



Ke'ena Kuleana Ho'okipa O Hawai'i
1801 Kalākaua Avenue
Honolulu, HI 96815
kelepona tel (808) 973-2255
kelepa'i fax (808) 973-2253
hawaii tourism authority.org

TESTIMONY OF
DANIEL NĀHO'OPI'I
Interim President & CEO
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS AND TOURISM

Wednesday, February 5, 2025
8:45 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 325

In consideration of
HB 966
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

Aloha Chairs Kahaloa and Tam, Vice Chairs Kusch and Templo, and members of the Committees,

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) offers comments on HB966, establishing statewide, uniform standards to promote agricultural tourism activities.

Agricultural tourism is a vital niche within Hawai'i's tourism industry, specifically identified in HRS 201B-3(a)(19). Successful development of agricultural tourism initiatives advances Hawai'i toward a regenerative tourism model that actively supports farmers while being sensitive to surrounding communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our comments.

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
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS
AND TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2025
8:45 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

HOUSE BILL NO. 966
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL TOURISM.

Chairs Kahaloa and Tam, Vice Chairs Kusch and Templo and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill No. 966 that creates a new section in Chapter 205 to establish statewide, uniform standards to promote agricultural tourism activities in the State by establishing state agricultural tourism activity requirements that are applicable to all counties that have adopted an agricultural tourism ordinance. This measure requires agricultural tourism activities to be registered with the county planning commission. It also requires agricultural tourism activities to coexist with an agricultural activity on a farming operation and requires termination of the agricultural tourism activities upon cessation of the agricultural activity.

The Department of Agriculture appreciates the intent of this measure and offers the following comments.

This measure requires the following standards to be adopted into county zoning ordinances applicable to agricultural tourism activities on a farming operation. The Department offers comments for each requirement.

1. Agricultural tourism activities may be conducted on a "commercial" farming operation as defined in Section 165-2. (page 3, lines 18-21) While the Department concurs with this linkage, we note there is no definition of what constitutes a "commercial" farming operation. If the definition of "commercial farming operation" sets a low threshold, it may allow subsistence or personal



agricultural activity to qualify for agricultural tourism activities and defeat the intent of this measure.

2. Agricultural tourism activities are to be “accessory and secondary” to the principal agricultural use (page 4, lines 2-3). The requirement that revenue from agricultural tourism activities not exceed the revenue from sales from agricultural activities (page 4, lines 7-9) could be a measure of “accessory and secondary”. However, this requirement is inextricably tied to the definition of what constitutes a “commercial farming operation”. This may become an issue for commercial farming operations of any scale where overnight accommodations (page 4, lines 10-14) are approved and that income combined with income from “accessory facilities...such as gift shops and restaurants” and “activities for visitors” (page 5, lines 1-5) exceeds the income from agricultural activities.
3. The termination of the permit to conduct agricultural tourism activities upon the cessation of the agricultural activity on the farming operation may need to be clarified in cases where the cessation of the agricultural activity is temporary due to inclement weather, disease/pest infestation, market and supply chain disruptions, change in crop type (orchard crops require multiple years before economic harvest occurs), and so forth.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.

HB-966

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 6:40:26 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Bateman	Heavenly Hawaiian Farms	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa and Committee:

Thank you for the opporutnity to present testimony in **strong support** of this bill.

As many of this committee know, farming of every kind is a very challenging venture at best. It requires extensive labor, initial capital investment and regular infusion of cash to make ends meet. And, at the end of the day, there is no guarantee of success or profitability. Farmers, therefore, need to find means to supplement their crop sales. Agricultural tourism is one of the most significant avenues to generate that supplemental cash flow. It allows the farmer to sell more of the farm crop at retail to visitors to the farm. Enhanced sales are generated through the experience of being on the farm, education seeing how a product is developed from the raw crop, experiencing first hand what a farmer must do to succeed to bring the product to market. And they are able to taste products freshly harvested and processed. On farm sales will generate many times online retail revenue or farmers market sales or wholesale to retail stores. Agriculture tourism is truly a "lifeline" for farmers trying to improve their cash flow.

