

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

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2025
1:01 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

SENATE BILL NO. 245, PROPOSED SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO OWNERSHIP OF AGRICULTURAL LAND.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 245, Proposed Senate Draft 1 that seeks to prohibit certain entities from acquiring or holding any interest in agricultural land within the State and engaging in farming operations in the State. The Department of Agriculture (Department) offers the following comments.

The Department shares the concerns expressed by the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation and the Agribusiness Development Corporation that the effect of this measure does not inadvertently preclude otherwise legitimate investment in Hawaii's agricultural lands for agricultural production.

The measure assigns DOA the responsibility of receiving an annual report from exempt entities that must demonstrate continued compliance with the proposed requirements. SD1 also assigns DOA the responsibility of enforcing compliance and imposing penalties in the form of fines of not less than \$50,000 and divestiture of agricultural land and farming operations by prohibited entities who choose not to meet the exemption criteria within a period of five years. SD1 does not address the need for a special fund, the authorization to hire personnel to carry out the regulatory responsibilities, the appropriations necessary to establish and maintain the regulatory function, and the authorization for rulemaking.



Otherwise, the Department supports all bona fide agricultural operations and looks to both the landowners and legislators at the State and county levels to seek ways to support access to agricultural lands with improvements necessary to support agricultural production.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.

COUNTY COUNCIL

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Arryl Kaneshiro



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Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawaii 96766

February 7, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF FERN HOLLAND
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
SB 245, RELATING TO OWNERSHIP OF AGRICULTURAL LAND
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Monday, February 10, 2025
1:01 p.m.
Conference Room 224
Via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of SB 245, Relating to Ownership of Agricultural Land. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a Councilmember of the Kaua'i County Council.

I am growingly concerned about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai'i's agricultural lands by foreign corporations. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable land.

For Hawai'i to move towards increased food security, the State should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place.

SB 245 is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers. Twenty-five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands.

I urge you to act to protect Hawaiian agricultural lands and food security into the future.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 245. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

FERN HOLLAND
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AAO:ss



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

February 10, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 245, Proposed SD1
RELATING TO OWNERSHIP OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:01 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, 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 provides comments SB 245, Proposed SD1, which prohibits certain entities from acquiring or holding agricultural land and engaging in farming operations in the State.

While we share the legislature's commitment to preserving agricultural lands for farming and food security, we have significant concerns regarding the potential unintended consequences of this measure.

HFB has long supported policies that protect agricultural lands from urbanization and speculative uses. However, restricting certain entities from owning, leasing, or engaging in farming operations may have far-reaching impacts on agricultural investment, infrastructure development, and operational sustainability. Many farming operations rely on partnerships, cooperatives, and structured investments to access capital, share resources, and scale their operations. By expanding restrictions beyond ownership to include farming operations, this bill may discourage legitimate agricultural investment, preventing necessary infrastructure improvements and farm expansion.

Agricultural cooperatives often operate as corporations or partnerships to provide shared resources, marketing, and distribution for local farmers. The restrictions outlined in this bill may unintentionally prevent these cooperatives from acquiring land or participating in farming operations, despite their role in supporting Hawai'i's agricultural community.

The bill exempts nonprofit organizations (501c3) and entities majority-owned by Hawai'i residents, but it is unclear how these exemptions will be applied or verified. Further clarity

is needed on whether corporate-owned family farms or investment-backed agricultural ventures will qualify under the exemptions. The requirement that exempt entities submit annual compliance reports adds an administrative burden, which could be challenging for small-scale farms.

Many farmers in Hawai'i lease farmland from trusts, corporations, and partnerships. Restricting these entities from holding agricultural land could reduce the availability of farmland for lease, making it harder for farmers to access land without outright ownership. Additionally, the requirement that prohibited entities divest their land within five years could disrupt existing lease agreements, potentially displacing farmers who rely on long-term leases to sustain their operations.

By prohibiting certain entities from acquiring and holding agricultural land, this measure could limit the pool of available farmland, further exacerbating the challenge of securing affordable and accessible farmland for farmers. The proposed five-year timeline for compliance and mandatory divestiture may not provide sufficient time for businesses and agricultural entities to restructure their operations. Forcing divestiture could disrupt active farming operations, leading to unintended economic and agricultural consequences. The proposed fine of at least \$50,000 per year for non-compliance could pose a significant financial burden, especially for agricultural businesses that may need time to transition under the new restrictions.

