

HB-975

Submitted on: 2/11/2023 9:52:30 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/13/2023 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg Takeshima	Hawaii Department of Agriculture	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I will be available for questions via Zoom.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

FEBRUARY 13, 2023
2:20 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 312

HOUSE BILL NO. 975
RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Gates and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 975 relating to sustainable agriculture. This housekeeping measure addresses potential deficiencies in Act 312, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, which established a three-year cover crop reimbursement pilot program to provide up to 75 per cent cost reimbursement to farming operations in the State for the acquisition of cover crop seeds, green manure, or compost to incentivize such practices. The Department supports this bill and defers to the Attorney General's office regarding the need for guidelines for a reimbursement program.

Both cover crops and compost (green manure is often used interchangeably with cover crops, although cover crops do not become green manure until it is tilled into the soil) are recognized best management practices by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the United States Department of Agriculture. Both practices are valuable tools which can reduce surface water velocities, trap pesticides, soils, nutrients, and other pollutants of concern before they leave agricultural properties.



Subsidy implementation may provide cross-programmatic efficiencies related to matching federal funding with the Department of Health's Clean Water Branch, Polluted Runoff Control Program. If cover crops, green manure, and composting are implemented in watersheds with approved watershed-based plans (WBP) in the State of Hawaii, state funds appropriated by this bill may be leveraged to provide greater non-point source pollution control. Watersheds with WBPs include:

Kaua'i:

- Hanalei Bay Watersheds: Hanalei, Waikoko, Waipā, and Wai'oli
- Nawiliwili Bay Watersheds: Puali, Hulēi'ia, and Nawiliwili

Oahu:

- Ala Wai Watersheds: Manoa-Palolo, Makiki, and Ala Wai
- Honouliuli Watershed
- Kaiaka Bay: Kī'iki'i, Kaukonahua, Poamoho, Paukauila, Helemano, and 'Ōpae'ula
- Kapakahi Stream Watershed
- Ko'olaupoko Watersheds: Watersheds from Kualoa to Makapu'u
- Ma'ili'ili Watershed
- Waikele Watershed
- Wailupe Stream Watershed

Moloka'i

- Kawela Watershed

Maui

- Southwest Maui Watersheds: Hapapa, Wailea, Mo'oloa
- West Maui Watersheds: Honokōwai, Wahikuli, Kahana, Honokahua, and Honolua
- South Central Maui Watershed: Pōhākea

Kaho'olawe

- Kaulana and Hakioawa Watersheds
- Kamōhio Watershed

Hawai'i

- Pelekane Bay Watershed: Kawaihae Watershed
- Waikoloa-Wai'ula'ula Stream Watershed

The resources requested by the Department to implement reimbursement programs includes an accountant and an account clerk within the Administrative Services Office. The positions are needed to properly implement this and other related reimbursement programs at an estimated cost of \$120,000 annually.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.



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February 13, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 975
RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 312 & Videoconference
2:20 PM

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice-Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee:

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 975, which is a housekeeping measure that addresses potential deficiencies in Act 312, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022, which established a three-year cover crop reimbursement pilot program to provide up to 75 per cent cost reimbursement to farming operations in the State for the acquisition of cover crop seeds, green manure, or compost to incentivize such practices.

HFB agrees that the use of cover crops and green manure increases agricultural productivity and is a beneficial management practice. We strongly support 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 Hawai'i. 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 composting are well-known.

Farming is a tough business. High production costs are a major driver of narrow profit margins for Hawai'i'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 by incentivizing, with a 75% match, cover crops seeds, green manure, and compost material. 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.



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

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Kaiea Medeiros
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Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Rufina Kaauwai
Molokai

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

Brynn Foster
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Ray Maki
Kauai

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems 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 supports HB975.**

The Hawaii Farmers Union United has been a strong supporter of the cover crop reimbursement pilot program. We are fully invested in the agricultural sustainability of the State of Hawaii and of its farmers, and this bill even further supports the long-term health of our farming operations and our soil. We have seen the positive impacts of previous incentive programs and think HB975 further clarifies and strengthens the pilot program.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF

HB-975

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 6:47:09 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/13/2023 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-975

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 11:28:11 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/13/2023 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support. Thank you.