



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND
Thursday, February 6, 2025, 9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411
in consideration of
HB 778
RELATING TO INTEGRATED LAND USE.

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee,

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **strongly supports** HB 778, which mandates an integrated land use study for Hawai'i's agricultural districts to address the urgent challenges of competing land uses.

With only 4 million acres of total land, Hawai'i faces immense pressure as affordable housing, renewable energy, and agriculture compete for limited space within the 1.9 million acres of Hawai'i's Agricultural District. Additionally, the State of Hawai'i has statutorily mandated the following 22 sustainability, climate, and affordable housing targets:

Target Year	Statutory Mandate	Legal Reference
2022	Coal Power Prohibition – Ends all coal burning in the state.	HRS §342B-36
2025	Farm-to-State Target – DOE, DOH, PSD, DOD, and UH must purchase 10% of total food from local agricultural/processed food sources.	HRS §27-8
2026	Affordable Rental Housing Target – The state must develop or facilitate 22,500 affordable rental housing units for occupancy between 2017-2026.	Act 127, SLH 2016
2030	Farm-to-State Target – DOE, DOH, PSD, DOD, and UH must purchase 18% of total food from local agricultural/processed food sources.	HRS §27-8
2030	Farm-to-School Target – 30% of food served in public schools must be locally sourced	HRS §302A-405.6
2030	Doubling Local Food Target – Double local food production and increase local food exports.	Act 151, SLH 2019
2030	Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standards (EEPS) Target – Reduction of 4,300 gigawatt hours (GWh) of electricity use statewide.	HRS §269-96
2030	Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) Target – 40% of electricity generation must come from renewable sources	HRS §269-92
2030	Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission Limit – Reduce statewide GHG emissions to 50% below 2005 levels.	HRS §225P-5 (Act 238, SLH 2022)
2030	State Fleet ZEV Transition – All light-duty passenger vehicles in the state fleet must be zero-emission.	Act 74, SLH 2021 (HRS § 225P-7, 264-20.7, and §196-9(c)(11))

2035	DOE Net-Zero Energy Target – All Public schools must generate as much renewable energy as they consume.	HRS §302A-1510
2035	UH Net-Zero Energy Target – All University of Hawai'i campuses must generate as much renewable energy as they consume	HRS §304A-119
2035	State Fleet ZEV Transition – All light-duty motor vehicles in the state fleet must be zero-emission vehicles.	Act 74, SLH 2021 (HRS § 225P-7, 264-20.7, and §196-9(c)(11))
2035	Farm-to-State Target – DOE, DOH, PSD, DOD, and UH must purchase 26% of total food from local agricultural/processed food sources.	HRS §27-8
2040	Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) Target – 70% of electricity generation must come from renewable sources.	HRS §269-92
2040	Farm-to-State Target – DOE, DOH, PSD, DOD, and UH must purchase 34% of total food from local agricultural/processed food sources.	HRS §27-8
2045	Reclaimed Water in State and County Facilities – 100% use of reclaimed water except for potable/drinkable uses.	HRS §174C-31(g)(6)
2045	Zero Emissions Clean Economy Target – The state must sequester more carbon than it emits.	HRS §225P-5
2045	Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) Target – 100% of electricity generation must come from renewable sources.	HRS §269-92
2045	Farm-to-State Target – DOE, DOH, PSD, DOD, and UH must purchase 42% of total food from local agricultural/processed food sources.	HRS §27-8
2050	Statewide Cesspool Conversion – All cesspools must be upgraded, converted, or connected to sewage systems.	HRS §342D-72
2050	Farm-to-State Target – DOE, DOH, PSD, DOD, and UH must purchase 50% of total food from local agricultural/processed food sources.	HRS §27-8

Without strategic planning, the State risks not fulfilling these multiple climate, sustainability, and affordable housing mandates. A comprehensive, data-driven study is critical to assess current land use, identify conflicts, and develop balanced solutions to ensure land use planning reflects Hawai'i's statutory and policy commitments.

Currently, DBEDT and OPSD are conducting a pilot study for the island of O‘ahu, with the support of ADC, HSEO, HHFDC, and CTAHR’s available data, but additional staffing and resources to OPSD are needed to expand this effort in a more timely manner, statewide.

Passing HB 778 will provide essential staff and financial support to continue this critical work.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025
9:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 411

HOUSE BILL NO. 778
RELATING TO INTEGRATED LAND USE.

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 778 that requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to conduct an Integrated Land Use Study the purpose of which is to develop land use data that can be used for planning and decision making for competing uses of lands within agricultural districts. The Study will determine the land use feasibility and needs of lands within agricultural districts to meet the State's climate, sustainability, and housing statutory targets.(page 2, line 19 to page 3, line 4) The Department of Agriculture (Department) offers comments.

