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STATE OF HAWAII OFFICE OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Monday, February 24, 2025, 2 pm
State Capitol, Conference Room 308
in consideration of
HB 778, HD1
RELATING TO INTEGRATED LAND USE.

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **strongly supports** HB 778, HD1 which mandates an integrated land use study for Hawai'i's agricultural districts to address the urgent challenges of competing land uses.

With only 4 million acres of total land, Hawai'i faces immense pressure as affordable housing, renewable energy, and agriculture compete for limited space within the 1.9 million acres of Hawai'i's Agricultural District. Additionally, the State of Hawai'i has statutorily mandated the following 22 sustainability, climate, and affordable housing targets:

Target Year	Statutory Mandate	Legal Reference
2022	Coal Power Prohibition – Ends all coal burning in the state.	HRS §342B-36
2025	Farm-to-State Target – DOE, DOH, PSD, DOD, and UH must purchase 10% of total food from local agricultural/processed food sources.	HRS §27-8
2026	Affordable Rental Housing Target – The state must develop or facilitate 22,500 affordable rental housing units for occupancy between 2017-2026.	Act 127, SLH 2016
2030	Farm-to-State Target – DOE, DOH, PSD, DOD, and UH must purchase 18% of total food from local agricultural/processed food sources.	HRS §27-8
2030	Farm-to-School Target – 30% of food served in public schools must be locally sourced	HRS §302A-405.6
2030	Doubling Local Food Target – Double local food production and increase local food exports.	Act 151, SLH 2019
2030	Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standards (EEPS) Target – Reduction of 4,300 gigawatt hours (GWh) of electricity use statewide.	HRS §269-96
2030	Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) Target – 40% of electricity generation must come from renewable sources	HRS §269-92
2030	Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission Limit – Reduce statewide GHG emissions to 50% below 2005 levels.	HRS §225P-5 (Act 238, SLH 2022)
2030	State Fleet ZEV Transition – All light-duty passenger vehicles in the state fleet must be zero-emission.	Act 74, SLH 2021 (HRS § 225P-7, 264-20.7, and §196-9(c)(11))

HB 778, HD1 RELATING TO INTEGRATED LAND USE - SUPPORT
State Office of Planning and Sustainable Development

2035	DOE Net-Zero Energy Target – All Public schools must generate as much renewable energy as they consume.	HRS §302A-1510
2035	UH Net-Zero Energy Target – All University of Hawai‘i campuses must generate as much renewable energy as they consume	HRS §304A-119
2035	State Fleet ZEV Transition – All light-duty motor vehicles in the state fleet must be zero-emission vehicles.	Act 74, SLH 2021 (HRS § 225P-7, 264-20.7, and §196-9(c)(11))
2035	Farm-to-State Target – DOE, DOH, PSD, DOD, and UH must purchase 26% of total food from local agricultural/processed food sources.	HRS §27-8
2040	Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) Target – 70% of electricity generation must come from renewable sources.	HRS §269-92
2040	Farm-to-State Target – DOE, DOH, PSD, DOD, and UH must purchase 34% of total food from local agricultural/processed food sources.	HRS §27-8
2045	Reclaimed Water in State and County Facilities – 100% use of reclaimed water except for potable/drinkable uses.	HRS §174C-31(g)(6)
2045	Zero Emissions Clean Economy Target – The state must sequester more carbon than it emits.	HRS §225P-5
2045	Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) Target – 100% of electricity generation must come from renewable sources.	HRS §269-92
2045	Farm-to-State Target – DOE, DOH, PSD, DOD, and UH must purchase 42% of total food from local agricultural/processed food sources.	HRS §27-8
2050	Statewide Cesspool Conversion – All cesspools must be upgraded, converted, or connected to sewage systems.	HRS §342D-72
2050	Farm-to-State Target – DOE, DOH, PSD, DOD, and UH must purchase 50% of total food from local agricultural/processed food sources.	HRS §27-8

Without strategic planning, the State risks not fulfilling these multiple climate, sustainability, and affordable housing mandates. A comprehensive, data-driven study is critical to assess current land use, identify conflicts, and develop balanced solutions to ensure land use planning reflects Hawai‘i’s statutory and policy commitments.

Currently, DBEDT and OPSD are conducting a pilot study for the island of O‘ahu, with the support of ADC, HSEO, HHFDC, and CTAHR’s available data, but additional staffing and resources to OPSD are needed to expand this effort in a more timely manner, statewide.

Passing HB 778, HD 1 will provide essential staff and financial support to continue this critical work.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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February 24, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 778, HD1
RELATING TO INTEGRATED LAND USE

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, 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 778, HD1, which requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to conduct an integrated land use study for agricultural districts and submit interim and final reports to the Legislature. A comprehensive and data-driven approach to land use planning is necessary to balance competing priorities while ensuring that agriculture remains a viable and protected industry in Hawai'i.

The amendments made in HB 778, HD1, strengthen the bill by clearly defining and prioritizing the protection of productive agricultural lands and ensuring direct input from the agricultural community. These provisions are crucial, as agricultural lands have long been subject to increasing pressures from non-agricultural uses, including affordable housing, renewable energy projects, and waste management facilities. While we recognize the importance of these developments, they must not come at the expense of productive agricultural lands that are essential for local food production and economic sustainability.

Hawai'i's agricultural landscape has evolved beyond traditional soil classification as the sole factor in determining land suitability for farming. Modern agricultural practices, including greenhouses, hydroponics, aquaculture, and aquaponics, allow for successful production across all land classifications. Some of the state's most productive floriculture and hydroponic operations thrive on lands classified as C, D, and E. Factors such as rainfall patterns, temperature variations, wind conditions, and humidity levels all play a significant role in determining the viability of different crops in a given area. In many cases, soil type and terrain are not the primary determinants of whether farming can succeed.

Any land use study must account for these advancements and environmental considerations when evaluating the future of agriculture in Hawai‘i.

To ensure that the study is effective, we emphasize the importance of:

- Clearly defining and prioritizing the protection of productive agricultural lands to prevent further encroachment from non-agricultural developments.
- Including direct input from the agricultural community to ensure the study reflects the realities and needs of farmers and ranchers.
- Ensuring that agricultural lands designated for agricultural production are not compromised for short-term development needs.

Preserving and supporting agriculture is vital for Hawai‘i’s food security, economic sustainability, and cultural heritage. We encourage the committee to advance HB 778, HD1, with careful consideration for maintaining a strong agricultural sector.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



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Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Finance Committee,

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. **HFU supports HB778.**

This initiative is vital for understanding and maximizing the potential of our agricultural districts, ensuring that land use not only supports food production but also aligns with broader environmental and economic goals. By entrusting the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development with this study, the bill places emphasis on a comprehensive evaluation of land use patterns, infrastructure needs, and potential policy interventions that could bolster the viability of agriculture in Hawaii.

The Hawaii Farmers Union supports this bill because it recognizes the importance of data-driven approaches to land management. An integrated land use study will provide valuable insights into managing agricultural lands more effectively, addressing issues such as soil health, water management, and the encroachment of non-agricultural developments. By delivering interim and final reports to the Legislature, the study ensures that findings and recommendations are heard at the highest levels, paving the way for informed decision-making that can support farmers, protect natural resources, and enhance local food security.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union