HFB supports efforts to preserve Hawai'i's agricultural lands for food security, local food production, and long-term agricultural sustainability. However, we urge the committee to consider the potential negative impacts of this bill and provide greater flexibility in its application. Specifically, we recommend:

- Clarifying and refining exemptions for legitimate agricultural entities, such as cooperatives, investment-backed farming ventures, and agricultural partnerships that directly support local farmers.
- Ensuring that land leasing arrangements remain viable so that farmers who do not own land but lease from restricted entities are not adversely affected.
- Reevaluating the five-year mandatory divestiture requirement to allow for a more gradual transition that avoids disruption to active farms.
- Reviewing the proposed fines and penalties to ensure they are fair, reasonable, and do not place an excessive burden on legitimate farming operations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our input on this measure.



Testimony of **Lahaina Strong**
Before the Senate Committee on
Agriculture and Environment

In Consideration of Senate Bill No. 245 SD1
RELATING TO OWNERSHIP OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

To Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and the honorable members of the committee,

We are writing on behalf of Lahaina Strong, an organization deeply rooted in our community's resilience and advocacy. Originally formed in 2018 following the Hurricane Lane fire in Lahaina and revitalized after the devastating fires of August 8, 2023, Lahaina Strong has become the largest grassroots, Lahaina-based community organization, with over 35,000 supporters. Our mission is to amplify local voices and champion community-driven solutions, which are more critical than ever as we continue rebuilding and recovering.

Lahaina Strong, stands in **support of Senate Bill 245 SD1**, which aims to promote the conservation, protection, and sustainable development of the State's agricultural resources by prohibiting certain entities from owning, purchasing, or acquiring ownership of agricultural lands. This bill strengthens Hawai'i's agricultural sector and ensures that our 'āina remains dedicated to local food production and economic sustainability.

This bill is a critical step toward strengthening our circular economy—keeping resources, land, and food production local rather than dependent on outside forces. By restricting corporations, limited liability companies, trusts, partnerships, and limited partnerships from owning or acquiring agricultural lands in Hawaii this bill would ensure that agricultural lands are used for farming and not outside speculation. This measure supports local farmers, strengthens our food systems, and helps create a future where we are not so vulnerable to external disruptions.

We appreciate the effort to ensure that Hawai'i's agricultural lands remain productive, accessible, and beneficial to our communities. We urge you to **support SB245 SD1** and continue to support policies that prioritize local resilience and sustainability.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Hawai'i's future.

Sincerely,

Lahaina Strong



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |
Honolulu, HI 96813
P: 808-533-1292 | e:
info@hawaiiifood.com

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Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 10, 2025

TIME: 1:10pm

RE: SB245 Relating to Ownership of Agricultural Land

Position: Comments

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA believes that this measure would lead to less agricultural land in the state being under active cultivation, and unnecessarily reduce production of local food.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



HAWAII CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

SB245 PROPOSED SD1 – In Opposition
Relating to Ownership of Agricultural Land

Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment

Date: Monday, February 10, 2025
Time: 1:01 PM
Place: Conference Room 224

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

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association (HCIA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony **in opposition to the proposed SB245 SD1**, which prohibits certain entities from acquiring or holding any interest in agricultural land within the State and from engaging in farming operations in the state.

HCIA is concerned that the consequences of this bill would significantly damage Hawaii's agriculture business sector and ultimately hurt the local economy. Our focus in Hawaii should be on getting more new farms and encouraging existing farmers to increase their production. While we understand the sentiment behind this measure, in reality it would have the opposite effect of supporting local farmers and likely lead to a reduction in our state's agricultural production and workforce. There are many positive initiatives and programs to help local agriculture production and we should back those that further support Hawaii's economy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association is a Hawaii-based non-profit organization that promotes modern agriculture to help farmers and communities succeed. Through education, collaboration, and advocacy, we work to ensure a safe and sustainable food supply, support responsible farming practices, and build a healthy economy.



Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: SB245 (Proposed SD1)

Monday, February 10th, 2025 1 p.m. Conference Room 224

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

HAPA supports SB245. There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawaii's agricultural lands by foreign corporations. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawaii to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place.

This issue is of particular importance on Maui, where the Canadian Pension Fund. Public Sector Pension Investment Board (PSP) is the island's largest private landowner through Mahi Pono-- and is now seeking to control East Maui water leases.

