

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

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Thursday, February 13, 2025, 10:15 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

in consideration of
HB 975
RELATING TO CARBON SEQUESTRATION INCENTIVES.

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee:

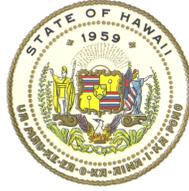
The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports the intent and offers comments** on HB 975, which codifies and makes permanent the Hawai'i Carbon Smart Land Management Assistance Program under the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development's (OPSD) [Carbon Offsetting Report](#)¹ emphasizes the limitations and strongly dissuades the state's use or reliance on carbon offset programs due to accountability gaps and greenwashing risks.

The OPSD supports "carbon-smart" land management initiatives aimed at greenhouse gas sequestration, provided these programs do not engage in or manage activities within the unregulated carbon offsetting market, and **suggests adding specific language disallowing the use, engagement in, or administration of a carbon offset program in this bill.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

¹ Office of Planning and Sustainable Development. (2019). Feasibility and implications of establishing a carbon offset program for the State of Hawaii: Final report. Office of Planning and Sustainable Development. Retrieved from https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/op/sustainability/feasibility_and_implications_of_establishing_a_carbon_offset_program_for_the_state_of_hawaii_finalweb.pdf



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION & ADAPTATION
COMMISSION
POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Co-Chairs:
Chair, DLNR
Director, OPSD

Commissioners:
Chair, Senate AEN
Chair, Senate WTL
Chair, House EEP
Chair, House WAL
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Director, C+C DPP
Director, Maui DP
Director, Hawaii DP
Director, Kauai DP
The Adjutant General
Manager, CZM

**Testimony of
LEAH LARAMEE
Climate Change Coordinator on behalf of
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission Co-Chair Mary Alice Evans and
Co-Chair Dawn N.S. Chang**

**Before the House Committees on
ENERGY and ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**Thursday, February 13, 2025
10:15 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423 & Videoconference**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 975
RELATING TO CARBON SEQUESTRATION INCENTIVES**

House Bill 975 codifies and makes permanent the Hawai'i Carbon Smart Land Management Assistance Program under the Department of Land and Natural Resources. **The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

The Commission consists of a multi-jurisdictional effort between 20 different departments, committees, and counties to protect the lives and livelihoods of the people of Hawai'i through accelerated climate action. This bill provides a sustainable funding mechanism to support carbon smart land management across the state while simultaneously supporting water and food security, regenerative agriculture, local jobs and markets, climate resiliency and small businesses. The Carbon Smart Land Managers Pilot Program provides grant funding with matching contributions from lessees or owners of land in Hawai'i, with a focus on smaller land managers who often are unable or have difficulty to access federal funding. The pilot supports small and medium land managers to develop and implement plans for regenerative sustainable practices and carbon sequestration strategies.

Awards for the Carbon Smart Land Managers Pilot were extended to ten land managing grant recipients across the state, from Hawai'i County to Moloka'i and 'Oahu. These awardees serve

as partners with the State of Hawai‘i as we work together to deepen and broaden our practical, locally appropriate and responsive knowledge and applications for soil health, carbon sequestration and climate change adaptation, mitigation and resilience actions. Some examples of grantee pilot projects include transitioning fallow land to agroforestry systems, creating organic compost from mushrooms to provide to markets across the islands, removing invasive species and regenerating native forest through Hawaiian traditional ecological knowledge and practices, integrating silviculture on biodynamic ranchland, and supporting a hui of 14 ‘Ōiwi-led organizations across the Hawaiian islands in diverse endogenously determined carbon-sequestration activities.

Enthusiasm for and interest in the Program has been mounting, with queries incoming from farmers, forest managers, conservationists, community groups and non-profit organizations, and even urban dwellers. The current available resources for the pilot are far outweighed by the expressed interest communicated to DLNR, which in part demonstrates need for supporting such carbon sequestration comprehensive climate and food security initiatives. Further, supportive networks were created through the bridging of training and technical support of the pilot program’s partners with the Hawaii Climate Smart Commodities (HiCSC) partnership and the University of Hawai‘i’s NREM 491 course in Soil Health and Climate Smart Agriculture. This partnership with HiCSC is incredibly important for developing wider networked capacities and market chain linkages for Hawaii-rooted climate and carbon smart market. Feedback from the Program’s participants highlighted the experiential learning activities, and the value of relationships formed across initiatives, which have continued to serve as a source of support and wider resources, providing more ideas, models and techniques for carbon-smart land management.

Developing capacities for deep carbon soil and soil health sampling and testing has been an exciting and challenging aspect to the pilot, with several Program partners noting that they have been teaching experientially what they have learned about carbon sequestration and soil health and sampling to their wider networks, meaning the capacities for understanding and carbon sequestration have the potential to expand exponentially, with targeted trainings. Research has shown that healthy endemic ecosystems not only contribute to climate mitigation through carbon sequestration, but also serve to mitigate risks and impacts of climate shocks, including landslides, flooding, extreme heat, drought, storm surges, tsunamis, hurricanes and extreme weather, and wildfires. Removing invasive species is expensive, and sufficient funding has not been made available to comprehensively and effectively tackle the complex climate threats that invasive species pose— funding for both the removal of the invasive species and the recovery of ecosystems and climate-smart food systems for intelligent and informed land management is essential for the survival of Hawaiians and the islands upon which we depend.

Many of the pilot Awardees have approached their initiatives through inclusive, community-wide engagement, including community planting events and training in carbon soil sampling processes. One project has been developing and trialing native forest “starter kits” to seed smaller areas of land for their community to scale native forest restoration across rural Waimea. As a carbon smart pilot project, the project’s intentions are to return ancestral knowledge and place-based research into daily forestry practices. As the program continues, the design learning monitoring and evaluation protocol is tracking indicators for improved water retention, carbon storage, nutrient cycling and native plant growth and viability, and whether the practices are

lessening invasive weed growth and the need for synthetic fertilizers and harmful herbicides over time.

Several of the Program Awardees partners are Kānaka Maoli, and embed their carbon-smart land management practices with indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (iTEK) and Nature-based Solutions (NbS). Incredibly significant and relevant to the Hawaiian culture and ecological needs, learning from these projects can contribute to gaps in applied research, wherein very few studies have been conducted bridging indigenous Hawaiian TEK with carbon-and-climate smart strategies. Learning from such expanded initiatives can model locally-appropriate climate solutions with applications for communities worldwide.

Novel and innovative approaches are being piloted with our partners, from silvopasture ranching, to developing expanded markets for locally cultivated organic mushroom composting, while bridging networks to support the Hawaiian localized market web and supply chain to meet a growing demand for such products. Knowledge and capacities for carbon smart land management is growing for our partners, disseminating out through their communities.

“One participant shared that his favorite hoa lā‘au (companion plant) was our staff member, because he was “able to answer a handful of questions regarding native plant reforestation best practices” - Program Awardee

Hawaiian land managers are demonstrating their commitment to learn and develop carbon sequestration capacities, and to implement climate resilient land management strategies. The pilot begins to meet them in this space of commitment and vision for healing and wellbeing in Hawai‘i.

The Commission enthusiastically supports this bill to expand from the pilot stage into a full-fledged multi-year program. It is crucial to build on the momentum catalyzed by the pilot, to model and disseminate tools and capacities to counter the compounding impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss upon our fragile and beautiful archipelago.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



HAWAII FOREST INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (HFIA)

P. O. Box 66 ❖ 'O'ōkala, HI
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Email: hfia@hawaiiiforest.org
Website: www.hawaiiiforest.org

Date: 02/10/25

TO: EEP Chair Lowen, EEP Vice Chair Peruso and EEP Committee Members

FROM: the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA)

SUBJECT: In Support of HB975 Relating to Carbon Sequestration Incentives

Dear Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Peruso, and EEP Committee Members,

On behalf of the Directors and members of the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA), please support HB975 Relating to Carbon Sequestration Incentives.

