

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEXTER KISHIDA**  
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 & FOOD SYSTEMS**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 2024  
10:00 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 164, SD1**

**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.**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution 164, SD1 that urges the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to establish a two-year agricultural crime pilot program to examine and assess the effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural crime cases, including those of agricultural theft and vandalism in the state.

Agricultural crimes occur in every county and impacts farmers, ranchers, growers of fruits, vegetables, livestock, macadamia nuts, coffee, floriculture, and aquaculture. The DOA strongly supports this resolution and agrees that it is time to expand the Agricultural Theft, Vandalism and Trespass Pilot Project statewide.

The DOA stands ready to take the lead on this important project, coordinating with the Department of Law Enforcement to have presence in each of the four counties.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this resolution.





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April 12, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON SCR 164, SD1**

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  
STATE

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference  
10:00 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 SCR 164, SD1**, which urges 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 State.

Agricultural crime is a persistent problem facing agriculture. Weather, drought, pests, weeds, disease, unstable markets, transportation, labor issues, and a changing climate all contribute to uncertainty for farmers and ranchers. Few businesses face such challenges, yet we are charged with producing food, feed, fiber, fuel, and flowers for the 99% of non-farmers. Add in the constant threat and impacts of trespass, theft, and vandalism, and it's a wonder farms and ranches remain viable.

Sadly, agricultural crime is a growing trend in Hawai'i. Farmers and ranchers are often victims of those looking for easy targets. Despite our efforts to install cameras, form community ag watch groups, and patrol our farms, these criminals know that being caught and prosecuted is unlikely. Our police departments are trying to help but don't have the staffing and resources to be everywhere at all times.

In recent years, not only crops and livestock have been stolen, but also tractors, trucks, farm equipment, and tools. Too often, a farmer or rancher has sweated, worried, and worked to the bone to produce a crop or raise livestock, only to wake up one morning to find that an opportunistic criminal has helped themselves to the harvest. Farmers and ranchers are fed up with this activity and frankly, deserve better. We understand that law enforcement resources are often prioritized for public health and safety. Is a farmer's and his family's health, safety, and livelihood any less important? We think not.

HFB believes that dedicated enforcement officers housed in the county prosecutor's office would significantly minimize agricultural crimes and enhance public safety. We hope that this will serve as a deterrent to would-be criminals. The agricultural crime pilot project could help prevent agricultural crimes and help our farmers and ranchers stay in business.

HFB will continue to work with the police and prosecutor's office to find ways to help deter, apprehend, and convict individuals who are committing agricultural crimes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important subject.

**SCR-164-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/11/2024 7:29:59 AM

Testimony for AGR on 4/12/2024 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lani Petrie	Kapapala Ranch	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure.



**Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.**

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair

**SCR164 SD1**

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 STATE.

Friday, April 12, 2024, 10:00 AM  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SCR164 SD1** to assess the effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural crime cases. We hope that this pilot project will lead to better pathways to reporting and prosecuting ag crimes so that we can keep our farmers and ranchers safe while they produce food for the community.

In an incredibly tragic incident on Oahu on February 17<sup>th</sup>, Cranston Pia lost his life when confronting trespassing poachers. He was a responsible, respected rancher who will be missed in the community. We need to protect our producers so that they can focus on producing food and taking care of the land, rather than living in fear of dangerous situations. Deterring poachers and trespassers requires actual prosecution so criminals think twice before breaking the law.

Trespassing, vandalism, and theft happen everyday on Hawaii's farms and ranches. There needs to be a concerted effort to truly deter these acts and prosecute those who choose to break the law. In some cases, it may be vandalism and theft that sets an agricultural producer's business back and increases the cost of production, but in other cases it means they are put in danger because armed trespassers have no respect and the penalties do not deter them from breaking the law.

We support the expansion of the pilot project to extend statewide, as these crimes are happening on all islands. We also appreciate the resolution for the Department of Agriculture to work with the Department of Law Enforcement to hire enforcement officers within the counties.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of almost 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase

Hawaii Cattlemen's Council

Managing Director



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**SCR-164-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/10/2024 3:19:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 4/12/2024 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support

**SCR-164-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/10/2024 5:21:19 PM

Testimony for AGR on 4/12/2024 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Woody Child	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Strongly Support SCR164.

**SCR-164-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/10/2024 8:52:02 PM

Testimony for AGR on 4/12/2024 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jason Moniz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and members for the House Agriculture Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of SCR164.

It seems that all crime, including Ag crimes have become more common, dangerous and deadly. For too long agriculturist have had to attempt to control theft, vandalism and trespass on their own. Recently we lost a dear colleague attempting to protect his livestock. Please help us protect our agriculture resources that we work so hard to produce by providing for the prosecution necessary to deter these crimes.



**LATE**

**SCR-164-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/11/2024 3:19:46 PM

Testimony for AGR on 4/12/2024 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jimmy Gomes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SCR 164