The Department is concerned how future planning and decision making based on the proposed Study will impact agricultural producers and agricultural land and water resources throughout the State.

The Study is to incorporate the recommendations of plans, studies, and statutes for high-profile uses and activities (Hawaii 2050 Sustainability Plan, state land use review of district, Hawaii sea level rise vulnerability and adaptation report, State's climate, sustainability, and housing targets, and renewable energy goals). There is no mention of the agricultural goals and long-standing statutory framework (Important Agricultural Lands, 30 percent increased local food production by 2030, Chapter 205, etc.). As a participant in the Study, the Department will be alert to recommendations that compromise the protection given to agricultural lands and water resources if determined to be less needed for agricultural production and therefore available for competing uses. This may result in an agricultural land economy where those who wish



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to continue existing farm businesses or start agricultural operations may be unable to compete for agricultural lands against higher priority non-agricultural uses and activities.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.



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February 6, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

TESTIMONY ON HB 778
RELATING TO INTEGRATED LAND USE

Conference Room 411 & Videoconference
9:00 AM

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Lamosao, 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 778, which requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to conduct an integrated land use study for agricultural districts and submit interim and final reports to the Legislature. A comprehensive and data-driven approach to land use planning is necessary to balance competing priorities while ensuring that agriculture remains a viable and protected industry in Hawai'i.

Agricultural lands have long been subject to increasing pressures from non-agricultural uses, including affordable housing, renewable energy projects, and waste management facilities. While we recognize the need for these developments, it is essential that they do not come at the expense of productive agricultural lands. A well-structured land use study can provide critical insights into how Hawai'i can meet its sustainability and economic development goals without undermining local food production.

Hawai'i's agricultural landscape has evolved beyond traditional soil classification as the sole factor in determining land suitability for farming. Modern agricultural practices, including greenhouses, hydroponics, aquaculture, and aquaponics, allow for successful production across all land classifications (A, B, C, D, E). Some of the state's most productive floriculture and hydroponic operations are thriving on C, D, and E lands. Factors such as rainfall patterns, temperature variations, wind conditions, and humidity levels all play a significant role in determining the viability of different crops in a given area. In many cases, soil type and terrain are not the primary determinants of whether farming can succeed. Any land use study must account for these advancements and environmental considerations when evaluating the future of agriculture in Hawai'i.

We support HB 778's intent to collect and analyze data to ensure informed decision-making regarding land use planning. However, we urge that the study:

- Clearly define and prioritize the protection of productive agricultural lands to prevent further encroachment from non-agricultural developments.
- Include direct input from the agricultural community to ensure the study reflects the realities and needs of farmers and ranchers.
- Ensure that agricultural lands designated for agriculture production are not compromised for short-term development needs.

Preserving and supporting agriculture is vital for Hawai'i's food security, economic sustainability, and cultural heritage. We encourage the committee to advance HB 778 with careful consideration for maintaining a strong agricultural sector.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



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Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the House Water & Land 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 HB778.**

This initiative is vital for understanding and maximizing the potential of our agricultural districts, ensuring that land use not only supports food production but also aligns with broader environmental and economic goals. By entrusting the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development with this study, the bill places emphasis on a comprehensive evaluation of land use patterns, infrastructure needs, and potential policy interventions that could bolster the viability of agriculture in Hawaii.

The Hawaii Farmers Union supports this bill because it recognizes the importance of data-driven approaches to land management. An integrated land use study will provide valuable insights into managing agricultural lands more effectively, addressing issues such as soil health, water management, and the encroachment of non-agricultural developments. By delivering interim and final reports to the Legislature, the study ensures that findings and recommendations are heard at the highest levels, paving the way for informed decision-making that can support farmers, protect natural resources, and enhance local food security.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

February 4, 2025

Subject: HB 778 *Relating to Integrated Land Use*

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi and Members of the Finance Committee,

Hawaii Food+ Policy is in full support of SB 1099, to promote the integration of existing land-use plans and allocates \$350,000 for a full-time researcher and \$150,000 for additional personnel support. This bill provides an ideal framework for the data-driven planning required to preserve farmland while balancing Hawaii's critical housing needs. Our island would only benefit from the thoughtful and strategic structure that this bill would provide, with the potential to set off a domino effect that would encourage agricultural sustainability and development.

The most crucial aspect of this bill is its response to the vulnerability of our food system. As concerns of our reliance on imported goods continue to grow, we must balance the needs of farmers, landowners, and sustainable development efforts through well-funded decisions. We are aware of the complexity of land allocation processes, but firmly believe that a clear framework paired with sufficient funding would be a necessary step in securing Hawaii's food system. These funds are an investment in Hawaii's future and require your prioritization. It is for these reasons that we urge the Finance committee to support HB 778, and we kindly appreciate your consideration.

Mahalo,
The Hawaii Food+ Policy Team