However, the current process to get planning approval for an agricultural tourism permit from county planning is extremely, cumbersome, costly and time consuming. It simply doesn't work for the average farmer. I know fellow coffee farmers who have incurred over \$100,000, mostly in hiring experts attorneys and advisors just to apply for a permit for a walking path, some small open pavilions highlighting processing activities and restrooms. Applying for a permit with all the associated costs of experts, attorneys, planners, etc to present a package to the county is prohibitive. This doesn't work for the farming community. Therefore, many farmers simply opt out. HB966 fixes the problem by allowing a farmer to register his/her agricultural tourism activities with a simple registration filing. Stores and restaurants on farms are currently allowed with the registration process. The logical question is, why can't the mere act of getting tourists onto the farm also be handled with a similar registration process?

I **strongly support** HB966 and urge this Committee to approve it and pass it out of committee.

Mahalo nui,

Dave Bateman, President

Heavenly Hawaiian Farms

Holualoa, HI

HB-966

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:58:04 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alla Kostenko	Covfefe Coffee Farm	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support this bill.



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

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

COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Chair
Rep. Shirley Ann Templo, Vice Chair

HB966 RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

Wednesday, February 5, 2025, 8:45AM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Chairs Kahaloe and Tam, Vice Chairs Kusch and Templo, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **opposes HB966** which establishes statewide, uniform standards to promote agricultural tourism activities in the State by establishing state agricultural tourism activity requirements that are applicable to all counties that have adopted an agricultural tourism ordinance. Requires agricultural tourism activities to be registered by the county planning commission. Requires agricultural tourism activities to coexist with an agricultural activity on a farming operation and requires termination of the agricultural tourism activities upon cessation of the agricultural activity.

Agricultural tourism is important to diversify a farm or ranch's revenue stream, provide access for the public to a working farm, and to educate and connect people with where their food comes from. Agriculture is a tough business with small margins. Utilizing agricultural tourism can often be an important factor in being able to stay afloat financially.

While we agree that tourism activities should not interfere with the agricultural operations, we do not agree that revenue from the tourism activities should not exceed revenue from agricultural activity. While this sounds like a good way to ensure agricultural production is the primary activity, the revenue from these two different streams are very different. Passing this bill will restrict farmers and ranchers' ability to continue ag tourism successfully.

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-966

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:06:13 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taylor Kellerman	Kualoa Ranch	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

*Aloha**My name is Taylor Kellerman and I am the Director of Diversified Agriculture, Land Stewardship and Education for Kualoa Ranch.**Born and raised on windward Oahu, I have worked in Hawaii's Agricultural industry for over 20 years and currently serve on multiple industry Board affiliations**I am here this morning to testify in opposition of HB 966 and the negative consequences the listed regulations would have both on our business as well as current and future endeavors that other farmers and ranchers could pursue to diversify their economies.**As an example:**At Kualoa Our ag programs Produce approximately 90K pounds of food per year and offer over 60 products**We Operate an onsite market that services our surrounding community (former food desert) as well as Support over 20 other local producers**Our Natural resource programs Steward over 3800 acres with an 8-person full time dedicated staff**And our Education programs Provide outdoor classroom curriculum for over 15K of Hawaii's student per year We also partner with the DOE CTE program and UH west programming with food production internships**All of this is possible because of the economic engine that agritourism provides. In short, limiting this portion of our business per the regulation outlined in this bill would mean loss of over 350 jobs, and loss of one of the only 7 day a week sources for local food on the windward side of Oahu.**The state has a goal of increasing food security, but the reality is the majority of farming and ranching businesses in Hawaii operate with razor thin margins coupled with constant uncertainty resulting from being at the mercy of mother nature. Assigning across the board*

limits, restrictions, or changes to the way in which an agricultural operation can diversify its economy will have lasting negative effects on the future of food production for Hawaii.

I appreciate your time.

TESTIMONY REGARDING HB966, Relating to Ag Tourism

NAME: Robert Horcajo, Mahina Farms Maui, LLC

Generally, I am in support of the goals of HB966, however, certain additions are contrary to said goals.

1. Revenue support: As noted in the preamble, farmers and ranches nationwide have used agricultural tourism to survive. I can guarantee however, that the income from agricultural tourism outpace the income from the actual farm income. When over 60% of the farmers statewide show no income, it's obvious farming is about the lifestyle, not the money. The new section that states "revenue from ag tourism activity shall not exceed revenue from the farming operation" is a hindrance to the survival of todays modern farms.
2. Statewide regulations: I feel this is a major benefit to all farmers in the State. I have spoken to other farmers on other islands about how their County handles permits and there are all different. Personally, we are presently applying for a Special Use Permt to have a guests string a lei from the lei plants we grow. We were told we need a building permit for a 8ft X 10 ft farm stand, when our County code states a 200 sf or less structure on ag land is exempt from permit.

