

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
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
AND
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025
10:00 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

HOUSE BILL NO. 1365
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Chairs Lowen and Kahaloa, Vice Chairs Perruso and Kusch, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1365. This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture ("Department") for the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the drilling of non-potable water wells on individual parcels at Pana'ewa agricultural park and Pana'ewa farm lots. The Department respectfully offers comments.

The lease rent is based on unimproved vacant land (lowest possible) and therefore all individual, on property, infrastructure improvements are the responsibility of the lessee. Article VII Section 4 of the Hawaii State Constitution states that "No tax shall be levied or appropriation of public or property made, not shall the public credit be used, directly or indirectly, except for a public benefit." The Department respectfully requests the bill includes the public benefit in consideration to prepare an EIS.



The Department respectfully suggests that grant funding be explored should the legislature desire to assist individuals. Additionally, we respectfully note that the agricultural park is served by the County of Hawai'i's Department of Water Supply, who gives a substantial discount for agricultural use.

Further, if the bill's referenced Pana'ewa farm lots consists of parcels or property under the jurisdiction of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands ("DHHL"), the Department respectfully defers to DHHL as it may operate under different sets of guidelines and statutes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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February 6, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 1365
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
10:00 AM

Aloha Chairs Lowen and Kahaloa, Vice-Chairs Perruso and Kusch, 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, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) 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.

We respectfully request an amendment to clarify that this is a pilot program limited to Panaewa Agricultural Park and Panaewa Farm Lots. A focused pilot program would allow for a cost-effective, site-specific approach to evaluating the feasibility of non-potable water wells without committing to a larger, more expensive initiative.

We urge the committee to pass HB 1365 with amendments to establish this as a pilot program specifically for Panaewa Agricultural Park and Panaewa Farm Lots, ensuring a practical, data-driven approach that can inform future agricultural water access initiatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure



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Aloha Chairs Lowen & Kahala, Vice Chairs Perruso & Kusch, and Members of the Committees,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports HB1365.**

Access to non-potable water is a crucial need for agricultural operations, providing a sustainable water source for crop irrigation and livestock, and helping to reduce the burden on potable water resources. This preparatory step will offer critical insights into any potential ecological concerns, enabling stakeholders to address them effectively before proceeding. As farmers navigate challenges related to water shortages and climate change, the support offered by this bill underscores a commitment to adaptive strategies that align with both agricultural needs and environmental stewardship.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



February 5, 2025

To: Chair Nicole Lowen, Vice Chair Amy Perrusso, Chair Kristin Kahaloe, Vice Chair Mattias Kusch, and the members of the House committee Energy and Environmental Protection and Agriculture and Food Systems

Subject: HB 1365, Relating to the Department of Agriculture

Aloha,

I am submitting testimony in **support** of HB1365, 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 SB1085 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. SB1085 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.

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



An EIS ensures water well development minimizes environmental risks while maximizing agricultural benefits. By passing SB1085, 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.

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

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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2025**

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair**

**Rep. Kirstin Kahaloe
Rep. Sean Quinlan
Rep. Matthias Kusch
Rep. Gene Ward**

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**Rep. Kirstin Kahaloe, Chair
Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair**

**Rep. Nicole E. Lowen
Rep. Sean Quinlan
Rep. Amy A. Perruso
Rep. Gene Ward**

**Thursday, February 6, 2025 10:00 AM
Conference Room 325
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street**

**RE: HB 1365 – 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**



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 to better take care of their water needs, without placing a financial burden on farmers. This can help both new 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,



Eric S. Tanouye
President

Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association

HB-1365

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 1:36:04 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/6/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

YES to- Appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the preparation of an environmental impact statement to drill non-potable water wells on individual parcels at Panaewa agricultural park and Panaewa farm lots.

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 7:10:13 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/6/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 7:55:02 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/6/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill.