
SENATE CONCURRENT 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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1 WHEREAS, despite the prevalence and cost of agricultural
2 crimes, many incidents go unreported and few result in
3 convictions; and
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5 WHEREAS, of the nearly nineteen thousand incidents in 2019,
6 only nine hundred seventy incidents were reported to law
7 enforcement, which resulted in seventy-nine arrests and sixty-
8 seven convictions; and
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10 WHEREAS, recognizing the challenges that local farmers face
11 regarding agricultural crimes, the Legislature passed Act 217,
12 Session Laws of Hawaii 2019, which established a two-year
13 Agricultural Theft and Vandalism Pilot Project to examine the
14 effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural theft and vandalism
15 cases in the counties of Hawaii and Maui, and included cases of
16 theft and vandalism that affect individuals who are not full-
17 time farmers or ranchers; and
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19 WHEREAS, this body believes that it is time to expand the
20 Agricultural Theft and Vandalism Pilot Project statewide as it
21 will provide resources to suppress incidences of agricultural
22 crimes and losses to farmers, ranchers, aquaculturists, and
23 floriculturists in the State; now, therefore,
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25 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second
26 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024, the
27 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of
28 Agriculture is urged to establish a two-year Agricultural Crime
29 Pilot Project to examine and assess the effectiveness of
30 prosecuting agricultural crime cases, including those of
31 agricultural theft, vandalism, and trespass, in the State; and
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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
34 is also requested to:
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- 36 (1) Examine and assess the effectiveness of prosecuting
37 agricultural crimes, including the theft of
38 agricultural products produced for personal or
39 commercial use on any land, regardless of land
40 classification; agricultural vandalism; and trespass
41 onto a private farm or ranch;
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- 1 (2) Create a Crimestoppers Anonymous phone line
- 2 specifically for individuals who wish to report an
- 3 agricultural crime, but do not wish to be named; and
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- 5 (3) Create a more comprehensive, accessible online form
- 6 that makes it easier for farmers and ranchers to
- 7 report agricultural crimes; and
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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
 10 is requested to coordinate with the Department of Law
 11 Enforcement to form an Agricultural Crime Task Force; provided
 12 that an interpreter be a part of the Task Force through the
 13 Department of Agriculture that can represent farmers who may
 14 speak languages other than English; and

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 16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
 17 is requested to coordinate with the Department of Law
 18 Enforcement and each of the four counties to hire enforcement
 19 officers for each county; and

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 21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
 22 is requested to assess the implementation of the pilot project,
 23 including the pilot project's effectiveness, to determine
 24 whether to continue, make permanent, or end the pilot project,
 25 by:

- 26
- 27 (1) Identifying the number of convictions for agricultural
- 28 crimes;
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- 30 (2) Identifying best practices for prosecuting
- 31 perpetrators of agricultural crimes;
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- 33 (3) Identifying best practices for the coordination of
- 34 local police and other enforcement officers'
- 35 interaction between the prosecuting attorney's office
- 36 and the Judiciary;
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- 38 (4) Identifying best practices for the development and
- 39 implementation of the public's and farmers' reporting
- 40 of agricultural crimes or the attempt of agricultural
- 41 theft or agricultural vandalism;
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- 1 (5) Identifying areas where agricultural crimes are most
2 prevalent;
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- 4 (6) Identifying best practices for preventing agricultural
5 crimes; and
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- 7 (7) Making recommendations for a statewide program to
8 address agricultural crimes; and
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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
11 is requested to submit an interim report to the Legislature of
12 its findings and recommendations, including any proposed
13 legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
14 the Regular Session of 2025; and

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16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
17 is requested to submit a final report to the Legislature of its
18 findings and recommendations, including any proposed
19 legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
20 the Regular Session of 2026; and

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22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
23 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
24 Board of Agriculture, Director of Law Enforcement, and
25 Prosecuting Attorneys and Chiefs of Police of each county.