Mahalo for the introduction of this legislation. Just read it so sorry for this last minute testimony. I have a lot of history with various ag related issues I can share in the future.

Robert Horcajo, bob@livemaui.com ; 808 244-4000



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Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Kahaloa & Tam, Vice Chair Kusch & Templo, and Committee Members,

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 HB966.**

HB966 provides a clear framework for integrating agricultural tourism with active farming operations, fostering a harmonious relationship between tourism and agriculture in Hawaii. By establishing uniform standards, this legislation ensures that agricultural tourism activities enhance and coexist with bona fide farming efforts, thereby preventing any potential dilution of the agricultural focus. This approach not only supports farmers in diversifying their revenue streams but also safeguards the integrity of Hawaii's agricultural landscape by mandating that tourism activities cease if the underlying agricultural operations discontinue.

Moreover, the requirement for registration with the county planning commission provides a systematic and organized method of oversight, ensuring that agricultural tourism activities comply with the local ordinances while promoting transparency and accountability. Conforming amendments and consistent regulations across the state simplify the compliance process for farmers, reducing administrative burden and potential confusion. This alignment encourages more farmers to explore agricultural tourism confidently, contributing to local economies and providing educational opportunities for visitors, all while preserving Hawaii's rich agricultural heritage.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 5, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

TESTIMONY ON HB 966
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
8:45 AM

Aloha Chairs Kahaloa and Tam, Vice-Chairs Kusch and Templo, 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 966, which establishes statewide, uniform standards to promote agricultural tourism activities in the state. This bill sets clear requirements for agricultural tourism that apply to all counties that have adopted an agricultural tourism ordinance. It also requires agricultural tourism activities to be registered with the county planning commission and ensures that they remain secondary to active agricultural operations, terminating when farming activity ceases

We strongly support agritourism, which represents an excellent revenue enhancement opportunity for farmers and ranchers and an educational opportunity for the public. Fostering the profitability of farmers and ranchers will significantly contribute to the State's goal of increased self-sufficiency.

We believe the primary purpose of the Agricultural District is production agriculture. Agricultural tourism should complement active farming operations and not become the primary land use. Agricultural tourism operations should be subordinate to bona fide agricultural operations. We believe that other loosely related activities merely using agriculture as a justification belong in the rural district. Counties should be encouraged to move in this direction, thereby protecting agricultural lands.

While we support establishing minimum statewide standards, we believe that the details of agricultural tourism should remain a home rule issue. Counties may have different views on what constitutes agricultural tourism and what activities they choose to allow. This should be respected and remain under the purview of county zoning. Therefore, we request that the requirement for a county to adopt ordinances regulating agricultural tourism operations remain in place.

We also request that the implementation of this measure:

- Ensure that registration requirements do not create unnecessary administrative burdens on working farmers and ranchers.
- Provide clarity on what constitutes an eligible agricultural operation to prevent unintended restrictions on small or diversified farms.
- Include input from farmers and ranchers in developing regulations to ensure that agricultural tourism activities remain viable and beneficial for agricultural producers

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Feb. 5, 2025, 8:45 a.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

To: House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair
Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

House Committee on Tourism

Rep. Adrian Tam, Chair
Rep. Shirley Ann Templo, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: HB966 — RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

Aloha Chairs, Vice-Chairs and other members of the committees,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii offers **comments** on [HB966](#), which would create uniform standards for agricultural tourism operations throughout the state.

In general, Grassroot supports the intent of this measure, which is to give farmers and ranchers more freedom to diversify their income sources. Offering agricultural tourism activities could educate visitors about sustainable practices and land stewardship, in addition to creating employment opportunities and excise tax revenues.

But we are concerned about the language in Section 2(c) of the bill that says: “ Revenue from all agricultural tourism activities on a farming operation shall not exceed revenue from the agricultural activity conducted on the farming operation.”

This definition fails to take into account the diversity of agricultural operations that exist throughout the state.

Farmers and ranchers who grow food primarily for personal consumption might not realize any income, but they are actively tending the land. Any food donated to local food banks would likewise be excluded by this wording.

Furthermore, this language does not consider the effect of a drought or a loss of crops to pests or theft, which could cause farm income to drop.

This situation would also be punishing to farmers who might be even more reliant on tourism activities during a bad growing season.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

HB-966

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 10:32:38 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Kimo Falconer	Hawaii Coffee Growers Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa and members of the Committee,

I am writing urging your support on HB 966. This measure will alleviate the difficult process of acquiring individual permits to create an on-farm experience that people can enjoy along with educating them to the wonderful products we have to offer in our State's agricultural community.

This bill proposes a simpler registration process to help our farmers find necessary supplemental income where it is desperately needed.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of H.B. 966, which seeks to establish a statewide registration system for agricultural tourism and allow limited overnight accommodations on farms. As the owner and operator of Rising Kona Coffee Farm Tours and the Kailua Kona Estate, an active agricultural property in Hawaii County that has received Agricultural Tourism plan approval from the County, I have firsthand experience with the complex, costly, and restrictive process for agritourism under current county regulations.

Challenges with the Current Plan Approval Process

When Hawaii County implemented its agritourism ordinance in 2008, the Planning Director at the time released a memo to all his staff that plan approval was meant to be an easy process—yet it has proven to be lengthy, expensive, and excessively restrictive.

One of the most burdensome aspects is that any change in the location of a tour stop on a farm—such as shifting from one grove of trees to another—requires a new plan approval submission to the Planning Director. This level of micromanagement is impractical and does not align with the natural seasonality and operational flexibility required in farming.

The Need for Overnight Accommodations in Agricultural Tourism

A critical component of this bill is the authorization of limited overnight accommodations on farms engaged in agricultural tourism. This provision is essential for three key reasons:

1. Sustaining Hawaii's Farms Through Agritourism Revenue

Overnight accommodations provide a stable, high-value revenue stream that can help farmers remain financially viable in an industry where margins are thin.

Many farms struggle to survive solely on crop production due to high operating costs, climate variability, and market fluctuations. The ability to offer overnight stays alongside farm tours, hands-on workshops, and other immersive experiences will save farms from financial hardship.

2. Expanding Agricultural Education Programs

Overnight stays allow for multi-day agricultural education programs, giving visitors and students the opportunity to engage deeply in Hawaiian farming practices, regenerative agriculture, and conservation efforts.

A single farm tour lasting a couple of hours is not enough time to provide meaningful education. However, a multi-day immersive program, where guests stay on-site, enables true experiential learning.

Many successful agritourism destinations around the world incorporate overnight stays as part of farm-based education programs, internships, and sustainability retreats—Hawaii should be able to do the same.

3. Aligning with Hawaii's Vision for Regenerative Tourism

The Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) has actively promoted regenerative tourism, which focuses on authentic, community-based experiences that benefit both visitors and residents.

Allowing overnight stays on farms is a direct and effective way to support regenerative tourism by connecting visitors with Hawaii's agricultural heritage, local food systems, and the land itself.

Unlike traditional hotels, on-farm accommodations ensure that tourism dollars go directly to local farmers and the agricultural economy rather than large corporate entities.

Conclusion

Hawaii's existing agricultural tourism framework is overly restrictive, bureaucratic, and failing to support farmers. H.B. 966 provides the necessary reforms by streamlining the process, replacing unnecessary plan approvals with a registration system, and allowing overnight stays throughout the state (instead of just Maui) that will provide essential revenue and educational opportunities.

If we want to preserve agriculture in Hawaii and create sustainable, profitable farms, we must allow farmers the flexibility to generate income through agricultural tourism that includes overnight accommodations. This bill is a lifeline for farmers and a vital step toward a more resilient and diversified agricultural economy.

I urge you to support H.B. 966 and help secure a sustainable future for Hawaii's farms and communities.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Jason Eisert



Aloha Chair Kahaloa and Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in strong support of this bill.

As many of this committee know, farming of every kind is a very challenging venture at best. It requires extensive labor, initial capital investment and regular infusion of cash to make ends meet. And, at the end of the day, there is no guarantee of success or profitability. Farmers, therefore, need to find means to supplement their crop sales. Agricultural tourism is one of the most significant avenues to generate that supplemental cash flow. It allows the farmer to sell more of the farm crop at retail to visitors to the farm. Enhanced sales are generated through the experience of being on the farm, education seeing how a product is developed from the raw crop, experiencing first-hand what a farmer must do to succeed to bring the product to market. And they are able to taste products freshly harvested and processed. On farm sales will generate many times online retail revenue or farmers market sales or wholesale to retail stores. Agriculture tourism is truly a "lifeline" for farmers trying to improve their cash flow.

