



Representative Richard Creagan

*Proudly serving State House District 5 - North Kona, South Kona, West Ka'u
House Chair of Agriculture*



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
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Aloha District 5 constituents!

Thank you for allowing me to be your State Representative and I look forward to serving you for the next two years. A new change for me is that I was appointed as Chair of the Committee on Agriculture. I was also asked to add animal welfare to the duties of that committee and accepted enthusiastically. Agriculture has diminished in our state with the demise of sugar and pineapple plantations, but our governor has set as his goal to double food production by 2020.

A big part of agriculture is dealing with invasive species and we have proposals to help deal with such pests as rat lung worm,

little fire ant, coffee berry borer beetle, and rapid ohia death, while trying to maintain attempted control of mosquitoes and coqui frogs.

Our district is largely zoned agriculture, and there are hundreds of small family farms. I am working on ways to especially support these small farmers so that everyone who wants to farm, whether commercially or for subsistence, will be able to live a good and successful life.

It is my honor and privilege to serve and represent you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance. Mahalo!

Medical Cannabis

Two bills passed this session that address medical cannabis. **SB786** officially changes all references to medical "marijuana" to medical "cannabis." **HB1488** was a more substantial bill and made several changes to medical cannabis. First, it expands the qualifying conditions to include rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, epilepsy, and multiple sclerosis. The bill also increases the total number of plants that a patient may grow from seven to ten, and extends the ability for caregivers to grow cannabis for patients until the end of 2023. The bill also gives patients the right to have their cannabis tested in a laboratory and allows providers of transportation services to help patients that may need assistance to enter or exit a dispensary. Several technical fixes were made that will help the dispensaries open and run smoothly, such as, extending certain deadlines to address delays and allowing for a backup system for tracking plants and seeds if the computer system goes down. In addition, required laboratory testing will now balance the burden of the cost to consumers with the benefits of the test. Finally, the Department of Health may permit additional retail dispensing locations and cultivation of additional plants by licensees.

Industrial Hemp Pilot Program

SB773 will maintain the hemp pilot program and allow applicants to apply for permits all year long. The counties will be required to recognize industrial hemp as an agricultural product, use or activity. Certain facility and transportation requirements will be lifted to make this industry more feasible. Hemp is a valuable new crop which can provide fiber, oil, protein, and medicines and could be Hawaii's next thriving industry. Over \$200,000 was placed in the budget to support this bill.



In 2015 I attended legislative conferences in Colorado and Washington, two states where marijuana and hemp are legal. This is a photo of an open hemp field in Boulder, Colorado. Hemp and medical cannabis could be the basis of thriving new industries for Hawaii Island.

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2017 End of Session Legislative Update

Diversified Uses on Agricultural Land:

Ag land in Hawaii is usually very expensive. Even though classified as agricultural, land may be, and often is, poorly suited for agriculture. This poorer land can be made suitable at considerable expense to grub, rip, and grade the soil and underlying rock, and by amending the soil. Income from selling unprocessed agricultural products is usually insufficient to offset these large upfront costs. Allowing additional sources of income, from value added products, farm stands, on-farm restaurants, rental housing, bed and breakfast operations to name a few, would facilitate paying for the farm and make the farm more productive. **HB778** allowed additional housing on ag land but did not pass. **HB2**, that did pass, authorizes tiny homes of less than 500 sq feet for farm workers in ag districts on the Big Island and would decrease their cost of living, increase their efficiency and improve overall security of the farm. **HB1475** passed this session and allows farmers' markets and food hubs on ag land. This will help farmers sell their products, produce value-added products, and increase on-farm income.

Invasive Species:

We have secured \$1 million in the State Budget to address Rat Lungworm disease and educate the public. Unfortunately, **SB272** did not pass, but would have provided over \$1.4 million for Dr. Susan Jarvi's lab at the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy at UH Hilo. Additionally, \$4 million was appropriated to the Invasive Species Council to address the Little Fire Ant and other invasive pests. We also passed Cliff Tsuji's long-time Biosecurity initiative (**HB1325**) and secured \$1.2 million to increase biosecurity for our ports and prevent invasive species from increasing in Hawaii. **HB186** extends the subsidiary offered to coffee farmers who purchase *Beauveria bassiana* products to combat the Coffee Berry Borer Beetle. This will support greater yields and a higher-quality, more valuable product. Also, \$1.5 million has been appropriated to address Rapid Ohia Death. ROD is easily spread and destroys almost 100% of each forest it comes into contact with.



Above: Governor David Ige proclaimed March 10, 2017 as the 5th annual Hawaii Invasive Species Awareness Week (HISAW). This event brought attention and recognition to individuals and organizations who have made substantial contributions to invasive species prevention and control. Big Island's own, Carolyn Dillon, was awarded for her efforts to mitigate Little Fire Ants and created the LFA Coalition so County and State efforts could work together along with the Kohala Center.

Pesticides:

Agricultural pesticides can be essential in Hawaii because our absence of winter ensures that insects are always present. However, certain pesticides such as chlorpyrifos have been shown to be potent teratogens causing long lasting permanent brain injury to fetuses. **SB778** would have implemented the Joint Fact Finding Group on pesticide use on Kauai, and when that did not pass we amended **SB804** with some similar language. We also added a section to test fetal exposure to chlorpyrifos after the baby is born. My plan to test a number of newborns throughout Hawaii for exposure of fetuses to this toxic chemical did not pass, but we will continue to seek additional funding for this project.

New University Hospital in West Hawaii:

Although I am no longer Vice-Chair of the Health Committee, I am still working on health care issues. A group headed by Dean Jerris Hedges of the John A Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) is currently doing a \$500,000 feasibility study of a university affiliated teaching hospital that would train future doctors, nurses and other health care providers. The hospital would hopefully be located next to the Palamanui Community College to facilitate training of health care professionals. It is envisioned that the university hospital would be the center of

Governor's Deadlines

The House and Senate Chambers have agreed on language for the specific bills and they are awaiting Governor Ige's approval. The Governor has specific deadlines to follow.

Governor signs the bill by July 11, 2017: Bill Becomes a Law

Governor takes no action by July 11th: Bill Becomes a Law

If the Governor intends to veto a bill, he must inform the Legislature by June 26 and deliver the veto by July 11. Two-thirds of each chamber will need to override the veto by convening Special Session. Special Session would need to convene by July 11, before noon, to override the Governor's veto. This process does not happen often.

Below: Along with Senator Russell Ruderman and Senate Ag Chair Mike Gabbard and House Health chair Rep. Della Belatti, I hosted an informational briefing on rat lungworm disease. We invited Dr. Susan Jarvi, University of Hawaii at Hilo, who has been doing extensive research. Dr. Robert Cowie, University of Hawaii at Manoa carefully studied the slugs and snails associated with RLW and presented as well. The Department of Health also joined the discussion and is focusing on educational programs to prevent future cases of ingesting the slugs.

