

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

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2025  
10:00 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 77, HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 69  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO DESIGNATE  
KUNIA, LEILEHUA PLATEAU, AND POAMOHO AS THE CENTRAL OAHU  
AGRICULTURAL CORRIDOR AND TO ESTABLISH A LIST PRIORITIZING  
POTENTIAL AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS  
THAT WOULD PROVIDE THE MOST VALUE TO THE STATE.

Chair Kahaloea, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Concurrent Resolution No. 77 and House Resolution 69. These resolutions request the Department of Agriculture (Department) to designate Kunia, Leilehua Plateau, and Poamoho as the Central Oahu Agricultural Corridor and to establish a list prioritizing potential agricultural infrastructure improvement projects that would provide the most value to the State. These resolutions also request the Department of Transportation to consider traffic signage for speed limits and "no passing" zones. The Department offers comments on the proposed Corridor designation and establishing a list of prioritized agricultural infrastructure improvements.

With respect to the requested designation of the proposed Central Oahu Agricultural Corridor, the Department would consider identifying, rather than designating, the Corridor, as we have no program or authority to formally designate a geographic area. We also recommend the resolutions declare a purpose for the proposed designation or identification of the Corridor. For the Committee's information, the Department has identified and testified about the need to protect the "Kunia Corridor" from non-agricultural uses and activities. As we informally describe it, the "Kunia Corridor" extends from the Royal Kunia community and the Hawaii Agricultural



Research Center to the south and Schofield Barracks and Wheeler Army Airfield to the north, with the Kunia Road at its core.

The resolutions request the Department to “establish a list prioritizing potential agricultural infrastructure improvement projects that would provide the most value to the State...” The resolutions identify infrastructure needed by farmers to include roads and water systems. The resolutions should specify whether this list of prioritized infrastructure is to be limited to the proposed Central Oahu Agricultural Corridor or the island of Oahu, or the entire State. If the list of prioritized infrastructure is specific to the agricultural lands within the proposed Corridor, then the Department would respectfully recommend that the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism be the requested agency in these resolutions as the ADC controls thousands of acres of agricultural land, operates the Waiahole Ditch, and is a major party to the Wahiawa Irrigation System.

The Department notes that “potential agricultural infrastructure improvement projects” may be expressed in general terms in county plans. County zoning ordinances and State land use law identify permitted and permissible uses on agricultural land and do not identify specific infrastructure projects. Therefore, there is little, if any, utility to include county zoning and State land use law in establishing the list of prioritized potential agriculture infrastructure improvement projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these resolutions.

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

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEM

March 21, 2025

10:00 a.m.

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 77/HOUSE RESOLUTION 69

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO DESIGNATE KUNIA, LEILEHUA PLATEAU, AND POAMOHO AS THE CENTRAL OAHU AGRICULTURAL CORRIDOR AND TO ESTABLISH A LIST PRIORITIZING POTENTIAL AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS THAT WOULD PROVIDE THE MOST VALUE TO THE STATE.

Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of House Concurrent Resolution 77 & House Resolution 69, requesting the Department of Agriculture to designate Kunia, Leilehua plateau, and Poamoho as the Central Oahu agricultural corridor and to establish a list prioritizing potential agricultural infrastructure improvement projects that would provide the most value to the state.

Some of Hawaii's largest diversified farmers operate on the central plain of Oahu. Investing in the region's aging plantation era infrastructure is of critical importance not only because of the impact on the production of crops, but also

because of the economic impact on the community. Making these investments will ensure the infrastructure can support agriculture production for centuries to come.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

**HCR-77**

Submitted on: 3/20/2025 5:50:09 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/21/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brian Miyamoto	Hawaii Farm Bureau	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support this!



# Hawaii Agriculture Research Center

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## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE and FOOD SYSTEMS

### HOUSE CONTINUING RESOLUTION 77 AND HR 69

- REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO DESIGNATE KUNIA, LEILEHUA PLATEAU, AND POAMOHO AS THE CENTRAL OAHU AGRICULTURAL CORRIDOR

**MARCH 21, 2025**

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and members of the committee:

My name is Robbie Melton. I am Executive Director of the Hawaii Agriculture Research Center (HARC). I am testifying today on behalf of the center and our research and support staff.

