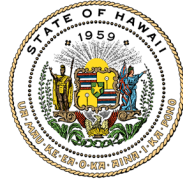


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025
1:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 88, SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 71
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH AND
ADMINISTER A MICROBIAL ALGAE SOIL PRODUCTS PILOT PROGRAM.

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 88 and Senate Resolution No. 71 that requests the Department of Agriculture (Department) to establish and administer a microbial algae soil products pilot program (Pilot Program). The Department offers comments.

At the core of the Pilot Program is the cooperation of farmers who will have met 5 strict standards to qualify to be part of the Program. These farmers will apply the microbial algae soil products that are to be acquired from an unspecified source. The Department, in collaboration with the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR), will produce reports prior to the convening of the 2026 and 2027 legislatures containing findings and recommendations for the long-term application of microbial algae soil products to Hawaii's agricultural sector.

The Department defers to CTAHR with respect to supplying the qualified farmers with microbial algae and how best to measure the efficacy of its application to improve soil health, nutrient cycling and reduce fertilizer dependency without funding and other resources.

As resolutions do not provide for funding, we defer to CTAHR whether the following activities can be undertaken: data collection; analysis of soils of participating



farms; soil testing; crop yielding; purchase of farming supplies to carry out the Pilot Program; educational outreach, and so forth. Without these activities taking place, we are uncertain if the true utility of applying microbial algae soil products can be determined.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.