

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



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

**DEAN M. MATSUKAWA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

**WRITTEN ONLY**  
**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD**  
**CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2025**  
**10:01 AM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 211**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 782, HOUSE DRAFT 1, SENATE DRAFT 1**  
**RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill No. 782, House Draft 1, Senate Draft 1 that establishes within the Department of Agriculture (Department) a fifteen-member Working Group to be chaired by the Chair of the Board of Agriculture to review and make recommendations on amending or repealing unnecessary or obsolete laws pertaining to agriculture. There is an appropriation, and a report is due to the 2026 Legislature. The Department offers comments.

The measure identifies the following six issues that shall be considered for amending or repeal by the Working Group:

- (1) Restrictions on leases of State agricultural land that prohibit a residence on the property;
- (2) Restrictions on leases of State agricultural land that prohibit the raising of poultry and swine on the property;
- (3) Caps on agricultural operation loan rates;
- (4) Regulations governing agricultural workforce development and farm labor access;
- (5) Water access and permitting; and
- (6) Procurement policies that impact the use of locally grown food in state institutions.

Other laws "pertaining to agriculture" that are possibly "unnecessary or obsolete" may be considered for review and recommendation by the Working Group.



The Department has concerns with respect to three of the initial issues to be considered by the Task Force. Both the Agricultural Resources Management and Agricultural Loan divisions do not concur that the issues of the operating loan cap, house building and raising of poultry and swine are unnecessary, obsolete or impede the growth and success of agriculture in Hawaii.

In lieu of the proposed Working Group, the Department recommends that the Legislature commission a study to be done by a neutral party such as the Legislative Reference Bureau to comprehensively and efficiently determine the magnitude and extent of laws that qualify as unnecessary or obsolete and meriting consideration for amendment or repeal.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.



Testimony Presented to  
Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Wednesday, April 2, 2025, 10:01am  
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference  
by  
Ron Weidenbach, HAAA President

SUBJECT: Support for intent of HB782 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Aloha Senator Dela Cruz, Chair, and Senator Moriwaki, Vice Chair, Committee on Ways and Means,

The Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association (HAAA), established in 1975 and representing aquaculture industry members statewide supports the intent of HB782 HD1 SD1 to establishes a working group within the Department of Agriculture to review and make recommendations on amending or repealing unnecessary or obsolete laws, rules, and departmental policies pertaining to agriculture.

For example and to this end, the HAAA respectfully requests the addition of "livestock" to HB782 HD1 SD1, p. 4, (c) (2) to read: "Restrictions on leases of state agricultural land that prohibit the raising of livestock, poultry and swine on the property;"

Justification: The Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO) recommends the use of livestock grazing to reduce and control invasive vegetation fuel load on Hawaii's agricultural lands. However, livestock are currently specifically prohibited on DOA diversified agriculture leases, only being allowed on pasture leases

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the intent of HB782 HD1 SD1 and to respectfully request your consideration of our noted amendment to this measure.



March 27, 2025

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)

**Support of HB 782, H.D.1, S.D. 1 Relating to Agriculture (Establishes within the Department of Agriculture [DOA] a working group to review and make recommendations on amending or repealing unnecessary or obsolete laws pertaining to agriculture. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/2050.)**

**WAM Hearing: Wednesday April 2, 2025, at 10:01 a.m.**  
**Conference Room 211 & Videoconference**

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers, and utility companies. LURF's mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational, and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express its **support of HB 782, H.D.1, S.D. 1** and of the various agricultural stakeholder groups who defend the goals of viable agricultural operations and the conservation and protection of agriculture, including important agricultural lands in Hawaii.

**HB 782, H.D.1, S.D. 1.** The purpose of this measure is to establish a working group within the DOA to review and make recommendations on amending or repealing unnecessary or obsolete laws pertaining to agriculture.

**LURF's Position.** In view of the intensifying impacts being cast upon agricultural conditions and operations by climate change, globalization, the influx of devastating invasive species and diseases, market conditions, lack of available labor, amongst other factors, the State must seek to update and amend its current laws and policies to effectively accommodate, support, and modernize the local agricultural industry.

LURF understands that outdated, and therefore unnecessary and inappropriate sections of the Hawaii Revised Statutes and agriculture-related policies are now having the negative effect of impeding efficient operations and may be retarding the growth and success of agriculture in Hawaii.

LURF members include farmers, ranchers, and landowners who own, maintain, and engage in agricultural enterprises, all of which believe that existing agricultural laws and policies must be reviewed and vetted to help sustain their businesses, and significantly heighten local food production in this State.

Agricultural stakeholders believe the review by a working group as proposed by HB 782, H.D.1, S.D. 1, will greatly assist in the efforts to achieve long-term sustainability of Hawaii's food supply and economic growth, and to ensure the survival and success of this critical component of the State's economy.

The purpose of this bill is also consistent with the underlying intent and objectives of the IAL laws (Hawaii Revised Statutes, Sections 205-41 to 52), which were enacted to fulfill the mandate in Article XI, Section 3, of the Hawaii State Constitution, "to conserve and protect agricultural lands, promote diversified agriculture, increase agricultural self-sufficiency and assure the availability of agriculturally suitable lands."

By recognizing the significance of, and need to assist the local agriculture industry, and implement measures which help to support the growth and maintenance of agriculture in the State, this bill significantly helps to promote economically viable agriculture and food self-sufficiency in Hawaii.

For the reasons stated above, LURF is in **support of HB 782, H.D.1, S.D. 1**, and respectfully urges your favorable consideration of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding this matter.



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April 2, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 782, HD1, SD1**  
**RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference  
10:01 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 782, HD1, SD1**, which establishes a working group within the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to review and make recommendations on amending or repealing unnecessary or obsolete laws pertaining to agriculture. This bill also appropriates funds to support the working group's efforts.

Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers face significant regulatory challenges that can hinder agricultural growth and innovation. Many existing agricultural laws and regulations were established decades ago and may no longer align with the needs of modern farming practices, advancements in technology, and the state's goal of increasing local food production. Conducting a thorough review of these laws will help identify outdated policies, streamline regulatory processes, and reduce unnecessary burdens on farmers and ranchers.

A dedicated working group will provide an opportunity for agricultural stakeholders, policymakers, and regulatory agencies to collaborate in identifying and addressing policies that may be hindering the growth of local agriculture. This effort will help ensure that Hawai'i's agricultural laws and policies are relevant, effective, and supportive of a resilient and sustainable food system.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.





**EAST OAHU COUNTY FARM BUREAU**  
**910 CALIFORNIA AVE., WAHIAWA, HI 96786**

March 31, 2025

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair, and Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
State Capitol, 415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

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

The East O'ahu County Farm Bureau, which represents approximately 420 farmers and supporters of agriculture from Waimanalo to Kahuku, **strongly supports HB 782 HD1 SD1**, "Relating to Agriculture," which would establish a working group to review laws pertaining to agriculture and to make recommendations for repealing or amending unnecessary or obsolete laws.

Many existing laws and policies unnecessarily restrict agricultural operations. Some of these rules date from plantation days and do not reflect the current realities of an extremely diverse industry which includes farms and ranches of different sizes raising many types of crops and livestock using different farming techniques. In order to support the growth of agriculture in Hawai'i and provide for greater food security, it is time for a comprehensive review of all laws and policies that affect agriculture. We therefore respectfully urge your Committee to pass HB 782 HD1 SD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter of great importance to Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers.

Sincerely,

Frederick M. Mencher  
for Grant Hamachi, President  
East O'ahu County Farm Bureau



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

**HB782 HD1 SD1**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, April 2, 2025, 10:01 AM  
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council supports **HB782 HD1 SD1** which establishes within the Department of Agriculture a working group to review and make recommendations on amending or repealing unnecessary or obsolete laws pertaining to agriculture. and appropriates funds.

Agriculture continues to evolve and a comprehensive review of the current laws will be beneficial to the industry. This review should take into account the goals to increase local food production and remove undue burdens while still ensuring safe production for people and the land. A dedicated working group will be able to think critically about the needs of agriculture and how that relates to current laws and regulations. It is important that funds be provided, as noted in this measure, so that a thorough review can be done. We appreciate the inclusion of a representative of the Hawaii Cattlemen's Council on this working group so that we can directly speak to the livestock production needs.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase  
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council  
Managing Director





**HB-782-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 9:54:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy Brinker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

**HB-782-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 8:18:37 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT! Every department should do this, and do it on a regularly scheduled basis. Mahalo!



April 1 2025

To: Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki, and the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Subject: **HB 782 HD1 SD1**, Relating to agriculture

Aloha, I am submitting this testimony in support of **SB 782 HD1 SD1**. This bill establishes a working group in the Department of Agriculture whose purpose is to recommend repeals and amendments for outdated laws relating to agriculture.

This working group will give a particularly large amount of attention to laws that place restrictions on the following:

- **Leases of state agricultural land for providing residence on a property:**  
Farming is very difficult work that often requires early mornings and late nights. Being unable to live on their land forces farmers to commute, which raises costs, lowers productivity, and makes their lives more difficult in general.
- **Leases of state agricultural land for raising poultry and swine on a property:**  
Hawaii currently imports the vast majority of its food from the mainland, including meat and eggs. By making it more feasible to produce these commodities locally, consumers will have access to cheaper, healthier, more sustainable food.
- **The loan rates of agricultural operations:**  
While lower loan rates make loans cheaper for farmers, it has many unintended negative consequences. Caps on loans make banks more hesitant to give them out in the first place. Due to this, it is much harder for smaller farmers to qualify for them since large corporations are seen as a safer investment.

Some argue that the above restrictions do not have a large enough negative impact on local farmers to meaningfully hold them back. That if we wish to establish this working group, we should do further research to truly understand the effects of existing laws. I disagree with this argument. The fact of the matter is the political, economic, and literal climate has been transforming at blinding speeds in recent years. This means the conditions local farmers currently face are far different than those faced decades ago. In wake of this, local farmers have been vocal about the impacts of these existing laws and the need for change.

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**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.



# HAWAI'I FOOD+ POLICY

Honolulu, HI 96813  
food@purplemaia.org

I empathize with being uncertain in the face of change. However in times of crisis, hesitation and rigidity only lead to eventual ruin. By passing HB782 HD1 SD1, you will create a team of capable individuals who can make the important changes needed to turn Hawai'i into a more resilient place.

Mahalo for your time and continued support of Hawai'i's food systems.

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

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Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means 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 HB782.**

HB782 is a vital initiative that promises to enhance the agricultural landscape in Hawaii by addressing outdated or unnecessary laws. Agriculture is a cornerstone of Hawaii's economy and culture, yet it faces significant challenges due to evolving market conditions and regulatory landscapes. Establishing a working group within the Department of Agriculture to assess and recommend revisions to these laws is crucial. This initiative will ensure our legal framework supports contemporary farming practices and innovation, enabling farmers to be more competitive and sustainable.

Moreover, the appropriation of funds signifies a concrete commitment to resolving issues that may hinder agricultural productivity and growth. A carefully considered review and modernization of existing regulations can lead to more efficient farming practices, reduced administrative burdens, and enhanced opportunities for local farmers. Such efforts will ultimately contribute to more resilient agricultural systems and bolster food security throughout the islands. The Hawaii Farmers Union recognizes and supports HB782 as a necessary measure to empower our farmers and sustain the vital agricultural sector well into the future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union