For clarification, Mahi Pono Holdings, LLC's sole member is Canadian pension fund PSP, both of which are registered as foreign entities in Hawai'i. PSP is a Crown Corporation with \$265 billion in assets that invests the pension funds of the Canadian Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the federal public service, and the Reserve Force.

Many of those workers are represented by the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) union, which has more than 200,000 members. James Infantino, the National Pension Officer for PSAC, spoke at the September 2024 East Maui Water Authority meeting and gave a very clear message to Water Authority members and the community: "Don't let PSP investments anywhere near this long-term lease."

The basis for his message was PSP Investment's well-known record of international water grabs exploitation of water resources and local communities, which PSAC – representing PSP beneficiaries -- does not support.

This is just one example of why we need to ensure that Hawai'i's lands are protected from foreign interests. Twenty five states already have enacted restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', with a stylized, cursive script.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director



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Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment 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 the intent and provides comments on SB245.**

HFU previously supported SB 245 to address speculative landholding and corporate market consolidation while ensuring that Hawai'i's agricultural land remains accessible to local farmers. Our original testimony recommended targeted exemptions, enforcement provisions, and a transition period to ensure the bill would effectively protect family farms and agricultural sustainability.

However, **SB 245 SD 1 expands the bill's scope beyond its original intent, introducing new concerns that must be addressed to avoid unintended impacts to Hawai'i's farmers.**

The Bill Title Requires a Focus on Land Ownership, Not Farming Bans

The title of this bill—"RELATING TO OWNERSHIP OF AGRICULTURAL LAND"—establishes a clear legislative intent to regulate who owns agricultural land, not who is permitted to farm on it. However, SD1 expands restrictions beyond land ownership to include farming operations, introducing prohibitions that go beyond the bill's scope.

Background on Corporate Farming & Land Ownership Laws

Several states regulate or restrict certain corporate ownership interests in agricultural land. Corporate farming laws—such as those in Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wisconsin—prevent corporate consolidation in agriculture to protect family farms. These laws typically:

- Prohibit non-family corporate entities from owning agricultural land unless they meet specific exemptions.
- Allow exemptions for family farm corporations, cooperatives, and banks holding farmland for debt collection.
- Withstand legal challenges when properly structured.

At the same time, courts have struck down corporate farming laws that violate the U.S. Constitution's dormant Commerce Clause. Laws must be carefully crafted to avoid discriminating against out-of-state entities while still protecting local farmers.

Hawai'i has the opportunity to **adopt best practices from other states** while ensuring that **locally owned and operated agricultural entities remain viable.**

Recommended Modifications to SB245 SD1

Restore the Bill's Focus on Land Ownership Restrictions

Remove the prohibition on certain entities engaging in farming operations, and instead

focus on land ownership to prevent market consolidation without harming legitimate farming models. The original bill focused on restricting land ownership by certain entities to prevent market consolidations. SD1 now prohibits certain entities from engaging in farming operations altogether, a shift that could impact farmer cooperatives, family farm corporations, and joint ventures that rely on shared resources to survive.

HFU's testimony on the original bill specifically recommended tailored exemptions for cooperative models, recognizing that the issue is not the legal structure itself. SD1 does not clarify how cooperatives, family farm corporations, and joint ventures will be treated, potentially making it harder for local farmers to form collaborative entities for land access and shared farming operations.

Clarify & Strengthen Exemptions for Local Farming Entities

States with successful corporate farming laws (e.g., Minnesota, Missouri) include clear exemptions for family farm corporations, cooperative associations, and certain trusts to ensure local farmers are not inadvertently restricted. SD1 should thus:

- Explicitly exempt agricultural cooperatives and family farm corporations where a majority of ownership and control is held by Hawai'i residents actively engaged in farming.
- Clarify that exemptions apply to locally controlled farming entities, regardless of their legal structure (LLC, partnership, corporation, etc.), as long as their primary purpose is farming.

Remove Unnecessary Registration Requirements for Exempt Entities

The original bill targeted land ownership, but SD 1 now requires annual compliance reports for all exempt farms, effectively creating a statewide farm registration system. Instead of requiring all exempt entities to register annually, limit reporting requirements to "prohibited entities".

