

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND
AND AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2025
1:01 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 229**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1365 H.D.2
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Chairs Inouye, and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Elefante, and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1365 H.D.2. This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture ("Department") for a pilot program to prepare an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment for the drilling of non-potable water wells on individual parcels at Pana'ewa agricultural park and Pana'ewa farm lots, under the Department. The Department supports the intent of this bill provided it does not impact the priorities identified in the Governor's biennium budget.

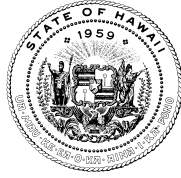
The Department supports diversified farming on agricultural park and non-agricultural park parcels in Pana'ewa. The Department understands the importance of establishing reliable sources of non-potable water to support the viability of farming operations. Moreover, the Department recognizes that compliance with our environmental laws is key to the successful planning and implementation for these wells.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII
*Ke Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina 'o
Hawaii*

SYLVIA J. LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII
*Ka Hope Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina
'o Hawaii*



KALI WATSON
CHAIRPERSON, HHC
Ka Luna Ho'okele

KATIE L. LAMBERT
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIR
Ka Hope Luna Ho'okele

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS
Ka 'Oihana 'Āina Ho'opulapula Hawaii'i

P. O. BOX 1879
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIR
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER & LAND
AND AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT
HEARING ON MARCH 19, 2025 AT 1:01PM IN CR 229

HB 1365, HD 2, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

March 18, 2025

Aloha Chairs Inouye and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Elefante and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) **supports with amendment** this bill which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for a Non-Potable Water Wells Pilot Program to prepare an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment to drill non-potable water wells on individual parcels at Panaewa Agricultural Park and Panaewa farm lots, under the Department of Agriculture.

DHHL appreciates the intent of this bill. The bill's referenced Pana'ewa farm lots consists of parcels or property under the jurisdiction of DHHL. We respectfully request that it be noted that the Hawaiian Homes Commission (HHC), as codified in the Hawaii State Constitution, has exclusive land use and zoning authority for Hawaiian Home Lands. Additionally, lessee beneficiaries with existing cesspools may pose a threat to any well within proximity due to possible contamination to the aquifer.

DHHL recommends inserting a new Section to HB1365, HD2, with language that reads –

The department of agriculture shall consult and coordinate with the department of Hawaiian home lands on the location and distribution of water from the non-potable water wells prior to and after the completion of the environmental impact statement or environmental assessment to drill non-potable water wells on individual parcels at Panaewa agricultural park and Panaewa farm lots.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

March 19, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

TESTIMONY ON HB 1365, HD2
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Inouye, Vice-Chairs Richards and Elefante, and Members of the Committees:

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 1365, HD2, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for a Non-Potable Water Wells Pilot Program to prepare an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment to drill non-potable water wells on individual parcels at Panaewa Agricultural Park and Panaewa farm lots. This initiative is a crucial step in improving water security for agriculture in this region while alleviating pressure on potable county water supplies.

Access to affordable and reliable irrigation water is essential for agricultural viability. At the Panaewa Agricultural Park and Panaewa Farm Lots, many farmers struggle with the high cost and limited availability of irrigation water, limiting their ability to expand production. Developing non-potable water wells would free up potable county water for residential use while providing a more cost-effective and sustainable water source for agricultural operations.

According to data from the U.S. Census of Agriculture and the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, agricultural production in Hawai'i has been declining, with water access cited as a key limiting factor. Floriculture, diversified crops, and livestock operations all require consistent irrigation to maintain and expand production. Without a dedicated water source, agriculture will continue to struggle.

The Panaewa farmers have expressed willingness to participate in a cost-share arrangement for the development and maintenance of these wells, further strengthening the case for this investment. Their commitment demonstrates a public-private approach that ensures long-term sustainability of the infrastructure once developed.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-1365-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 9:14:02 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/19/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Warren Watanabe	Testifying for Maui County Farm Bureau	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Maui County Farm Bureau is in strong support of HB1365 HD2, Relating to the Department of Agriculture. A reliable source of water is critical to the success of any agricultural business.

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair**

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Water and Land
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 1:01PM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

RE: HB1365 HD2 Relating to the Department of Agriculture

Aloha e Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 1365 House Draft 2 (HB1365 HD2), which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for a Non-Potable Water Wells Pilot Program to prepare an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment to drill non-potable water wells on individual parcels at Panaewa Agricultural Park and Panaewa farm lots, under the Department of Agriculture.

HB1365 HD2 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for 21st Century Agriculture. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

Access to affordable and reliable irrigation water is vital for sustainable agriculture in Hawaii, yet farmers in the county face high costs for potable water during dry months. This measure aims to address this challenge by funding a pilot program for non-potable water wells at Panaewa agricultural park and farm lots. By increasing the availability of non-potable water for irrigation, the program will help conserve valuable potable water for other essential uses while reducing operating costs for local farmers.

The measure appropriates funds for the Department of Agriculture to prepare an environmental impact statement or assessment for drilling these wells, with any completed improvements reverting to the State upon lease expiration. The Chamber supports HB1365 HD2 because it enhances water resource management, reduces costs for farmers, and ultimately strengthens the sustainability and economic resilience of Hawaii's agricultural sector.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill 1365 House Draft 2. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



March 18 2025

To: Chair Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair Tim Richards, III, Chair Lorraine Inoye, Vice Chair Brandon Elefante and Members of the Senate Agriculture & Environment and Water & Land Committee

Subject: HB 1365, Relating to the Department of Agriculture

Aloha,

I am submitting testimony in **support** of **HB1365 HD2**, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for drilling non-potable water wells on individual parcels at Panaewa Agricultural Park and Panaewa Farm Lots.

