

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



WENDY L. GADY
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STATE OF HAWAII
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**TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
& FOOD SYSTEMS**

Wednesday, February 14, 2024
9:15 a.m.
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1815
RELATING TO THE AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

Chairperson Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 1815, which includes agritourism in the definition of "enterprise" to authorize the Agribusiness Development Corporation to financially support businesses engaged in agritourism.

Agritourism comes with economic benefits for farmers and ranchers. From generating additional income and direct marketing to preserving farms, farmland, and local culture and traditions, agritourism diversifies farmers' income streams, meaning they can make money outside of their regular planting season.

We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



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February 14, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 1815
RELATING TO THE AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:15 AM

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 1815, which includes agritourism in the definition of "enterprise" to authorize the Agribusiness Development Corporation to financially support businesses engaged in agritourism.

We strongly support agritourism as it represents an excellent revenue enhancement opportunity for farmers and ranchers as well as an educational opportunity for the public. Fostering the profitability of farmers and ranchers will significantly contribute to the State's goal of increased self-sufficiency.

The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) was initiated by the agricultural industry as sugar and pineapple downsized. It was established to help transition Hawaii's agricultural industry from plantation agriculture to smaller diversified agricultural operations. Transitioning large tracts of monoculture farmland into smaller diversified ag lots and finding and supporting bona fide farmers to work those lands is a long and complex process. ADC has had success developing a productive diversified sector out of former sugar and pineapple lands.

ADC assists farmers and ranchers with land and water issues, regulatory mandates, invasive species, global competition, financing, marketing, and research funding. As the entrepreneurial agricultural arm of the state, ADC should have the authority to support agritourism.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

HB-1815

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 10:00:08 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
penny levin	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have concerns about the vagueness of the addition to this bill. While it is difficult to make ends meet as a farmer in today's economy and agritourism has been one of the mechanisms that farming families have used to survive, the current wording of the bill may have the affect of increasing tourism and not real agriculture. I recommend the following change:

""Enterprise"" includes a business engaged in agritourism provided that the primary business of the entity is agriculture"

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

HB-1815

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 9:33:01 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

My name is Jacob Wiencek, Chairman of Hawaii Young Republicans, and in my personal capacity I testify in FAVOR of this bill. Agri-tourism can form a vital, diversified part of our economy and whatever action the state government can take to facilitate this economic activity, it should take. It's a small but important bill. I urge the committee to support our combined agricultural and tourist sectors by passing this bill.

LATE

Testimony re HB 1815

I do not support expanding the purview of ADC to include “. . . a business engaged in agritourism.”

Since its inception in 1994, the Agribusiness Development Corporation (“ADC”) has FAILED in fulfilling its responsibilities. It was formed to facilitate and provide direction for the transition of Hawaii’s agriculture industry from a dominance of sugar and pineapple to one composed of a diversity of different crops.

The only thing that the ADC has succeeded in transitioning is providing space for drug dealers, chop-shops, thieves, and other illegal activities that have taken the lives of community members.

Adding or changing a definition such as “Enterprise” in this bill only opens the field of victims to now include TOURISTS, the number one income-generating industry in Hawaii.

Is the State of Hawaii willing to take that risk? I know as a member of the Wahiawa-Whitmore Village community that I am NOT willing to take that risk. Please kill this bill and not our community or its members.

Thank you.

Thora-Jean Cuaresma
Community member
Wahiawa-Whitmore Village

LATE

HB-1815

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 12:58:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jazmine Corpuz	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony re HB 1815

I do not support expanding the purview of ADC to include “. . . a business engaged in agritourism.”

Since its inception in 1994, the Agribusiness Development Corporation (“ADC”) has FAILED in fulfilling its responsibilities. It was formed to facilitate and provide direction for the transition of Hawaii’s agriculture industry from a dominance of sugar and pineapple to one composed of a diversity of different crops. The responsibility of building our food sustainability here in Hawai’i has not been the focus of ADC as it should be.

The only thing that the ADC has succeeded in transitioning on their thousands of acres around our community is providing space for a spike in houselessness, chemical farmers, drug dealers, chop-shops, thieves, and other illegal activities that has even led to the loss of lives of community members. They have already succeeded in mismanaging the land for our food sustenance which is far more important for our communities than tourist attraction and “Export”.

Adding or changing a definition such as “Enterprise” in this bill only opens the field of victims to now include Tourist with the loss of more community members and one of the biggest opportunities for Hawai’i to build our sustainable food table, to the current number one income-generating industry in Hawaii. Tourism will always be an income generator for Hawai’i, we do not need to lose more of our agricultural opportunities to please the tourist industry. ADC was not developed with the mission of recreating a port of “EXPORTING” goods from Hawai’i, Dole has already done enough of that! We need ALL of our Agricultural land to be utilized for our people, our farmers, our communities, OUR HAWAI’I!

