

A Bill for an Act Relating to the Conservation District.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by adding a new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

**“CHAPTER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

§ **-1 Findings and purpose.** The legislature finds that lands within the state land use conservation district contain important natural resources essential to the preservation of the State’s fragile natural ecosystems and the sustainability of the State’s water supply. It is therefore, the intent of the legislature to conserve, protect, and preserve the important natural resources of the State through appropriate management and use to promote their long-term sustainability and the public health, safety and welfare.

§ **-2 Definitions.** As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

“Board” means the board of land and natural resources.

“Chairperson” means the chairperson of the board of land and natural resources.

“Conservation district” means those lands within the various counties of the State bounded by the conservation district line, as established under provisions of Act 187, Session Laws of Hawaii 1961, and Act 205, Session Laws of Hawaii 1963, or future amendments thereto.

“Department” means the department of land and natural resources.

“Kuleana” means those lands granted to native tenants pursuant to L. 1850, p. 202 entitled “An Act Conforming Certain Resolutions of the King and Privy Council, Passed on the 21st Day of December, A.D. 1849, Granting to the Common People Allodial Titles for Their Own Lands and House Lots, and Certain Other Privileges,” as originally enacted and as amended.

“Land”, means all real property, fast or submerged, and all interests therein, including fauna, flora, minerals, and all such natural resources, unless otherwise expressly provided.

“Landowner” means an owner of land or any estate or interest in that land.

“Land use” means:

- (1) The placement or erection of any solid material on land;
- (2) The grading, removing, harvesting, dredging, mining, or extraction of any material or natural resource on land;
- (3) The subdivision of land; or
- (4) The construction, reconstruction, demolition, or alteration of any structure, building, or facility on land.

“Nonconforming” use means the lawful use of any building, premises or land for any trade, industry, residence or other purposes which is the same as and no greater than that established prior to October 1, 1964, or prior to the inclusion of the building, premises, or land within the conservation district.

§ **-3 Powers and duties of the board and department.** The board and department shall:

- (1) Maintain an accurate inventory of lands classified within the state conservation district by the state land use commission, pursuant to chapter 205;
- (2) Identify and appropriately zone those lands classified within the conservation district;
- (3) Adopt rules, in compliance with chapter 91 which shall have the force and effect of law;
- (4) Set, charge, and collect reasonable fees in an amount sufficient to defray the cost of processing applications for zoning, use, and subdivision of conservation lands;
- (5) Establish categories of uses or activities on conservation lands, including allowable uses or activities for which no permit shall be required;
- (6) Establish restrictions, requirements, and conditions consistent with the standards set forth in this chapter on the use of conservation lands; and
- (7) Establish and enforce land use regulations on conservation district lands including the collection of fines for violations of land use and terms and conditions of permits issued by the department.

§ **-4 Zoning; amendments.** (a) The department, after notice and hearing as provided in this section, shall review and redefine the boundaries of the zones within the conservation district.

(b) The department shall adopt rules governing the use of land within the boundaries of the conservation district that are consistent with the conservation of necessary forest growth, the conservation and development of land and natural resources adequate for present and future needs, and the conservation and preservation of open space areas for public use and enjoyment. No use except a non-conforming use as defined in section -5, shall be made within the conservation district unless the use is in accordance with a zoning rule.

(c) The department may allow a temporary variance from zoned use where good cause is shown and where the proposed temporary variance is for a use determined by the department to be in accordance with good conservation practices.

(d) The department shall establish zones within the conservation district, which shall be restricted to certain uses. The department, by rules, may specify the land uses permitted therein which may include, but are not limited to, farming, flower gardening, operation of nurseries or orchards, growth of commercial timber, grazing, recreational or hunting pursuits, or residential use. The rules may control the extent, manner, and times of the uses, and may specifically prohibit unlimited cutting of forest growth, soil mining, or other activities detrimental to good conservation practices.

(e) Whenever any landowner or government agency whose property will be directly affected makes an application to change the boundaries or land uses of any zone, or to establish a zone with certain land uses, or where the department proposes to make the change or changes itself, the change or changes shall be put in the form of a proposed rule by the applicant and the department shall then give notice by publication at least three times in three successive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the State and in the county in which the property is located. The notice shall be given not less than thirty days prior to the date set for the hearing, and shall state the time and place of the hearing and the changes proposed. Any proposed rules and the necessary maps shall be made available for inspection by interested members of the public. The hearing shall be held in the

county in which the land is located and may be delegated to an agent or representative of the board as may otherwise be provided by law and in accordance with rules adopted by the board. For the purpose of its public hearing or hearings, the board shall have the power to summon witnesses, administer oaths, and require the giving of testimony.

§ **-5 Nonconforming uses.** Neither this chapter nor any rules adopted hereunder shall prohibit the continuance of the lawful use of any building, premises, or land for any trade, industrial, residential, or other purpose for which the building premises, or land was used on October 1, 1964, or at the time any rule adopted under authority of this part takes effect. All such existing uses shall be nonconforming uses. Any land identified as a kuleana may be put to those uses which were historically, customarily, and actually found on the particular lot including, if applicable, the construction of a single family residence. Any structures may be subject to conditions to ensure they are consistent with the surrounding environment.

§ **-6 Permits and site plan approvals.** (a) The department shall regulate land use in the conservation district by the issuance of permits.

(b) The department shall render a decision on a completed application for a permit within one-hundred-eighty days of its acceptance by the department. If within one-hundred-eighty days after acceptance of a completed application for a permit, the department shall fail to give notice, hold a hearing, and render a decision, the owner may automatically put the owner's land to the use or uses requested in the owner's application. When an environmental impact statement is required pursuant to chapter 343, or when a contested case hearing is requested pursuant to chapter 91, the one-hundred-eighty days may be extended to an additional ninety days at the request of the applicant. Any request for additional extensions shall be subject to the approval of the board.

(c) The department shall hold a public hearing in every case involving the proposed use of land for commercial purposes, at which hearing interested persons shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to be heard. Notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be published at least once in a newspaper of general circulation in the State and in the county in which the property is located. The notice shall be given not less than twenty days prior to the date set for the hearing. The hearing shall be held in the county in which the land is located and may be delegated to an agent or representative of the board as may otherwise be provided by law and in accordance with rules adopted by the board. For the purposes of its public hearing or hearings, the department shall have the power to summon witnesses, administer oaths, and require the giving of testimony. As used in this paragraph, the term "commercial purposes" shall not include the use of land for utility purposes.

(d) The department shall regulate the construction, reconstruction, demolition, or alteration of any structure, building, or facility by the issuance of site plan approvals.

§ **-7 Penalty for violation.** (a) The department shall prescribe administrative procedures as it deems necessary for the enforcement of this chapter and any zoning rule adopted in accordance therewith. These rules may be enforced by court order at the suit of the department or of the owner or owners of real estate directly affected by the rules. The provisions of section 607-25 shall apply to this chapter.

(b) Any person violating this chapter or any rule adopted in accordance with this chapter shall be fined not more than \$2,000 in addition to administrative costs and damages to state land. After written notification from the department, wilful violation of this section may incur an additional fine of up to \$2,000 per day for each day in which the violation persists.

§ -8 Zoning order; appeal to circuit court. Any final order of the department based upon this part may be appealed to the circuit court of the circuit in which the land in question is found. The appeal shall be in accord with chapter 91 and the Hawaii Rules of Civil Procedure.”

SECTION 2. Section 205-5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

“(a) Except as herein provided, the powers granted to counties under section 46-4 shall govern the zoning within the districts, other than in conservation districts. Conservation districts shall be governed by the department of land and natural resources pursuant to [section 183-41] chapter ____.”

SECTION 3. Section 183-41, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is repealed.

SECTION 4. Section 183-43, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is repealed.

SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed.¹ New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved July 1, 1994.)

Note

1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.