The proposed funding in **HB 1365 HD2** is a critical step toward supporting Hawai'i's farmers by ensuring water resources are accessible for agricultural use. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the urgency of increasing Hawai'i's self-sufficiency in food production. With improved access to non-potable water wells, farmers in Panaewa will be better equipped to cultivate their crops, contributing to Hawai'i's food security goals while reducing reliance on imports. Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) are essential for responsible development, but their costs often create barriers for farmers. **HB 1365 HD2** ensures this burden does not fall on individual farmers, allowing them to focus on expanding operations and productivity. Water is the lifeblood of agriculture, and this bill will enable farmers leasing agricultural land from the Department of Agriculture to overcome irrigation challenges through funding for a comprehensive EIS.

An EIS ensures water well development minimizes environmental risks while maximizing agricultural benefits. By passing **HB 1365 HD2**, the Legislature will empower Hawai'i's farmers, advance local food production, and promote sustainable agricultural development. I respectfully urge the committees to support this measure.

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.

https://data.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2024/Testimony/HB1937_HD1_TESTIMONY_A_EN_03-15-24_.PDF

<https://dhh.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Panaewa-Ag-Lots-Draft-EA-OCR.pdf>



HAWAI'I FOOD+ POLICY

Honolulu, HI 96813
food@purplemaia.org

Mahalo for your time and consideration of this measure and for your ongoing support of Hawai'i's agricultural community.

Mahalo,
Lea iaea & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

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<https://dhhhl.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Panaewa-Ag-Lots-Draft-EA-OCR.pdf>



**THE SENATE
KA 'AHA KENEKOA
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2025**

**COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair**

**COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair**

**RE: HB 1365HD2 – RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE.**

My name is Eric S. Tanouye and I am the President for the Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association. HFNA is a statewide umbrella organization with approximately 350 members. Our membership is made up with breeders, hybridizers, propagators, growers, shippers, wholesalers, retailers, educators, and the allied industry, which supports our efforts in agriculture.

The Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association (HFNA) **SUPPORTS
House Bill 1365 HD2**

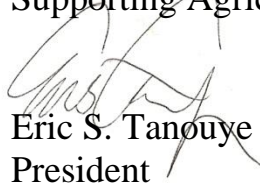
We support the funding of an environmental impact statement looking into non-potable water wells on individual parcels for the Panaewa agricultural park and Panaewa farms lots. It is important as farmers that we have access to water for the growing of our products and places less of a burden on community water lines to have a separate source available.

This will help to provide the parcels of Panaewa agricultural park and farm lots, the opportunity to better take care of their water needs, without placing an additional financial burden on farmers. This can help both new, young and current farmers.



If you have any questions at this time, I would be happy to discuss them and can be reached by phone at 808-959-3535 ext 22, cell 960-1433 and email eric@greenpointnursery.com.

Supporting Agriculture and Hawaii,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric S. Tanouye', is written over the printed name.

Eric S. Tanouye
President

Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association

HB-1365-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 10:50:31 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/19/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jill Coombs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Inouye, Vice-Chairs Richards and Elefante, and Members of the Committees:

I am a local agricultural business owner who is starting my own farm in the Molokai Ag park this year. I believe all farmers must support each other and so **I support HB 1365, HD2**, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for a Non-Potable Water Wells Pilot Program to prepare an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment to drill non-potable water wells on individual parcels at Panaewa Agricultural Park and Panaewa farm lots. This initiative is a crucial step in improving water security for agriculture in this region while alleviating pressure on potable county water supplies.

Access to affordable and reliable irrigation water is essential for agricultural viability. At the Panaewa Agricultural Park and Panaewa Farm Lots, many farmers struggle with the **high cost and limited availability of irrigation water**, limiting their ability to expand production. Developing non-potable water wells would **free up potable county water for residential use** while providing a more **cost-effective and sustainable water source for agricultural operations**.

According to data from the U.S. Census of Agriculture and the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, agricultural production in Hawai'i has been declining, with water access cited as a key limiting factor. Floriculture, diversified crops, and livestock operations all require consistent irrigation to maintain and expand production. Without a dedicated water source, agriculture will continue to struggle.

The Panaewa farmers have expressed willingness to participate in a cost-share arrangement for the development and maintenance of these wells, further strengthening the case for this

investment. Their commitment demonstrates a public-private approach that ensures long-term sustainability of the infrastructure once developed.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Jill Coombs 808-658-9849

HB-1365-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 9:53:37 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/19/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jimmy Gomes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1365 and stand with HFB testimony

HB-1365-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 11:27:44 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/19/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John R. Gordines	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HDOA in efforts to provide water resources to farmers in Panaewa.

No water no food!
Johnny Gordines

HB-1365-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 7:18:27 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/19/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will help expand sustainable agriculture and provide jobs.

Mahalo!

HB-1365-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 8:17:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/19/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure that will lead to farmers' reliable and cost-effective access to non-potable irrigation water.

Thank you.