

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



WENDY GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
HUI HO'OU LU AINA MAHIAI

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

LATE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
February 4, 2025
1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

SENATE BILL NO. 448
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 448, which would appropriate funds to the Agribusiness Development Corporation to acquire a conservation easement in central Oahu. This conservation easement would allow ADC to better support local agriculture while protecting the land through the preservation of open spaces.

We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



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Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Decoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Senate Economic Development and Tourism 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. **HFUU supports SB448.**

This bill will help ensure that vital farmland is preserved for current and future generations of local farmers. Protecting land from development pressures will bolster food security in Hawaii, allowing farmers to focus on growing diverse crops that meet the needs of our communities and support our local economy.

The conservation easement will also serve as a vital tool in promoting environmental stewardship. Preserving agricultural land in Central Oahu means maintaining open spaces that contribute to biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and the conservation of natural resources. This commitment to land preservation is in alignment with broader goals to mitigate climate change's impacts and foster resilience within our agricultural systems. By supporting SB448, we are not only investing in the agricultural sector but also in the ecological health and sustainability of Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



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February 4, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

TESTIMONY ON SB 448
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice-Chair Wakai, 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 SB 448, which appropriates funds to the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) for the acquisition of a conservation easement in Central O'ahu to ensure the long-term preservation of agricultural lands for food production and sustainability.

Hawai'i's agricultural industry faces increasing challenges, including losing prime farmland to urban development, rising operational costs, and competition from imported goods. The State Constitution (Article XI, Sections 3) mandates conserving and protecting agricultural lands, promoting diversified agriculture, increasing agricultural self-sufficiency, and assuring the availability of agriculturally suitable lands. SB 448 aligns with these mandates by securing critical agricultural lands for future generations of farmers.

Moreover, the State has enacted ambitious goals to increase local food production. Act 175 (2021) requires that at least 30% of food served in Hawai'i's public schools be locally sourced by 2030, and Act 176 (2021) mandates that 50% of produce purchased by state departments be locally grown by 2050. Meeting these targets will require long-term access to agricultural lands—lands that are increasingly at risk of conversion to non-agricultural uses.

By funding a conservation easement, SB 448 will:

- Preserve farmland for active agricultural use and ensure it remains available for future food production.
- Provide stability for farmers who depend on agricultural land for their livelihoods.
- Support the State's food security goals by protecting productive land from development pressures.
- Help the local economy by sustaining agricultural jobs and local food production.

Agriculture should be a pillar of Hawai'i's economy and food security, and proactive efforts are needed to ensure its future survival and success. SB 448 represents an essential investment in Hawai'i's agricultural future.

We urge the committee to pass this measure and help safeguard Hawai'i's farmlands for future generations.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on this measure.