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State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2025
10:02 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 211

HOUSE BILL NO. 1365, HD 2, SD 1
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1365, HD 2, SD 1. 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. Requires consultation and coordination with the department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) on location and distribution of water. 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 and the establishment of non-potable water wells to support the viability of farming operations. The Department's intent was to assist farmers with costs of the environmental impact statement or environmental assessment only, inclusion of the requirement for consultation and coordination on location and distribution of water greatly expands the project which would significantly increase the amount of time and cost not originally envisioned for the project. The Department



respectfully requests that the measure return to the language in House Bill 1365 House Draft 2.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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March 31, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON HB 1365, HD2, SD1
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
10:02 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, 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 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.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair**

**Monday, March 31, 2025, at 10:02AM
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference**

LATE

RE: HB1365 HD2 SD1 Relating to the Department of Agriculture

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, 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 Senate Draft 1 (HB1365 HD2 SD1), 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. Requires the Department of Agriculture to consult and coordinate with the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands on the location and distribution of water from non-potable water wells before and after the completion of an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment to drill non-potable water wells on individual parcels at Panaewa Agricultural Park and Panaewa farm lots. Requires any non-potable water well or improvement on individual parcels at Panaewa Agricultural Park and Panaewa farm lots to revert to the State upon termination of upon the expiration date of the lease.

HB1365 HD2 SD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for 21st Century Ag. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's reside

Hawaii's agricultural sustainability depends on reliable, cost-effective water sources, yet farmers in Hawaii County face substantial expenses when relying on limited potable water supplies during dry seasons. By developing non-potable water wells, this measure seeks to conserve potable water for essential uses, lower operating costs for farmers, and strengthen the long-term viability of local agriculture.

Through a pilot program that funds an environmental review for drilling non-potable wells in Panaewa, this bill underscores the importance of a coordinated approach among state agencies and local stakeholders. The Chamber supports this legislation, as it promotes sustainable agriculture and fortifies the State's food production capabilities.

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 Senate Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify

HB-1365-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 8:01:16 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2025 10:02:00 AM

LATE

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!