

MAR 07 2025

SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE COUNTIES TO ADOPT LOCAL ZONING ORDINANCES TO REQUIRE OWNERS OF AGRICULTURAL-ZONED LANDS TO EXECUTE AND RECORD DECLARATIONS THAT ACKNOWLEDGE STATE AND COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LAND USE REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS AND PENALTIES FOR NONCOMPLIANCE.

1 WHEREAS, while nearly half of the State's 4,100,000 acres
2 is designated for agricultural use, approximately eight percent
3 of these lands is being used for actively growing crops and 18.5
4 percent of these lands is being used for grazing animals; and
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6 WHEREAS, according to the Department of Agriculture's 2020
7 Update to the Hawaii Statewide Agricultural Land Use Baseline
8 study, between 2015 and 2020, the overall statewide acreage of
9 planted crops decreased by twenty-one percent, or 31,207 acres,
10 in large part due to the closure of the Hawaiian Commercial and
11 Sugar Company on Maui; and
12

13 WHEREAS, during this time, there was an overall seven
14 percent increase in other crop types, or an additional 7,588
15 acres, including a notable twenty-two percent increase in
16 diversified agriculture, which added 3,695 acres, demonstrating
17 that farming is still a viable industry in Hawaii; and
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19 WHEREAS, the study also provided the following statewide
20 statistics:
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- 22 (1) For the island of Hawaii, there are 62,461 crop acres
23 and 552,091 pasture acres;
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25 (2) For the island of Kauai, there are 23,191 crop acres
26 and 42,345 pasture acres;
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28 (3) For the island of Maui, there are 7,718 crop acres and
29 115,241 pasture acres;
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1 (4) For the island of Molokai, there are 3,880 crop acres
2 and 37,867 pasture acres;
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4 (5) For the island of Lanai, there are 105 crop acres and
5 0 pasture acres; and
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7 (6) For the island of Oahu, there are 23,227 crop acres
8 and 18,035 pasture acres; and
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10 WHEREAS, while the statewide totals are 120,632 crop acres
11 and 765,579 grazing acres, for a total of 886,211 acres, this
12 total is less than one-half of the nearly 2,000,000 acres
13 statewide designated for agriculture use; and
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15 WHEREAS, while state and county agricultural land use
16 regulations seek to require or at least encourage active
17 agricultural use of agricultural-zoned lands, it is clear that a
18 significant amount of these lands is not being used for
19 agricultural production; and
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21 WHEREAS, the Hawaii State Plan, pursuant to chapter 226,
22 Hawaii Revised Statutes, includes objectives and policies for
23 the economy related to agriculture, including the objectives of
24 "growth and development of diversified agriculture throughout
25 the State" and "an agriculture industry that continues to
26 constitute a dynamic and essential component of Hawaii's
27 strategic, economic, and social well-being", along with eighteen
28 companion policies; and
29

30 WHEREAS, each of the counties' general plans also calls for
31 supporting local agriculture industries and promoting food
32 sustainability; and
33

34 WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture and Hawaii Farmers
35 Union run farm apprentice mentoring programs, and the University
36 of Hawaii's GoFarm Hawaii Program offers a Farmer-to-Farmer
37 Mentorship series of webinars and other training programs, among
38 other opportunities to grow local farmers; and
39

40 WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the State and the
41 counties to pursue policies and take actions that result in an
42 increase in the number of acres that are in active farming and



1 ranching use and that increase the production of local
2 agricultural products, which will promote food security and
3 sustainability while increasing the number of agricultural jobs,
4 thus promoting economic diversity; and

5
6 WHEREAS, Maui County currently requires owners of
7 agricultural-zoned lands to submit a declaration of compliance
8 when obtaining a building permit, acknowledging state and county
9 land use requirements and penalties for violations; and

10
11 WHEREAS, such declarations should be utilized by all four
12 counties and should be recorded so that future owners are also
13 aware of these requirements; and

14
15 WHEREAS, the counties should also make available to owners
16 of agriculture lands information on local agricultural
17 resources, including farm bureaus and farm apprenticeship and
18 mentoring programs, so that owners can readily put their lands
19 into production; now, therefore,

20
21 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
22 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025,
23 that the counties are urged to adopt local zoning ordinances to
24 require owners of agricultural-zoned lands to execute and record
25 declarations that acknowledge state and county agricultural land
26 use regulations and requirements and the penalties for
27 noncompliance; and

28
29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the counties are encouraged to
30 promote the active use of agricultural lands by making
31 information available on farm apprenticeship and mentoring
32 programs to owners of agricultural lands; and

33
34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
35 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
36 Agriculture, Director of the Office of Planning and Sustainable
37 Development, Mayor of the County of Hawaii, Mayor of the City
38 and County of Honolulu, Mayor of the County of Kauai, Mayor of
39 the County of Maui, Planning Director of the County of Hawaii,
40 Director of Planning and Permitting for the City and County of
41 Honolulu, Planning Director of the County of Kauai, Planning
42 Director of the County of Maui, President of the Hawaii Farm



1 Bureau, and President and Chief Executive Officer of the Hawaii
2 Farmers Union.

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OFFERED BY:



