
HOUSE 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 AND AGRICULTURAL VANDALISM, IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU AND COUNTY OF KAUAI.

1 WHEREAS, agricultural crimes, which include agricultural
2 theft and vandalism, are a persistent issue affecting farmers
3 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 often trespass onto farm
17 property, often armed with weapons and accompanied by dogs, to
18 illegally hunt, which can be particularly dangerous and
19 destructive for farming operations and can result in destroyed
20 crops, lost livestock, illegal drug use, litter, and discarded
21 animal carcasses on farm property; and
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23 WHEREAS, agricultural crimes, including agricultural theft
24 and vandalism, increase the costs of production and decrease the
25 chances for farming and ranching operations to succeed; and
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27 WHEREAS, despite the prevalence and cost of agricultural
28 crimes, many incidents go unreported and few result in
29 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

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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 Project Program 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

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15 WHEREAS, the City and County of Honolulu suffered the
16 highest rates of theft or vandalism of all farms in the State
17 and the County of Kauai suffered the third highest rates of
18 theft or vandalism of all farms in the State; and

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20 WHEREAS, this body believes that it is time to replicate
21 the Agricultural Theft and Vandalism Pilot Project in the City
22 and County of Honolulu, County of Kauai, and County of Maui as
23 it will provide resources to suppress incidences of agricultural
24 crimes and losses to farmers, ranchers, aquaculturists, and
25 floriculturists in the State; now, therefore,

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27 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
28 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
29 Session of 2024, that the Department of Agriculture is urged to
30 establish a two-year Agricultural Crime Pilot Project to examine
31 and assess the effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural crime
32 cases, including those of agricultural theft and agricultural
33 vandalism, in the City and County of Honolulu and County of
34 Kauai; and

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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
37 is also requested to examine and assess the effectiveness of
38 prosecuting agricultural crimes, including the theft of
39 agricultural products produced for personal or commercial use on
40 any land, regardless of land classification, and agricultural
41 vandalism; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
2 is requested to coordinate with the Department of Law
3 Enforcement, the City and County of Honolulu, County of Kauai,
4 and County of Maui to hire one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE)
5 enforcement officer for each county, to be placed within the
6 respective prosecuting attorney's office or any other law
7 enforcement agency; and
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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
10 is requested to assess the implementation of the pilot project,
11 including the pilot project's effectiveness, to determine
12 whether to continue, expand, or end the pilot project, by:
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- 14 (1) Identifying the number of convictions for agricultural
15 crimes;
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17 (2) Identifying best practices for prosecuting
18 perpetrators of agricultural crimes;
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20 (3) Identifying best practices for the coordination of
21 local police and other enforcement officers'
22 interaction between the prosecuting attorney's office
23 and the Judiciary;
- 24
25 (4) Identifying best practices for the development and
26 implementation of the public's and farmers' reporting
27 of agricultural crimes or the attempt of agricultural
28 theft or agricultural vandalism;
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30 (5) Identifying areas where agricultural crimes are most
31 prevalent;
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33 (6) Identifying best practices for preventing agricultural
34 crimes; and
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36 (7) Making recommendations for a statewide program to
37 address agricultural crimes; and
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39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
40 is requested to submit an interim report to the Legislature of
41 its findings and recommendations, including any proposed



1 legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
2 the Regular Session of 2025; and

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
5 is requested to submit a final report to the Legislature of its
6 findings and recommendations, including any proposed
7 legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
8 the Regular Session of 2026; and

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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
11 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
12 Board of Agriculture; Director of Law Enforcement; Prosecuting
13 Attorneys for the City and County of Honolulu, County of Kauai,
14 and County of Maui; and Chiefs of Police of the Honolulu Police
15 Department, Kauai Police Department and the Maui Police
16 Department.

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