HFU supports transparency in agricultural land ownership, but Hawai'i does not currently have a farm registration program—and SD 1 introduces one without deliberation. Farm registrations programs have been used successfully elsewhere (e.g., Nevada, Vermont, Guam) to support conservation and local food procurement. If a farm registration system is needed Hawai'i should implement such a program through a deliberate, farmer-driven process—not as an unintended consequence of SD1.

Revising SB245 SD1 to align with its original title and intent—focusing on ownership restrictions rather than farming bans—and to adopt these amendments to ensure SB245 SD1 effectively supports Hawai'i's farmers while addressing the issue of speculative land ownership and outsized market power.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 6:00:35 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Fox	Testifying for Malama Kaua'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai'i's agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai'i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands.

I do, however, want to ensure language is in place to protect owners who are using their lands to protect against ag land development and do use them for active agricultural purposes. For example, we have a new long-term lease for an agricultural park from a trust that does this. They have the right intentions and should not be harmed from this bill, so there may need to be some specific language around current owners and active users of properties as well.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:51:21 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of Committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, I am writing on behalf of the Green Party of Hawai'i, in full Support of SB245 proposed SD1. It is important to keep Hawaiian lands in hands of local people who are trying hard to feed our communities in a healthy environment. I work on a local organic farm that struggles daily to compete with the corporately grown food that ships from the mainland. We need to keep those same corporations from buying up the agricultural lands that Hawaiian farmers are using to produce local food, in our communities. We need a level playing field to help our local farmers. For Hawai'i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation.

The Green Party of Hawai'i asks for your strong support of SB245, our communities depend on local agricultural to supply the healthy food we need.

Mahalo Nui,

Susan RobertsEmery
Co Chair GPH
Green Party of Hawai'i
Paauilo

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:36:32 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gina Salcedo	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments: SB245 RELATING TO OWNERSHIP OF AGRICULTURE LAND Testimony in Full Support of SB245 in its entirety. Mahalo Nui Loa, Austin and Gina Kalei Salcedo (Kea'au Ag Landowner)

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:04:21 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Austin Salcedo	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

SB245 RELATING TO OWNERSHIP OF AGRICULTURE LAND

Testimony in Full Support of SB245 in its entirety.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Austin and Gina Kalei Salcedo

(Kea'au Ag Landowner)

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:36:44 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Testifying for Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Subject: Enhanced Support for S.B. NO. 245 - Relating to Ownership of Agricultural Land

Dear Members of the Hawaii State Legislature,

I am writing to underscore the urgent need for and support of Senate Bill No. 245 concerning the ownership and sustainable management of agricultural land in Hawaii. Below, I provide an in-depth analysis, incorporating recent statistics and data, to argue for the bill's passage with proposed enhancements.

Support Points with Data:

- Preservation of Local Agriculture:
 - Hawaii imports approximately 85-90% of its food, underscoring the necessity for robust local agriculture (Source: NIFA - Growing Hawaii's New Farmers).
 - The 2022 USDA Census reports over 7,300 farm operations in Hawaii, but there's been a decline, with more than 700 farms lost since 2017 (Source: Honolulu Civil Beat).
- Mitigation of Land Speculation:
 - In 2020, only 8% of land zoned for agriculture in Hawaii was actively used for crop cultivation, highlighting potential speculative holding rather than active farming (Source: Civil Beat - Hawaii Has A Lot Of Agricultural Land).
 - The state has seen a significant drop in agricultural land use, from 1.1 million acres in 1980 to about 350,830 acres by 2015, largely due to the end of the plantation era (Source: HDOA - Agricultural Land Use Study).
- Promotion of Sustainable Practices:

- The University of Hawaii's GoFarm Hawaii program has trained numerous farmers, emphasizing sustainable and indigenous agricultural practices, with over 40 graduates starting commercial farming (Source: NIFA).

Areas for Improvement:

- Narrow Exemption Criteria:
 - Current criteria for exempt entities might exclude beneficial community-oriented organizations. The 2022 Census showed 4,162 new and beginning producers in Hawaii, indicating a vibrant, yet nascent, farming community needing support (Source: Farm Flavor - Census of Agriculture).
- Clarity in Enforcement:
 - Clear, fair enforcement is vital to avoid legal disputes, which could deter potential agricultural investors or farmers.
- Support for Transition:
 - The 2023 USDA/NASS data indicates that agricultural sales in Hawaii were predominantly from diversified agriculture (\$370.9 million), suggesting a need for supportive measures during transition periods (Source: USDA/NASS).

Recommendations for Amendments:

- Establish a Farmer Transition Fund:
 - Propose an amendment for a state-backed fund to assist farmers in transitioning to new ownership or operational models. This could mirror models like the Important Agricultural Lands (IAL) incentives, providing tax credits or direct financial aid (Source: CTAHR - Voluntary Long-Term Protection of Agricultural Land).
- Victim Assistance Program:
 - Suggest the creation of a legal and financial assistance program for farmers affected by land speculation, ensuring they receive the support needed to continue or restart operations. This could leverage existing frameworks from the Department of Agriculture's data collection efforts for targeted assistance (Source: Civil Beat - Federal Farm Census).
- Land Stewardship Education:
 - Amendments should mandate educational programs on sustainable practices, particularly for new landowners or those transitioning under the bill. The University of Hawaii at Manoa's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources could be instrumental in this education (Source: Wikipedia - Agriculture in Hawaii).
- Specific Amendments:

- Section -5 Exemptions: Expand to include agricultural cooperatives or community land trusts, recognizing their role in sustainable and community-focused agriculture.
- Section -6 Enforcement: Clarify procedures with an emphasis on transparency and fairness, possibly including an independent review board for appeals.
- Section -8 Divestiture: Propose rights of first refusal for local farmers or community organizations when lands are divested, preventing speculative purchases and encouraging local stewardship.

In conclusion, while S.B. No. 245 aims to protect and enhance Hawaii's agricultural landscape, incorporating these data-driven recommendations will ensure the bill not only addresses current issues but also fosters a resilient, locally-empowered agricultural future.

Thank you for your consideration and dedication to the sustainable development of our state.

Sincerely,

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire

Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 5:06:19 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy D Moser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In STRONG SUPPORT of SB 245 SD1 Proposed.

Aloha Chair and members of the Committee,

Local farm land ownership and production of food are crucial matters now. Our communities need the food security provided by the farmers working our lands for our benefit. I am in support of the clear language and improvements presented in this Senate Draft 1 Proposed.

Please vote YES on this measure.

Nancy Moser in Waikoloa on Hawai'i Island

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 5:49:34 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kimdonghyeon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 7:29:20 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Hagan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 5:52:44 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Troy Abraham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaiian land belongs to local Hawaiian people.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 5:57:09 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Hennessy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out-of-state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty-five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

Mahalo,

Lisa Hennessy, Princeville

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 9:31:27 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keith Webster	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of SB245. Hawaii has very long and vulnerable supply chains. We need to strengthen our local production of food but land costs are a major barrier. This measure does not fix the problem but it is a step in the right direction. Support our farmers and local food for our residents. Please support SB245.

Keith Webster, Kaneohe

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 8:47:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Troy Schacht	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 9:21:51 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Dinner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

An important step to protect our future. Please pass.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 5:14:35 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl hendrickson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment is concerning. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 7:49:04 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jim Scancella	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Be it known that I support this bill. We need this now and for the future.

Mahalo for your time,

Jim Scancella

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 6:21:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Janik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ag is the future.

Richard Janik, MD

Lihue, Kauai

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 6:18:40 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zoe Goodman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245. Mahalo

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 6:22:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Local control of land is best for the states future. Please pass.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 6:23:58 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eliel Starbright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai'i's agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai'i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245. Eliel,Kapaa

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:58:05 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emelia Briscoe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:10:34 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

Susan Wong, Kailua, HI

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:34:37 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keila Paahana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 3:37:41 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sven Sorge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 6:36:15 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245. Mahalo.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 6:37:52 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 12:30:40 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:00:08 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Dorsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to support SB245, which will restrict foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Doing so will decrease land speculation and investment by foreign or out of state corporations, thereby helping local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands, access to which will increase food security.

Thank you

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:14:24 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Morgan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. Already a Chinese corporation bought hundreds of acres in Naalehu for a coffee and tea farm. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:31:10 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign corporations. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands.

This issue is of particular importance on Maui, where the Canadian Pension Fund Public Sector Pension Investment Board (PSP) is the island's largest private landowner through Mahi Pono-- and is now seeking to control East Maui water leases.