**HARC strongly supports HCR77 and HR69 requesting the department of agriculture to designate Kunia, Leilehua plateau, and Poamoho as the central Oahu agricultural corridor and to establish a list prioritizing potential agricultural infrastructure improvement projects that would provide the most value to the state.**

Central Oahu has is the pinnacle region of agriculture on Oahu. The HARC Kunia Experiment Station has been active for over 50 years conducting agriculture experiments and educating farmers across Hawaii on its research findings of best practices, new crop varieties with traits like disease resistance and higher productivity. We focus on crops that will strengthen Hawaii's agricultural sustainability.

The Kunia Experiment Station is the gateway to this agricultural district. Over the generations as the island has developed it has become less friendly to agricultural businesses in the designated area. There is much infrastructure that needs to be upgraded or developed.

For example, the current speed limit on Kunia Road is 35 MPH. Very few people actually drive the speed limit making it very difficult for farmers to enter and exit their property. Installing speed humps and other traffic measures would make a big difference.

To achieve Hawaii's goal of reducing food imports and increasing Hawaii's food production, creating this agriculture corridor will ensure Hawaii will have a thriving agriculture industry.

**Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support.**

**HCR-77**

Submitted on: 3/20/2025 4:02:56 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/21/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alan Takemoto	Bayer	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloha and members of the committee:

Bayer strongly supports HCR 77 / HR 69 which recognizes the best and most productive agricultural lands in central Oahu. It highlights the need to support and fund the necessary irrigation infrastructure and roadways for farming to be viable in this ag corridor.

We respectfully urge the passage of these resolutions.

Mahalo.

KUNIA VILLAGE TITLE HOLDING CORPORATION

PO BOX 100

KUNIA, HI 96759

808 228 0272

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE**

**ON AGRICULTURE and FOOD SYSTEMS**

**March 21, 2025**

*Pilot*

*50 years way*

Aloha Chair Kahaloa and members of your committee:

My name is Stephanie Whalen and I represent the Kunia Village and its agricultural worker tenants.

The Village strongly supports HCR 77/HR69 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO DESIGNATE KUNIA, LEILEHUA PLATEAU, AND POAMOHO AS THE CENTRAL OAHU AGRICULTURAL CORRIDOR AND TO ESTABLISH A LIST PRIORITIZING POTENTIAL AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS THAT WOULD PROVIDE THE MOST VALUE TO THE STATE.

However it also strongly recommends *changing the implementing agency from the Department of Agriculture to the Agribusiness Development Corporation* which has some land in this area.

The Kunia Village is the former Del Monte Hawaii headquarters and housing for its agricultural workers. It was given to the Hawaii Agricultural Research Center in 2009 with the hope that HARC could carry on providing agriculture with homes for agricultural workers and infrastructure for agricultural businesses. It is doing that but believe that more needs to be done to ensure the future of local agriculture.

The west portion of central Oahu from H-1 to Waialua has significant agricultural land some of it legally dedicated to agriculture in perpetuity; it has good soil, water and sunlight; it is close to the major food market of the state. Most of it has been set aside in Community plans to stay in agriculture but that isn't enough. Development always finds a way to convert agricultural lands into other uses.

If we are really intent on increasing local food production and providing long term stability for it, developing a designated corridor, where agriculture is the top driver for policy, infrastructure, use and incentives is necessary.

This area already includes significant pieces required for long term sustainability of agriculture: warehouses for processing, gravity flow irrigation, dedicated lands, parcels in research and labor housing.

Unfortunately, the roads through this area have an unreasonably high fatality rate and several farm workers have been killed. Accidents are a regular occurrence, and theft is out of control.

Agriculture needs to be seen by the various agencies having jurisdictions in this area as the priority. facilitating its needs over other uses or standards.

Please pass this measure to help ensure food for the future.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in **strong support of HCR77/HR69.**

**HCR-77**

Submitted on: 3/21/2025 8:17:13 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/21/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jamie Barton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a small farmer operating off of Kaukonahua Road I strongly support this. I have a 5 acre flower foliage and fruit farm and have farmed both this area and kunia since 2009. I drive this road every day and have seen several accidents and many close calls. Folks drive very fast, especially on the curves of the road, and it very dangerous to come in and out of the farms on the road. The situation near the egg farm is particularly dangerous. I have also frequently driven Kunia road for years and have seen how much safer it is now with speed humps, kaukonahua rd could greatly benefit from the same. We are also completely dependent on the ag water flowing through the ditch along the road, and a loss of this water would end our business.