
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE LAND STUDY BUREAU SOIL RATING SYSTEM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Act 189, Session
2 Laws of Hawaii 2022 (Act 189), required the office of planning
3 and sustainable development to conduct a study of the
4 suitability of the land study bureau soil overall (master)
5 productivity rating system (land study bureau soil rating
6 system) and other soil classification systems used to regulate
7 agricultural lands in the State. Accurate soil data reflecting
8 soil characteristics, soil properties, and identification of
9 limits, risks, and soil suitability for various uses helps
10 optimize public and private investments in agriculture to meet
11 the State's food and agricultural sustainability goals.

12 The legislature further finds that one of the findings of
13 the Act 189 study is that the soil data used in the land study
14 bureau soil rating system have not been updated since the land
15 study bureau soil rating system was originally created in the
16 1960s and 1970s, and there is no process to regularly
17 incorporate new soil data. This undermines the credibility of

H.B. NO. 1012

1 the land study bureau soil ratings used to guide the regulation
2 of agricultural lands.

3 The legislature further finds that there is a need to
4 update the soil data used by the land study bureau soil rating
5 system, and establish a process for regularly updating the soil
6 data to provide public assurance on the integrity of the land
7 study bureau soil rating system.

8 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

- 9 (1) Update the soil data used by the land study bureau
10 soil rating system with current data and approaches;
11 and
12 (2) Appropriate funds.

13 SECTION 2. (a) The office of planning and sustainable
14 development shall update the soil data used by the land study
15 bureau soil rating system by incorporating the latest United
16 States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation
17 Service's soil data for the State and soil data from other soil
18 rating systems used in the State, developing a process for
19 regularly incorporating United States Department of Agriculture
20 Natural Resources Conservation Service soil data updates for the
21 State, creating detailed digital maps that show the soils across
22 the State, and drafting statutory and ordinance changes that may

H.B. NO. 1012

1 be necessary to align State and county governance with the
2 updated soil data used by the land study bureau soil rating
3 system. The office may procure consultant services to update
4 the soil data used by the land study bureau soil rating system.

5 (b) The office of planning and sustainable development
6 shall collaborate with the United States Department of
7 Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service and the
8 American Farmland Trust to ensure that the land study bureau
9 soil rating system aligns with national standards and best
10 practices.

11 (c) The office of planning and sustainable development
12 shall establish a public process for reviewing and refining the
13 updated soil data in the land study bureau soil rating system
14 and draft maps.

15 (d) The office of planning and sustainable development
16 shall present the final land study bureau soil rating system
17 that incorporates the updated soil data and maps to the
18 legislature within twenty-four months of the effective date of
19 this Act.

20 SECTION 3. In conducting the work required by this Act,
21 the office of planning and sustainable development shall
22 request, as appropriate, the assistance of the department of

H.B. NO. 1012

1 land and natural resources, the department of agriculture, the
2 college of tropical agriculture and human resources of the
3 university of Hawaii, the land use commission, and the county
4 planning and permitting agencies, which shall cooperate with the
5 office.

6 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$400,000 or so much
8 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 for the
9 office of planning and sustainable development to conduct the
10 work required by this Act.

11 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the office of
12 planning and sustainable development for the purposes of this
13 Act.

14 SECTION 5. This Act, upon its approval, shall take effect
15 on July 1, 2025.

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INTRODUCED BY: *Nedra K. Vukobratovic*

18

BY REQUEST

JAN 21 2025

H.B. NO. 1012

Report Title:

OPSD; Land Study Bureau Soil Rating System; Soils; Appropriation

Description:

Requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development, in coordination with other agencies, to update the soil data used in the land study bureau soil rating system and create a mechanism for regular soil data updates. Appropriates funds.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

H.B. No. 1012

JUSTIFICATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Business, Economic Development, and Tourism

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE LAND STUDY BUREAU SOIL RATING SYSTEM.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to direct the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to update the current Land Study Bureau (LSB) soil rating system with current data and approaches.

MEANS: Add a session law and appropriate funds.

JUSTIFICATION: The bill builds upon the study of the suitability of the LSB system in the regulation of agricultural lands in the State required by Act 189, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022. An important finding of the study is that the existing LSB soil data has not been updated since it was originally produced in the 1960s and 1970s, and there is no process to regularly incorporate new soil data. This undermines the credibility of LSB soil ratings used to guide the regulation of agricultural lands. An updated LSB soil data would enhance the accuracy of LSB soil classification and its role in land use regulation.

Impact on the public: An LSB soil rating system with current and regularly updated soil data would assure the public of the system's integrity in guiding government decisions regarding agricultural lands.

Impact on the department and other agencies: Government agencies that use the LSB soil rating system would have greater assurance of its usefulness in guiding land use decisions.

GENERAL FUND: \$400,000

OTHER FUNDS: None.

PPBS PROGRAM
DESIGNATION:

None.

OTHER AFFECTED
AGENCIES:

Land Use Commission; Department of Land and Natural Resources; Department of Agriculture; College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources of the University of Hawaii; County planning and permitting agencies.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

July 1, 2025.