HFIA is made up of individuals, small businesses and corporations throughout the state of Hawai'i with an array of professional expertise. Twenty percent of our membership consists of landowners, land managers, conservationists, field laborers, tree planters, or others in "green" professions. These members regularly participate in restoration/conservation, and carbon sequestration, efforts on their properties or as a part of their employment, on a variety of scales. Compensation for these efforts would help residents to continue in their carbon sequestration efforts, as well as incentivize others to do the same. Additionally, as the measure includes, providing modeling, methodology and protocol resources will make engaging in carbon sequestration efforts more accessible to a wider range of Hawaii residents.

A joint effort of managing our forest and agricultural lands for the benefit of Hawaii residents now and in the future, between public and private parties, is much needed and making permanent the Hawaii Carbon Smart Land Management Assistance Program would be notable progress. Please support HB975.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Guy Cellier, Acting President

Hawaii Forest Industry Association

Established in 1989, HFIA's is a nonprofit organization founded by people committed to sustainable forest management. HFIA's mission is to promote healthy and productive forests and a sustainable forest industry through management, education, planning, information exchange, and advocacy. HFIA has over 120 members including woodworkers, landowners, sawyers, foundations, foresters, growers, educators, environmentalists, architects, millers, ranchers, and others interested in HFIA's mission and goals.

HFIA Board of Directors

Officers: President Guy Cellier, Vice President Irene Sprecher, Secretary Taylor Coons, Treasurer Wade Lee
Directors: Jeremy Campbell, Doug Gordon, Nickolas Koch, Michael Sowards, Aileen Yeh



To: The House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Thursday, February 13, 2025, 10:15am

In support of HB975

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Energy and Environmental Protection Committee members,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **supports HB975** which codifies and makes permanent the Hawaii Carbon Smart Land Management Assistance Program under the Department of Land and Natural Resources. This Program fosters carbon sequestration activities through incentive contracts that provide compensation for eligible practices by program participants. Allowing small farmers, ranchers, foresters, and landowners to be compensated for taking measures to help Hawaii reach climate readiness goals is a win:win.

Climate change has led to an increase in the frequency of extreme weather events which increases the risks to our already vulnerable food supply chain. Hawaii needs to reduce its contribution to climate change, increase local food production, improve soil health, and secure resilient water sources through watershed protection. Programs such as the Hawaii carbon smart land management program are an effective means to do that.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this important legislation.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org

HB-975

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 12:34:35 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/13/2025 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Climate Protectors Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Climate Protectors Hawaii **SUPPORT** HB975.

Carbon sequestration is vital for Hawaii to reach its climate negative goal by 2025. Please pass this bill and continue to fund the Carbon Smart Land Management Assistance Program!

HB-975

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 8:26:54 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/13/2025 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kehaulani Lum	Waiehu Land LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kakahiaka Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection,

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of H.B. 975, relating to Carbon Sequestration Incentives, which codifies and makes permanent the Hawaii Carbon Smart Land Management Assistance Program under the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

My name is Kehaulani Lum, and I am the manager of Waiehu Land LLC, which oversees the restoration of 115 acres of Native Hawaiian ancestral lands which were reclaimed by descendants of Kapou, the Konohiki of Wailea, Hawai'i Island, after they were illegally transferred by judicial intervention to sugar plantation owners in the late 1800s.

For over 150 years, the life of the land was extracted solely for financial gain, with no regard to the cultural, environmental and long-term societal benefits of the traditional practice that sustained its healthy forests of 'ōhi'a, mamane and koa and precious food and medicines.

In partnership with the non-profit organization, Living Life Source Foundation, for the last decade, we have strived to remove the deep roots of avarice which were planted on and around the ahupua'a in the early 1900s, through the importation and planting of thousands of invasive albizia trees (potentially the fastest growing tree on the planet), to make possible the "free" irrigating of sugarcane crops.

Twenty-five years after the plantation shut down and divested its lands in the ahupua'a, without cautioning new caretakers about the potentially devastating challenges of maintaining the trees, one of the most noticeable invasive species in Hawai'i (according to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council) has taken over the public lands along the Ka'ahakini Stream and Kolekole Park. Their flowers and seeds are carried on the wind to neighboring lands, most of which are in private stewardship, where they establish and propagate millions of keiki. Basic stewardship to nurture the return of healthy forests and fields is burdening private owners with millions of dollars of expense for the eradication of these uninvited residents. At full maturity, over 100 feet tall, with loose limbs and roots that are susceptible to wind shear, the forests pose serious threats to human and animal well-being and prevent the growth of native understory.

