- 32 (1) Examine and assess the effectiveness of prosecuting  
33 agricultural crimes, including the theft of  
34 agricultural products produced for personal or  
35 commercial use on any land, regardless of land  
36 classification; agricultural vandalism; and trespass  
37 onto a private farm or ranch;
  - 38
  - 39 (2) Create a Crimestoppers Anonymous phone line  
40 specifically for individuals who wish to report an  
41 agricultural crime, but do not wish to be named; and  
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1 (3) Create a more comprehensive, accessible online form  
2 that makes it easier for farmers and ranchers to  
3 report agricultural crimes; and  
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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture  
6 is requested to coordinate with the Department of Law  
7 Enforcement to form an Agricultural Crime Task Force; provided  
8 that an interpreter be a part of the Task Force through the  
9 Department of Agriculture that can represent farmers who may  
10 speak languages other than English; and  
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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture  
13 is requested to coordinate with the Department of Law  
14 Enforcement and each of the four counties to hire enforcement  
15 officers for each county; and  
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17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture  
18 is requested to assess the implementation of the pilot project,  
19 including the pilot project's effectiveness, to determine  
20 whether to continue, make permanent, or end the pilot project,  
21 by:  
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23 (1) Identifying the number of convictions for agricultural  
24 crimes;  
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26 (2) Identifying best practices for prosecuting  
27 perpetrators of agricultural crimes;  
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29 (3) Identifying best practices for the coordination of  
30 local police and other enforcement officers'  
31 interaction between the prosecuting attorney's office  
32 and the Judiciary;  
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34 (4) Identifying best practices for the development and  
35 implementation of the public's and farmers' reporting  
36 of agricultural crimes or the attempt of agricultural  
37 theft or agricultural vandalism;  
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39 (5) Identifying areas where agricultural crimes are most  
40 prevalent;  
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1 (6) Identifying best practices for preventing agricultural  
2 crimes; and  
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4 (7) Making recommendations for a statewide program to  
5 address agricultural crimes; and  
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7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture  
8 is requested to submit an interim report to the Legislature of  
9 its findings and recommendations, including any proposed  
10 legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
11 the Regular Session of 2025; and  
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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture  
14 is requested to submit a final report to the Legislature of its  
15 findings and recommendations, including any proposed  
16 legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
17 the Regular Session of 2026; and  
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19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
20 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of  
21 Agriculture, Director of Law Enforcement, and Prosecuting  
22 Attorneys and Chiefs of Police of each county.