However, the current process to get planning approval for an agricultural tourism permit from county planning is extremely, cumbersome, costly and time consuming. It simply doesn't work for the average farmer. We know fellow coffee farmers who have incurred over \$100,000, mostly in hiring experts attorneys and advisors just to apply for a permit for a walking path, some small open pavilions highlighting processing activities and restrooms. Applying for a permit with all the associated costs of experts, attorneys, planners, etc to present a package to the county is prohibitive. This doesn't work for the farming community. Therefore, many farmers simply opt out. HB966 fixes the problem by allowing a farmer to register his/her agricultural tourism activities with a simple registration filing. Stores and restaurants on farms are currently allowed with the registration process. The logical question is, why can't the mere act of getting tourists onto the farm also be handled with a similar registration process?

Our association strongly supports HB966 and urge this Committee to approve it and pass it out of committee.

Mahalo nui,

Bill Dwyer
President
Hawaii Coffee Association

HB-966

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 8:04:31 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa M Thompson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB 966 RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL TOURISM.

I do NOT SUPPORT Part II, Section 2, item (c). “Revenue from all agricultural tourism activities on a farming operation shall not exceed revenue from the agricultural activity conducted on the farming operation.”

AgTourism as a way to help farmers weather disasters like drought, disease, floods and labor shortages. This Bill will hurt Farmers not help them.

Mahalo,

Theresa Thompson

Kathleen M. Pahinui
Pahinuik001@hawaii.rr.com

Sunday, February 2, 2025

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair Rep. Nicole E. Lowen Rep. Sean Quinlan Rep. Amy A. Perruso Rep. Gene Ward

COMMITTEE ON TOURISM Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Chair Rep. Shirley Ann Templo, Vice Chair Rep. Daniel Holt Rep. Ikaika Hussey Rep. Greggor Ilagan

Re: Comments on HB966 RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

Aloha Chair Kahaloa and Chair Tam and Committee Members:

While I support the intent of HB 966 and its purpose of defining and reigning in unchecked and rampant agri-tourism abuses, I am concerned that it may be removing some of those checks and balances. Specifically, Section 5 which discusses county ordinances setting forth procedures and requirements regarding agri-tourism. Right above these deletions at the start of the section, it does say:

Accessory agricultural uses and services described in sections 205-2 and 205-4.5 may be further defined by each county by zoning ordinance.

If the purpose of the following deletions is less prescriptive to allow each county more latitude in defining agri-tourism in their ordinances, then I understand the purpose. But if it is meant to loosen restrictions on agri-tourism, then I have serious concerns.

Agri-tourism is the real purpose for many who buy ag land on our North Shore - not to farm; and they will use any ruse possible to get around the rules. Luckily, our county Dept of Planning and Permitting along with our Council and Mayor just updated our land use ordinance to make unfettered agri-tourism harder.

Please support agriculture, not tourism. Please help us reach our food security goals.

Food first!

Mālama ʻāina,

Kathleen M. Pahinui

Kathleen M. Pahinui
Resident, Waialua, North Shore, Oʻahu

HB-966

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:37:58 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angelica Melone	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a concerned citizen, I offer my testimony on HB966, which seeks to establish statewide standards for agricultural tourism. Agricultural tourism is essential for diversifying farm and ranch revenue, connecting the public with working farms, and providing education about where food comes from. While I understand the importance of ensuring tourism activities don't interfere with agricultural operations, I am concerned that the proposed requirement that revenue from tourism not exceed revenue from agriculture could unfairly restrict legitimate farming and ranching businesses. This bill could limit the ability of farmers and ranchers to utilize agricultural tourism as a vital tool for financial sustainability, and I urge you to reconsider this provision.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-966

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 12:15:55 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Neal	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of the Committee,

My name is Ryan Neal, and I own and operate an active farm in Hawaii. I am writing to express my strong support for H.B. 966, particularly the provision allowing overnight accommodations as part of agricultural tourism.

I love sharing my farm with visitors and giving them a deeper understanding of agriculture in Hawaii. Offering overnight stays would allow guests to truly immerse themselves in native Hawaiian farm life while also providing me with critical revenue to keep the farm running. Farming is hard work with high costs, and agritourism with overnight stays is a necessary way to sustain it.

This bill would help farmers like me stay in business, educate visitors, and contribute to Hawaii's agricultural and tourism industries. I respectfully ask for your support in passing H.B. 966.

Mahalo,

Ryan Neal