

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 AND FOOD SYSTEMS

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

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 53, SENATE DRAFT 1
REQUESTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CONVENE AN
ADVISORY COMMISSION TO ADDRESS CERTAIN ISSUES TO GUIDE ACTION AND
PROGRESS IN THE AGRICULTURE, AQUACULTURE, AND FOOD SYSTEMS
INDUSTRIES OF THE STATE.**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 53, SD1 that requests the Department of Agriculture (Department) convene an advisory commission to address certain issues to guide action and progress in the agriculture, aquaculture, and food systems industries of the state. The Department offers comments.

The request expressed in the resolution is for the Department to “establish an advisory commission to address certain issues to guide action and progress in the agriculture, aquaculture, and food systems industries of the State” (Page 2 lines 11-14) that is to meet every quarter. The issues to be discussed by the advisory commission are:

(1) Competition for same resources;



- (2) Labor issues;
- (3) Drought and climate change;
- (4) Invasive species;
- (5) Overview of new regulations;
- (6) Water access and development; and
- (7) Waste management

The Department believes the effectiveness of the advisory commission in guiding action and progress in these seven issue areas will require Department staff and others to develop issue/white papers the contents of which would depend on the knowledge and skills of the advisory commission members.

The advisory commission is also requested to “examine and rank the following priority actions of the Hawaii State Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the State’s agriculture, aquaculture, and food systems industries” (Page 2, lines 38-41) There are 10 priority actions listed in the resolution that are supportive of farm-to-State; farm-to-table; agritourism; equitable access to locally grown foods for low-income households; culturally-based foods; export of non-food and food products; food hubs; cooperative transportation of local agricultural products; value-added facilities; increase access to existing built infrastructure.

The Department notes that the purpose of having the advisory commission examine and rank the Hawaii CEDS priority actions is not stated. The CEDS priority actions are in general agreement with the objectives, policies, and actions proposed in other agriculture-related documents and legislation, so there appears to be no conflicts or inconsistencies to be resolved.

The advisory commission is also requested to undertake the following four tasks (Page 4, lines 2-24):

- Make “detailed recommendations” on amendments to state/county regulations to encourage purchase of local agricultural products by all consumers;
- Compare/contrast how DOA tracks statistics compared to U.S. Department of Agriculture/National Agricultural Statistics Service;
- Review regulations on existing distribution channels including food trucks, roadside stands, farmers’ markets, agriculture-based commercial operations, and food hubs;
- Evaluate federal initiatives that would impact local producers, food distribution and purchase of local agricultural products, etc.

The Department notes that these tasks have to do with government regulations and statistics at the county, State, and Federal levels. The amount of work required of Department staff to research, categorize, evaluate, and produce recommendations for these four task areas is daunting.

The resolution requests that the Chair of the Board of Agriculture is to be the Chair of the advisory commission. (Page 4, line 26 to page 5, line 11) The 11 members of the advisory commission are to be selected from the following “segments of agriculture”:

- Aquaculture
- Harvested acreage including field crops and taro
- Vegetables

- Fruits
- Fruit and nut trees
- Livestock
- Nursery and floriculture
- Herbs (including basil, cilantro, lavender, turmeric)
- Eggs
- Coffee
- Seed corn.

Other individuals with relevant knowledge or experience may be invited to be members of the advisory commission. No advisory commission members will be subject to Chapter 84 (includes disclosure of financial interests). The Department is to provide administrative support to the advisory commission.

The Department notes that the resolution does not define the expertise and skills that members of the advisory commission are expected to have to effectively address the tasks requested of the advisory committee. (Page 4, line 26 to page 5, line 11) Further, it appears the two task areas that the advisory commission is to work on during their meetings every quarter of each year are to “guide action and progress in the agriculture, aquaculture, and food systems industries of the State” in the seven issue areas (Page 2 lines 12-14). The Department believes that the preparation of issue/white papers and other background materials are critical to help foster robust discussion on the many elements under each task area. This effort will divert months of staff time that the Department needs to apply to its current workload.

The Department strongly recommends in lieu of the advisory commission with multiple tasks as proposed in the resolution, consideration be given to an informal gathering of broadly knowledgeable individuals involved in or with Hawaii agriculture be summoned on an occasional basis to discuss the effect of public investment and other government initiatives in support of increasing local food self-sufficiency and exports.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.



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April 12, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON SCR 53, SD1

REQUESTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CONVENE AN
ADVISORY COMMISSION TO ADDRESS CERTAIN ISSUES TO GUIDE ACTION AND
PROGRESS IN THE AGRICULTURE, AQUACULTURE, AND FOOD SYSTEMS
INDUSTRIES OF THE STATE

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice-Chair Kahaloe, 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 53, SD1, which requests that the Department of Agriculture convene an advisory commission to address certain issues to guide action and progress in the agriculture, aquaculture, and food systems industries of the state.

HFB supports an advisory commission that adequately represents the diversity of Hawai'i's Agriculture Industry and can provide recommendations about its findings and needs to the department that supports the industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important matter.

SCR-53-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/9/2024 3:03:52 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Yes to:- REQUESTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
CONVENE AN ADVISORY COMMISSION TO ADDRESS
CERTAIN ISSUES TO GUIDE ACTION AND PROGRESS IN THE
AGRICULTURE, AQUACULTURE, AND FOOD SYSTEMS
INDUSTRIES OF THE STATE