

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER AND LAND AND AGRICULTURE
AND ENVIRONMENT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2025
1:01 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 229

HOUSE BILL NO. 778, HOUSE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO INTEGRATED LAND USE.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 778, House Draft 2 that requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to conduct an Integrated Land Use Study the purpose of which is to develop land use data that can be used for planning and decision making for competing uses of lands within agricultural districts. The Study will determine the land use feasibility and needs of lands within agricultural districts to meet the State's climate, sustainability, and housing statutory targets. (page 2, line 19 to page 3, line 4) The Department of Agriculture (Department) offers comments.

The Department is concerned how future planning and decision making based on the proposed Study will impact agricultural producers and agricultural land and water resources throughout the State.

The Study is to incorporate the recommendations of plans, studies, and statutes for high-profile uses and activities (Hawaii 2050 Sustainability Plan, state land use review of district, Hawaii sea level rise vulnerability and adaptation report, State's climate, sustainability, and housing targets). We are troubled that the State's numerous renewable energy goals and priorities look to be hidden within "climate" or "sustainability" targets. The direct and indirect impacts of utility-scaled solar energy

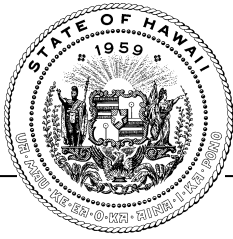


facilities located on Hawaii's good quality agricultural land must be fully accounted for in the proposed Study.

Equally concerning is this measure's lack of consideration given to the State's agricultural goals and long-standing statutory framework such as Important Agricultural Lands, 30 percent increased local food production by 2030, Chapter 205, and so forth. The Study must also account for the numerous bills introduced annually in the State legislature seeking to acquire agricultural lands, develop agricultural infrastructure, improve access to and management of agricultural lands, and propose statewide programs to increase local food production and value-added processing to replace imported foods and increase food exports.

As a participant in the Study, the Department will be alert to recommendations that unfairly compromise the protections given to agricultural lands and water resources. The Study must ensure that those who wish to continue their existing farm businesses or start agricultural operations on agricultural lands throughout the State are not impeded by non-agricultural uses and activities.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

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MARY ALICE EVANS
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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director
before the
**SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER AND LAND AND
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**
Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 1:01 pm
State Capitol, Conference Room 229
in consideration of
HB 778, HD2
RELATING TO INTEGRATED LAND USE.

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

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **strongly supports** HB 778, HD2 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 21 sustainability, climate, and affordable housing targets:

Target Year	Statutory Mandate	Legal Reference
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))
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 2 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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March 19, 2025

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

TESTIMONY ON HB 778, HD2
RELATING TO INTEGRATED LAND USE

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
1:01 PM

Aloha Chairs Inouye and Gabbard, Vice-Chairs Elefante and Richards, 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 778, HD2, 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, HD2, 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, HD2, with careful consideration for maintaining a strong agricultural sector.

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



To: The Senate Committee on Water and Land (WTL)
and
The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)
From: Sherry Pollack, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 1:01pm

In strong support of HB 778 HD2

Aloha Chairs Inouye and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Elefante and Richards, and members of the WTL and AEN committees,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **supports HB 778 HD2** that requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to conduct an integrated land use study for the use of lands within the agricultural districts and submit interim and final reports to the Legislature.

Hawaii faces many challenges as affordable housing, renewable energy, and agriculture compete for limited space within Hawaii's agricultural district. We must ensure that decisions made align agricultural lands with Hawai'i's food production, clean energy, and housing goals.

We strongly support the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development conducting this critical study. Please pass this important measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



Food+ Policy Internship 2024

food@purplemaia.org

March 16, 2025

Subject: SB 739 SD2 HD1 *Long-Term Agricultural Production*

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

Hawaii Food+ Policy **supports SB 739** SD2 HD1, a measure crucial for promoting diversified agriculture and self-sufficiency across Hawaii. Imani is an intern of ours, as well as a student at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. Finding affordable housing close to campus can be a challenge, and although there has been progress through Hawaii Revised Statutes, we need to ensure their goals are fully met. Although SB 739 focuses on the West O'ahu railways, its impact extends across all Hawaiian islands, reinforcing the need to protect agricultural lands and expand affordable housing. Both require urgent funding and legislative support.

This bill addresses Hawaii's historical agricultural decline by offering a strategic approach to diversifying agriculture while preserving farmland. We also support proposed amendments that enhance Land Board oversight, ensuring transparency in agricultural land approvals. This safeguard will prevent farmland from being misused for privatized development.

It is for these reasons that we strongly urge the Agriculture and Food Systems committee to support SB 739 to secure Hawaii's future in agriculture and housing.

Mahalo,
The Hawaii Food+ Policy Team

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 2024, the cohort of interns are undergrads and graduate students from throughout the UH 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.

HB-778-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 7:55:32 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT