

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR



**DEAN MINAKAMI**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII**

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM  
HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
FAX: (808) 587-0600

Statement of  
**DEAN MINAKAMI**  
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation  
Before the

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

April 02, 2025 at 10:01 a.m.  
State Capitol, Room 211

In consideration of  
**H.B. 1294 HD2 SD1**  
**RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING.**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee.

HHFDC **supports** HB 1294 HD2 SD1, which establishes an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group within the Department of Agriculture to address the shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the State. It also requires reports to the Legislature and appropriates funds. HHFDC supports the measure so long as it does not adversely impact priorities identified in the Executive Budget Request for FY 2026.

HHFDC is named as a member of the working group and agrees that collaboration would be a valuable way to address the shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL HB1294 HD2 SD1  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING**

Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Hawai'i State Capitol

April 2, 2025

10:01am

Rm. 211

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Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the committee:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) submits this **testimony in support of HB1294 HD2 SD1** that works towards addressing the pressing issue of agricultural workforce housing in the state. The bill proposes the establishment of an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group within the Department of Agriculture, tasked with identifying solutions to housing shortage and affordability for agricultural workers.

**OHA appreciates that this measure will help to address the needs of stability and productivity of Hawai'i's agricultural industry.** The provisions of the bill include the consideration of financial incentives, such as tax credit programs for agricultural employers who invest in housing solutions for their workforce. Additionally, the working group will study the feasibility of implementing a state income tax credit for investors who incur costs related to the construction, installation, acquisition, or rehabilitation of agricultural workforce housing.

**OHA recognizes that the bill promotes local agricultural and labor shortages in agriculture.** For that reason, recommendations to build agricultural housing stock must emphasize its affordability with the goal of attracting skilled and stable farm workers and increasing farm income. Providing worker housing may not be considered a taxable benefit, so this enables the farmworker or ranch hand to receive a lower taxable wage rate because workers housing costs are available at a low- or no-cost, and workers commuting costs may be reduced or eliminated.

**This measure is in alignment with The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) mission to improve the conditions of Native Hawaiians and ensure their equitable access to housing, aina mamona, and economic opportunities.** It reflects our commitment to advancing the well-being of our beneficiaries and the broader community. This measure

will help to improve living conditions for agricultural workers and increase food security and sustainability for Hawaii.

OHA asks that the Committee **PASS HB1294 HD2 SD1** that establishes a working group to support agriculture and affordable housing . Mahalo nui.

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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
April 2, 2025  
10:01 a.m.  
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

HOUSE BILL NO. 1294 HD2 SD1  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING

Chairperson Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) **supports** House Bill No. 1294 HD2 SD1, which seeks to address the critical shortage of workforce housing for agricultural employees in Hawaii. This bill is an essential step toward supporting the agricultural sector, ensuring the stability of Hawaii's farming workforce, and promoting food security by enabling farmworkers to live closer to the lands they cultivate and care for. We also acknowledge and support the inclusion of ADC as a member of the proposed working group tasked with implementing this initiative, ensuring that workforce housing solutions align with the unique needs of farmers and agricultural employees across the state.

**The Need for Workforce Housing in Agriculture**

Hawaii's agricultural industry is a cornerstone of the state's economy, cultural heritage, and food security goals. However, the high cost of living, limited

affordable housing options, and lack of workforce housing near agricultural lands create significant barriers for farm workers and their families.

Without adequate housing, many agricultural employees are forced to commute long distances or live in substandard conditions, contributing to worker shortages, increased operating costs for farmers, and decreased productivity. Workforce housing is critical for maintaining a reliable, skilled workforce that supports Hawaii's agriculture and food security initiatives.

### **How House Bill No. 1294 HD2 SD1 Supports Agricultural Employees and Employers**

House Bill No. 1294 HD2 SD1, provides a framework to develop, incentivize, and facilitate the creation of workforce housing on or near agricultural lands, which will:

1. **Stabilize the Agricultural Workforce:** Providing affordable and accessible housing will help retain skilled workers, attract new talent to the agricultural sector, and reduce turnover rates that disrupt farm operations.
2. **Enhance Productivity:** By reducing commute times and ensuring workers have safe and stable living conditions, House Bill No. 1294 HD2 SD1, supports a more reliable and productive workforce, benefiting farmers and the agricultural economy.
3. **Support Food Security Goals:** A stable agricultural workforce is essential to achieving Hawaii's goal of doubling local food production by 2030, as outlined in the Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan.

4. **Reduce Barriers for Farmworkers:** Many farm workers face financial challenges due to Hawaii's high cost of living. Workforce housing alleviates this burden, allowing workers to focus on their contributions to local food production.
5. **Create Opportunities for Rural Communities:** Workforce housing projects will stimulate economic development in rural areas, support local businesses, and strengthen community ties.

### **ADC's Role in the Working Group**

The inclusion of ADC on the proposed working group is a critical component of the success of this initiative. As the state's lead agency for agricultural land management and development, ADC is uniquely positioned to bring its expertise and resources to the table.

In its role on the working group, ADC will:

- **Identify Suitable Sites:** Work to identify lands under its management that are appropriate for workforce housing projects, ensuring proximity to active agricultural operations.
- **Collaborate with Stakeholders:** Partner with farmers, housing developers, local governments, and community organizations to design and implement housing solutions that are affordable, sustainable, and compatible with agricultural land use.

- **Promote Sustainability:** Advocate for the integration of renewable energy, water-efficient systems, and environmentally responsible practices in workforce housing developments.
- **Ensure Agricultural Compatibility:** Ensure that housing developments on agricultural lands do not interfere with or reduce agricultural productivity.
- **Support Funding Efforts:** Collaborate on securing federal, state, and private funding to support the development and maintenance of workforce housing projects.

### **Alignment with Statewide Goals**

House Bill No. 1294 HD2 SD1 aligns with several critical state priorities, including:

- **Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan:** Workforce housing supports the agricultural workforce needed to increase local food production and reduce reliance on imported goods.
- **Economic Development:** Stable housing for farm workers fosters economic growth in rural communities and helps sustain local farming operations.
- **Social Equity:** Providing affordable housing ensures that farm workers and their families can live with dignity, stability, and access to basic services.

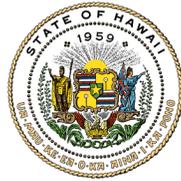
### **Conclusion**

The passage of House Bill No. 1294 HD2 SD1 is essential for addressing the housing needs of Hawaii's agricultural workforce and supporting the broader goals of food security, economic resilience, and sustainability. By investing in workforce housing and establishing a collaborative working group with ADC's involvement, Hawaii will strengthen its agricultural sector, support local farmers, and create opportunities for farm workers to thrive.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of this measure.

**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**  
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2025**  
**10:01 AM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1294, HOUSE DRAFT 2, SENATE DRAFT 1**  
**RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING.**

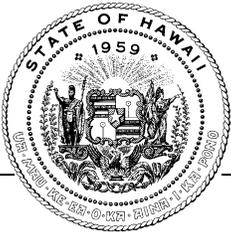
Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill No. 1294, House Draft 2, Senate Draft 1 that establishes within the Department of Agriculture (Department) a 29-member Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group to address the "shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the State". The Department is to provide administrative support and co-chair the Task Force with the Agribusiness Development Corporation. The bill requires an interim report to the Legislature prior to the 2027 session and the final report by the 2028 session. There are two separate appropriations for FYs 25-26 and 26-27 to gather the necessary data and prepare the required report, including any consultation fees and related expenses. The Department appreciates this measure's intent and offers comments.

The Department recommends that an early task of the Task Force, once established, is to gather data and information and survey farm operators to assess the realistic demand for farm workers. This information would inform a targeted rather than broad assessment of agricultural workforce housing needs. For instance, in 2022, 59 percent of Hawaii's 6,569 farms (federal definition) made less than \$10,000 a year in revenue from agricultural product sales. We do not know if these lower-income farm operations are able to hire farm workers, much less afford building and operating on-farm worker housing or be able to participate in alternative worker housing. A possible solution may be congregate living facilities located in the vicinity of where these small farm operations are aggregated.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.





**STATE OF HAWAI'I  
OFFICE OF PLANNING  
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**MARY ALICE EVANS**  
DIRECTOR

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

Telephone: (808) 587-2846  
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Web: <https://planning.hawaii.gov/>

Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS**  
Director

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**  
Wednesday, April 2, 2025  
10:01 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

in consideration of  
**HB 1294, HD2, SD1**  
**RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING.**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** HB 1294, HD2, SD1, which would establish a multi-sector agricultural workforce housing working group to examine a range of tools and strategies to address the need for agricultural workforce housing in the State.

OPSD recognizes farmworker housing has been a long-standing concern for the agricultural sector in Hawai'i, and that overcoming the shortage of farmworker housing is vital to the long-term viability of agricultural producers.

OPSD stands ready to participate in the working group. Such a working group would be useful in determining how we, as a State, could collectively meet the industry's need for farmworker housing while protecting agricultural lands from non-agricultural residential uses.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII  
*Ke Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina 'o  
Hawaii'i*

SYLVIA J. LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII  
*Ka Hope Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina  
'o Hawaii'i*



KALI WATSON  
CHAIRPERSON, HHC  
*Ka Luna Ho'okele*

KATIE L. LAMBERT  
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIR  
*Ka Hope Luna Ho'okele*

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS**  
*Ka 'Oihana 'Āina Ho'opulapula Hawaii'i*

P. O. BOX 1879  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

**TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIR**  
**HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION**  
**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS**  
**DECISION MAKING ON APRIL 2, 2025 AT 10:01AM IN CR 211**

**HB 1294, HD 2, SD 1, RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING**

April 2, 2025

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) **supports** this bill which 1) establishes an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group within the Department of Agriculture to address the shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the State, 2) requires reports to the Legislature, and 3) appropriates funds.

The Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, as amended, authorizes DHHL to lease agricultural lands or lands used for aquaculture purposes. DHHL has awarded 1,105 agricultural leases as of December 31, 2024 – 60 on Oahu, 64 on Maui, 406 in East Hawaii, 111 in West Hawaii, 46 on Kauai, and 418 on Molokai. DHHL also has 19,939 applications for an agricultural lease as of January 1, 2025 – 4,220 on Oahu, 4,840 on Maui, 7,410 on Hawaii Island, 2,327 on Kauai, and 1,142 on Molokai.

DHHL's General Plan Update dated November 2022 notes the following: "The connection to 'āina and ability to cultivate it and bring forth life is central to Prince Kūhiō's vision for the rehabilitation of Hawaiians. The first homestead pilot program focused on agriculture production as evidence that the Hawaiian Homesteads work. Today, agricultural homestead lots have the longest waitlists on all islands except for O'ahu." The Plan also provides that "the majority of agricultural applicants who responded (80%) indicated that they intend to farm and live (i.e., build a home) on their agricultural lot when awarded. The agricultural activities that applicants anticipated for their lots, once awarded, were mostly subsistence and gardening activities, while 11% of waitlist respondents anticipated using their agriculture lot for commercial farming." The Plan further explains that "DHHL is developing an Agriculture Program Plan to increase beneficiary capacity in farming. Programs will range from training in beginning farming to more advanced programs for commercial agriculture."

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 10:57:17 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
laurel brier	Testifying for Kauai Climate Action Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Farm worker housing has been a problem for decades. Let's address it. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai'i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai'i's local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions.



## Senate Committee on Ways and Means

### Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: HB1294 HD2 SD1

April 2nd, 2025 at: 10:01 a.m.; Conference Room 211

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Moriwaki and members of the committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) we submit this testimony in strong support of HB1294 HD2 SD1 establishing an Agricultural Housing Task Force whose goal is to make it easier for farmers to create and utilize "on-farm housing" for their farm worker employees. HAPA is a statewide organization and engages over 10,000 local residents annually through our work, many of which are passionate about expanding a sustainable food producing agricultural sector for Hawai'i and we believe that a lack of farmworker housing is one of the limitations in creating a vibrant farming future here in the islands.

The difficulty that farmers now face in recruiting farm workers is a well known fact, and the lack of availability of genuine farm worker housing is a key component of this dilemma. Because each county is unique and each has different laws governing the allowable housing density on agricultural land, and because of the overlap of state and county regulation it makes sense to assemble all of the stakeholders and form a task force such as is being proposed.

The many attempts and failures to get it right on the County and State level, despite the desperate need for farmworker housing, illustrate the need for this task force.

For viable solutions to be developed, it will be essential however that all parties involved in the planning and land use process, get together with those individuals who are actually operating real farms and who represent each county and the various sectors/types of farming.

Thank you for your consideration. I urge you to support HB1294 HD2 SD1.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick  
Executive Director



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921  
e-mail [info@hfbf.org](mailto:info@hfbf.org); [www.hfbf.org](http://www.hfbf.org)

April 2, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1294, HD2, SD1**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference  
10:01 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, 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 HB 1294, HD2, SD1**, which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group to address the shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the State.

HFB recognizes the need for agricultural workforce housing and believes that affordable housing is necessary to attract farm workers. This has been a major shortfall as we try to address the labor needs for agriculture and is a limiting factor for the growth of agriculture in Hawai'i.

The shortage of willing and able workers, the need for affordable housing for farm workers, and competition from alternative employment are several of the pressing farm-labor-related issues that need to be addressed.

The lack of affordable housing for farmers and farm labor impedes increasing food and non-food agricultural production in Hawai'i. There is a need to develop housing for farmers and farm employees while ensuring that the housing is used in conjunction with an active farm and occupied by bona fide farmers and farm employees.

An Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group can help identify the agricultural workforce housing needs in each County and help identify the barriers to meeting the housing needs for farm and ranch businesses in Hawai'i.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



April 1 2025

To: Chair Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Moriwaki, and Senate Committee Members for Ways and Means

Subject: **HB 1294**, Relating to Agricultural Workforce Housing

Aloha,

I am writing to express my **support** for HB 1294 HD 2 SD 1, which seeks to establish more affordable housing opportunities for our state's agricultural workers. As seen in the amendments in HD 2 the establishment of the Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group within the Department of Agriculture will provide a structured approach to addressing the housing needs of agricultural workers. Additionally, the language in SD 1 further emphasizes the importance of exploring various funding options in order to ensure that resources are directed efficiently and meeting the needs of all agricultural workers.

By focusing on this specific line of issue, the group can design pinpointed solutions that ensure that agricultural workers have access to safe and affordable housing, which is crucial for maintaining a stable and reliable workforce. The provisions in SD 1, including the collaboration with relevant state agencies and stakeholders, will help ensure that all potential housing solutions are carefully considered. With the backing of the Legislature as well as administrative support from the Department of Agriculture, this bill can create long-term strategies that not only will greatly improve the living conditions of workers, but also strengthen the sustainability and agricultural industry itself.

As someone who has spent a lot of time working on agricultural land in Waiāhole Valley, I have firsthand seen the importance of access to housing for farmers, and how imposition to housing opportunities for agricultural workers can be detrimental to the broader community that depends on their labor.

Access to farmer housing in Hawai'i must be addressed as a means to provide support and suitable living opportunities for many of Hawai'i's agricultural workers. The passing of this bill, especially with the funding strategies outlined in SD 1, is crucial in

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**The Food+ Policy internship** develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



**HAWAI'I  
FOOD+  
POLICY**

Honolulu, HI 96813  
food@purplemaia.org

safeguarding our state's food security. Our state's agricultural workforce plays a vital role in providing access to locally grown food for many local families. Ensuring that farmers have stable living conditions is critical to ensuring that our food security is being protected and maintained as Hawai'i's food security continues to grow.

Mahalo nui for your consideration and review.

Thank you,

Lea iaea & the Food+ Policy Team  
#fixourfoodsystem

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**The Food+ Policy internship** develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 9:26:57 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan B Roberts Emery	Testifying for Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of Committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, I am Co chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i. The Green Party of Hawai'i offers our support of HB1294 HD2 SD1. Requiring the Department of Agriculture to establish an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group to address the shortage of agricultural workforce housing in the State is much needed in the Agricultural community. As a farm worker myself , with poor wages usually paid, I see the challenges for agricultural workers trying to find adequate housing.

Please support HB1294 HD2 SD1.

Mahalo nui,

Susan RobertsEmery  
Green Party Hawai'i  
Paauilo

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 9:43:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of. Thank you.

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 5:04:58 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Eliel Starbright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB1294 HD2 SD1**-Farmer housing in Hawai‘i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai‘i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai‘i’s local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions. Eliel, Kapaa, 96746

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 5:53:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Malia Chun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Farmer housing in Hawai‘i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai‘i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai‘i’s local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions. Please support this bill and be part of the solution by supporting affordable housing for hardworking mahi‘ai who have the important kuleana of building food security for Hawai‘i!

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 3:26:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 10:57:36 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
pamela burrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha House members,

Please support HB1294..The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai‘i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai‘i’s local food security.

Farmer housing in Hawai‘i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce.

Mahalo,

Pamela Burrell, Kalihiwai, Kaua'i. 96754

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 8:32:10 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**STRONG SUPPORT!!!** This will help local farmers and rancher maintain and grow their businesses and move the state to greater food security, diversity and sustainability. Mahalo!

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 5:48:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mariana Monasi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Farmer housing in Hawai‘i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai‘i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai‘i’s local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions. Please support expanding much needed farmer housing so we can continue to build a system that protects how we feed ourselves while letting the amounts we rely on imported goods.

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 3:28:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ann Dorsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to support HB1294 HD2 SD1, which will require the Department of Agriculture to establish an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group to address the shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the State.

Farmer housing is critical to the stability of the agricultural workforce, which in turn, is important for food security in Hawai'i. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions.

Thank you

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 10:53:56 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kiana Otsuka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kiana Otsuka, and I am an O‘ahu resident writing in STRONG support of HB1294 HD2 SD1, which establishes an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group within the Department of Agriculture to address the shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the State and requires reports to the Legislature.

Farmer housing in Hawai‘i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai‘i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai‘i’s local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important bill.

Mahalo,

Kiana Otsuka

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 2:54:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Stacey Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Farmer housing in Hawai‘i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai‘i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai‘i’s local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions.

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 10:14:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Farmer housing in Hawai‘i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai‘i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai‘i’s local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions.

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 11:30:30 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of this bill HB1294 HD2 SD1 because with housing prices being so high this is tough on our agricultural workforce, the people we are looking to in order to convert to more self-reliance for our food. This will be a good first step towards a more long-term housing goal. Mahalo.

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 5:11:16 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melissa Barker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Members,

I am writing to respectfully ask that you support HB1294 which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish an Ag Workforce Housing Working Group to address the shortage of ag workforce housing.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 8:21:10 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ezgi Green	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing in **strong support** of HB1294 HD2 SD1, which seeks to establish an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group within the Department of Agriculture. This initiative is a critical step in addressing the **shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing** in Hawai‘i.

Access to stable and affordable housing is essential for the **stability of our agricultural workforce**, which in turn is crucial for strengthening **Hawai‘i’s local food security**. Without adequate housing, farmers and farmworkers struggle to remain in the industry, putting our local food systems at risk. The complex landscape of state and county regulations makes it difficult to develop practical housing solutions, and this bill provides a **necessary first step** in identifying viable pathways to resolve these challenges.

By bringing together key stakeholders, this working group will help **streamline policies, remove barriers, and create solutions** to ensure that agricultural workforce housing is prioritized. I urge you to pass HB1294 HD2 SD1 and support the hardworking individuals who sustain Hawai‘i’s agricultural future.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

**Ezgi Green**

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 6:09:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Pam Murphy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Farmer housing in Hawai‘i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai‘i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai‘i’s local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions.

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 4:33:21 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lorna Holmes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in support of HB 1294. Farmer housing in Hawai'i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai'i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai'i's local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions.

Mahalo for your attention.

Dr. Lorna Holmes,

Honolulu 96817

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 4:56:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members.

Farmer housing in Hawai‘i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai‘i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai‘i’s local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 4:28:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

**Comments:**

Farmer housing in Hawai‘i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai‘i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai‘i’s local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions.

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 11:36:42 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Farmer housing in Hawai‘i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai‘i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai‘i’s local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions.

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 11:47:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
TK McKenzie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this legislation to create a working group to address the dual inequities that are the extreme lack of affordable housing for farmers and the lack of food security due to a lack of secure farm labor.

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 12:03:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
KEALA FUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

Aloha, my name is Keala Fung and I support HB1294

Farmer housing in Hawai‘i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai‘i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai‘i’s local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions.

Please support HB1294 HD2 SD1. Mahalo for your time,

Keala Fung, Honolulu

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 12:08:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ann V Saffery	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha All,

Support for HB1294.

Mahalo for all you do,

Ann V Saffery

Honolulu, HI

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 1:24:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marc-Anthony Gamboa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Investment in farmer housing is crucial to bettering the food insecurity situation that Hawaii faces right now. Our overdependence on imports will prove costly if for any reason, such as a natural disaster, that if ports were destroyed or closed down, Hawaii would only have 2 weeks worth of food. The state is completely unprepared. A solution that will help bolster food production locally would be to invest in farmers here in the state.

Farmer housing in Hawai'i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai'i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai'i's local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions.

Let's get professional agricultural statisticians and experts to help provide us with solutions in which famers can be supported by the state.

Please support this bill.

Thank you,

Marc Gamboa

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 2:29:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
emily gambino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Farmer housing in Hawai‘i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai‘i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai‘i’s local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions.

Please support HB1294

Mahalo,

Emily Gambino

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:45:04 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Manawaiakea	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB1294 HD2 SD1 – Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group

Submitted Under Exclusive Equity Jurisdiction – Ko Hawai‘i Pae ‘Āina

Hawaiian Kingdom Law | Common Law Equity | Rule of Law

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am Roslyn Manawaiakea Cummings, a lawful ho‘oilina, mālama, and Trustee of the Cummings ‘Ohana GodTrust, submitting this testimony under exclusive equity jurisdiction of the Hawaiian Kingdom. I stand in support of HB1294 HD2 SD1, which proposes the establishment of a working group to address the urgent housing needs of mahi‘ai—those who labor the ‘āina to sustain the lāhui and secure Hawai‘i’s food sovereignty.

This bill directly affects the benefit of Kānaka Maoli, particularly those who, by ancestral right, serve as ho‘āina (native tenants) and mahi‘ai, in alignment with the kuleana granted by the 1850 Kuleana Act, the 1846 Land Commission, and affirmed through cases such as:

- Keelikolani v. Manaku (1868) – affirming rights of tenancy and the kuleana of landholders.
- Dreier v. Kua‘a (1885) – emphasizing the equitable interest of tenants and their right to residence and protection.
- In re Boundaries of Pulehunui (1877) – reinforcing the importance of native occupancy and use in legal recognition of land rights.

The shortage of lawful housing for mahi‘ai reflects a systemic failure to uphold kanawai and pono governance. It obstructs our inherent right to maintain cultural practices such as kalo cultivation, animal husbandry, and the propagation of mea ‘ai Hawai‘i that are essential to lāhui well-being and āina resilience.

“Tell them not to sell it—it’s worth more than gold.”

This wahi ‘ōlelo delivered in spirit affirms the truth already present in our laws: land and water are not for speculation or extraction but for perpetuation of life and culture. The rule of law requires protection of our people’s rights to remain on the land. The rule of evidence, from government reports to oral testimony, confirms that agricultural housing is inaccessible or outright denied to Kānaka Maoli mahi‘ai—those who should be prioritized under the original intent of the Great Māhele and the public trust doctrine.

This bill presents an opportunity to convene a working group that centers lawful heirs, not just commercial operators, and prioritizes housing frameworks grounded in equity, mo‘okū‘auhau, and kuleana.

Therefore, I strongly urge this Committee to PASS HB1294 HD2 SD1 with full recognition that housing for mahi‘ai is not a convenience—it is a matter of legal duty, equity, and survival of the lāhui.

Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono.

The sovereignty of the land is preserved in righteousness.

With lawful authority and pono intention,

Roslyn Manawaiakea Cummings

Mālama: Cummings ‘Ohana GodTrust

Ho‘oilina of Ko Hawai‘i Pae ‘Āina

Under Exclusive Equity Jurisdiction | Hawaiian Kingdom Law | Common Law Equity



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Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means 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. **HFU supports HB1294.**

By establishing an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group within the Department of Agriculture, the bill seeks to create a dedicated body that can delve into the complex challenges faced by our agricultural workers when it comes to securing housing. The lack of adequate housing options not only affects the quality of life for agricultural workers but also impacts the overall productivity and sustainability of Hawaii's farming industry. By prioritizing this issue, the working group can develop targeted strategies and solutions that will directly benefit both the agricultural workforce and the wider farming community.

Moreover, the appropriation of funds to support this initiative underscores a necessary commitment to invest in the agricultural sector's backbone—its workers. The establishment of a working group tasked to not only assess but also actively address these housing challenges is both timely and necessary. Housing stability is crucial for retaining skilled workers, relieving financial stress on farmers, and ultimately strengthening Hawaii's agricultural output. HB1294 promises progress through thoughtful examination and action, ensuring that our agricultural workforce is adequately housed and supported in their essential roles within the state.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 10:00:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ronald Weidenbach	Testifying for Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii's farmers and ranchers, including aquaculture and aquaponics producers, need to have the opportunity and government support to provide on-site workforce housing in order to attract and retain qualified agricultural managers and workers. The 24/7 on-site presence of staff will also help producers address the ever-increasing threats of agricultural theft.

If the State is serious about supporting increased local agriculture production, then supporting on-site workforce housing is fundamental to this goal.



# MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 211  
Wednesday, April 2, 2025 AT 10:01 A.M.**

To The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
The Honorable Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Members of the committee on Ways and Means

### **SUPPORT HB1294 HD2 SD1 RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING**

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS HB1294 HD2 SD1** which establishes an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group within the Department of Agriculture to address the shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the State.

The Chamber recognizes the significant need for agricultural workforce housing and believes that affordable housing is essential to attract and retain farm workers. This shortage has been a major impediment to meeting the labor needs of agriculture and limits agricultural growth in Hawai'i. The lack of available workers, the need for affordable housing, and competition from other employment opportunities are key farm-labor issues that must be addressed.

The lack of affordable housing for farmers and farm labor hinders the increase in food and non-food agricultural production in Hawai'i. Developing suitable housing for farmers and farm employees is crucial, while ensuring that the housing is used in conjunction with active farming operations and occupied by bona fide farmers and farm employees.

An Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group can effectively identify the specific agricultural workforce housing needs in each County and help determine the barriers to meeting the housing needs for farm and ranch businesses in Hawai'i.

We wholeheartedly support initiatives that promote our local businesses and farmers.

For these reasons we **SUPPORT HB1294 HD2 SD1** and respectfully request its passage.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap  
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 2:01:21 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Senator Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Senator Moriwaki and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Please support HB 1294 HD 2 SD 1 which, to my understanding, would be helpful to farmers and other people in the agricultural workforce, who are critical to Hawaii's food needs, with housing.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

**HB-1294-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 5:10:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/2/2025 10:01:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leo Nahe Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Farmer housing in Hawai‘i is needed to address the affordable housing crisis and support the state's agricultural workforce. The stability of the agricultural workforce is important for food security in Hawai‘i. The stability of farmer housing is critical to growing Hawai‘i’s local food security. Given the complexity of navigating state and county regulations, a working group is a first step to identifying how to navigate viable solutions.

Na,

Leo Nahe, Pearl City, 96782