A recent quote from a tree removal company shows a potential cost of over \$6,000 to remove just one acre of agricultural land in the area, if only traditional mechanized responses are

used. Extrapolated to 100 acres, this equals the assessed value assigned to the land by the County, thereupon rendering any effort to restore native forest to the ahupua'a a dream that only a billionaire can achieve. HB 975 lets the community know that we are not alone and brings us all great hope for the flourishing of the 'ōhi'a, koa, loulou, kalo, kukui and other species again.

We commend you for establishing the pilot program Hawaii carbon smart land management assistance pilot program and thank the Department of Land and Natural Resources for its effort to assist local Hawaiian farmers, farmer networks, ranchers, foresters, agroecologists, grassroots and local non-profit organizations community groups, schools, private land managers, ecologists and businesses through this visionary response.

We support House Bill 975, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request, and respectfully urge your support for a permanent program.

In deepest gratitude and aloha,

Kehaulani Lum

Manager, Waiehu Land LLC

HB-975

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:12:49 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/13/2025 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victor K. Ramos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE this bill. It's based on an arbitrary ideology to gain more government control.

I, Dr. Emilie Parry of Nu'uau Valley in Honolulu, **SUPPORT House Bill 975** which codifies and makes permanent the Hawai'i Carbon Smart Land Management Assistance Program under the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

As a professional researcher and practitioner, I feel strongly that the State of Hawaii needs to respond to the compounding and increasing risks created by climate change, biodiversity loss and the global and local ecological crises, by directly funding and providing technical support to local small and medium land managers, including non-profit organizations, farmers, businesses and others who have incentive and commitment to developing climate adaptive land management and food systems, but often do not have the resources to bridge the gap that could enable appropriate and sustainable long term practices that would serve Hawaiian community wellbeing. This well being includes strengthening food security, increasing ecologically-based climate resilience, and building a suite of locally appropriate and viable climate solutions that not only support carbon sequestration, but also create climate adaptive capacities on our islands.

This is urgent, and I ask that House Bill 975 be passed as a show of commitment to the safety wellbeing and capacities of Hawaiian citizens as we face a turbulent climate crisis.

Mahalo nui loa,
Dr. Emilie C Parry
Rootbridge Ecosystems

RootbridgeEcosystems@gmail.com

HB-975

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 10:47:41 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/13/2025 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Miguel Castrence	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of continuing the Carbon Smart Land Management Assistance beyond June 30, 2025. The recent federal funding freeze has impacted producers throughout Hawai'i, leaving them in financial limbo and putting their conservation efforts on hold indefinitely. Having a reliable source of funding would encourage producers to work towards improving soil health as well as climate benefits. Please support HB975!

Mililani Agricultural Park, LLC

Physical Address: 94-840 Lanikuhana Avenue, Mililani, HI 96789

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 892774, Mililani, HI 96789

Phone: 808-677-8779

February 12, 2025

House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

Testimony In Support of HB 975

Relating to Carbon Sequestration Incentives.

Chair Nicole E. Lowen and committee members:

My name is Wayne Ogasawara. I am a product of the old pineapple plantation, a farmer and owner of Mililani Agricultural Park, LLC and has farmed the lands for the past 26 years. This land has been dedicated as Important Agricultural Lands and will remain in agriculture forever!

I am in support of HB 975, which codifies and makes permanent the Hawaii Carbon Smart Land Management Assistance Program under the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

In early 2024, Mililani Agricultural Park, LLC was chosen to implement Hawaii's Carbon Smart Land Management Assistance Pilot Program. In addition to the 900 lychee, mango and avocado trees as part of the Carbon Smart Program that are scheduled to be planted in 2025, Mililani Agricultural Park, LLC has previously planted over 1,000 lychee, mango and avocado trees, which are all starting to produce fruits.

Your support of HB 975 will insure that farmers like myself will be able to expand our fruit tree orchards. It will also insure that our children and grandchildren will have a viable farm/orchard to enjoy and prosper and help keep Hawaii's agriculture strong!

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Hawaii's agriculture future.