Is the State of Hawaii going to continue to support the depletion of our sustainability opportunities? I know as a member of the Wahiawa-Whitmore Village community, I DO NOT support taking any more risks on something that directly affects our communities and life sustenance. Please kill this bill and prove to our community, and our Hawai`i people that our food sustainability opportunities are far more important than tourist attractions and the export of goods for monetary satisfactions.

Thank you.

Jazmine Corpuz

Community member

Wahiawa-Whitmore Village

LATE

HB-1815

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 1:14:55 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Felila Faletoi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I Do Not Support The ADC and this bill. As a member of the wahiawa/ Whitmore village Community. I don't support the corruption and lies that come from ADC, we do not need a tourist attraction here. Our community live off of sustainable living. Growing our own crops and feeding our families with it. **THEY HAVE HAD ALL THIS LAND AND ALL WE SEE IS HOMELESS AND CRIMES HAPPENING ON THEIR LAND.** I truly believe that our community will be better off without this bill. Please I ask that you listen to the people. We are the ones who suffer. Keep agriculture lands in the hands of our community. One way in and out of wahiawa traffic is bad already. We love our old town spirit and have aloha for everybody who visits. Just not with this bill I kindly disagree with the adc bill HB1815

LATE

HB-1815

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 3:37:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
brandi corpuz	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee for agriculture and food systems,

My name is Brandi Corpuz,

I would like to ask you all to vote no on bill 1815 for the following reasons.

As the Executive Director of a 3 island community nonprofit whose mission is to grow food and family together on Maui, Molokai and Oahu we stand in direct opposition of the ADC and their unsustainable agribusiness development. We have worked together with our ohana community towards food sustainability and community advocacy since 2018. We began our organization in Whitmore Village to stop the ADC from destroying our fruit trees and community farms that once surrounded the entire community.

We have fought to stop the excessive pesticide use around our island communities, that is sprayed on a regular basis. We believe that sustainable agriculture should not be in corporate hands, as corporations are not concerned about our aina. Since we are part of our aina, traditional farming and sustainable practices are the only way to assure our future of food sustainability.

ADC stands for Agribusiness Development Corporation. They have proven over the decades that they are not the best stewards for sustainable agriculture lands in Hawaii. They were created to “conserve and convert arable lands and their associated infrastructure that were formerly large mono-crop plantation lands”. These mono-crop businesses were corporations too. It seems that ADC did nothing more than lease to new corporations, with new sometimes more dangerous (heavy pesticide use, seed and testing,GMO) mono-crops. These new corporations do not grow sustainable food for us. These new corporations are just like the old ones and the insanity must end.

The entire Whitmore Project created by ADC and supported by Donovan Delacruz was not created to help with Hawaii's food sustainability goals. In fact, it is in direct opposition. ADC seeks to lease to Corporate farmers, create tourist attraction (agrotourism), spend excessive amounts of State funds as in the \$35 million dollar pedestrian bridge (for tourists), a food hub for corporate farmers with tax exempt export of our precious and finite locally grown food supply.

Although ADC may have new leadership, they are still working in the past mindset of “EXPORT” and “TOURISM”. Why do we have food security goals if we are only going to import tourism and export our food supply? How are we going to sustain our food supply for us, if our government is only concerned about the mighty dollar?

We have allowed corporations to control our farm lands and most valuable resources for far too long. Hawaii imports 85-90% of our food! We export more than \$100 million dollars of edible food every year. We spend approximately \$3 billion dollars importing food for us to eat? How does this add up? We have some of the most fertile (what hasn't been killed) soils with the longest growing time so our land is highly valuable to exporters around the world. We must stop giving away our valuable resources to the highest bidders.

As your committee is focused on agriculture and food supply, you should be looking to stop the ADC all together, rather than supporting their destructive practices. We could save this state \$3 billion dollars if we stop allowing the export of our food source and demand that the food grown here stays here. Sustainability and security are the key words and you must keep this in mind especially when fulfilling your duty to our shared communities.

Vote no to Bill 1815 and support locally sustainable food production! Vote no to Bill 1815 and create food security for your community and mine. Vote no to Bill 1815 and save \$3 billion for our state by growing our own food. We do not need another tourist attraction, we need a sustainable food supply. Please help to stop the export of our food and our people by voting NO.

Sincerely, Brandi Corpuz

HB-1815

Submitted on: 2/14/2024 1:41:03 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

RECEIVED
Date & Time
Feb 14, 2024, 4:11 pm

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Scott Wong

Farmer in Whitmore Village and wahiwa fully support the agri-business development corporation in supporting agritourism for their lands. And for their farmers. We have full confidence that the agribusiness development corporation has confidently and with due diligence managed their lands and their leasses. We fully support agritourism because it is a well published way that farmers can add value and revenue to their operation. It is also a way that farmers can demonstrate their operations and their ability to grow food. And in some cases, be able to demonstrate new technologies in the farm industry. Once again, we as farmers fully support agritourism on ADC Lands.