For clarification, Mahi Pono Holdings, LLC’s sole member is Canadian pension fund PSP, both of which are registered as foreign entities in Hawai‘i. PSP is a Crown Corporation with \$265 billion in assets that invests the pension funds of the Canadian Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the federal public service, and the Reserve Force.

Many of those workers are represented by the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) union, which has more than 200,000 members. James Infantino, the National Pension Officer for PSAC, spoke at the September 2024 East Maui Water Authority meeting and gave a very clear message to Water Authority members and the community: “Don’t let PSP investments anywhere near this long-term lease.”

The basis for his message was PSP Investment’s well-known record of international water grabs exploitation of water resources and local communities, which PSAC – representing PSP beneficiaries -- does not support.

This is just one example of why we need to ensure that Hawai‘i’s lands are protected from foreign interests.

For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Shay Chan Hodges, Haiku, Maui

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:17:06 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
M. Leilani DeMello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. **Please support SB245.**

Mahalo,

M. Leilani DeMello

‘Ōla‘a, Puna, Hawai‘i

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:26:51 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kencho Gurung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 12:56:40 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcia Kemble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Committee Chair and Committee members,

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty-five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 3:07:24 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Broderick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB245 as it helps to prioritize agricultural lands for local food producers and people of place.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 2:06:11 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you Chair and esteemed members,

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai'i's agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai'i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

Mahalo,

Jennifer Lum, 'Ewa Beach

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 3:11:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Chair and Members:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

Thank you,
Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 4:36:05 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isis Usborne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

Mahalo,

Isis Usborne (96815)

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 4:46:04 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anthony Simon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 5:23:09 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary True	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

Thanks for your consideration, Mary True

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:01:03 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara Luthy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai'i's agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai'i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:46:32 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Piotrowski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:11:37 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai'i's agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai'i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.



Hawaii's Thousand Friends

335 Hahani Street #342132 * Kailua, HI 96734 * Phone (808) 262-0682 E-Mail: hft3000@gmail.com

February 10, 2025

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, Vice Chair

SB 245 RELATING TO OWNERSHIP OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Committee Members

Hawaii's Thousand Friends, a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that appropriate planning, management and land use decisions are made that protect the environment, human health and cultural resources and that decision are made in conformity with the law supports SB 245 which seeks to ensure that Hawaii's agricultural lands remain locally owned.

There is a nationwide growing concern, not just in Hawaii, over foreign entities purchasing farmland. This concern is not unfounded.

In 2023, foreign investors owned 45.85 million acres of U.S. agricultural land, which is 3.6% of all privately held agricultural land, a 3.6% increase from 2022 and a 12.2% increase from 2025.

There are concerns that foreign ownership could threaten U.S food security and defense and that foreign ownership could affect local land rights and agricultural production.

Over the past five years foreign ownership of Hawaii's agricultural land has increased from 166,000 acres to 278,000, a 65% increase. (USDA Farm Service Agency report)

There is growing concern that a large portion of Hawaii's agricultural lands are owned by large corporations and businesses, leading to limited access for small-scale producers, and could lead to land development over farming

Hawaii's Aloha+Challenge has a goal of 20-30% of food consumed is grown locally and Hawaii's 2050 Sustainability Plan seeks to double local food production by 2030

These goals, that are meant to ensure food security for Hawaii, cannot be met if there is no land available to grow food for local consumption.

Since there are no federal restrictions on foreign ownership of agriculture land it is up to each state to protect its farmland.

We urge you to pass SB 245 and *keep Hawaiian land in Hawaiian hands.*

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:50:51 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Senator Gabbard, Vice Chair Senator Richards, III, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment.

Please support SB 245 proposed SD 1 to prohibit certain entities from owning, buying or acquiring agricultural lands.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

Chester Naka, DDS
3577-35 Pinao Street
Honolulu, HI 96822

Re: SB245 Relating to Ownership of Agricultural Land

Dear Sirs/ Madams:

Being an island state depending much on outside sources to feed our communities, it is imperative to maintain our agricultural lands for local farmers and growers. I have seen the land speculation and investments in Honolulu as well in other states and countries and do not wish it for our agricultural lands

The recent egg situation brings to the forefront our dependency on out of state resources. To insure more food security, we need to make lands affordable to our local producers, not speculators, especially foreign investors. Is it always going to be "all about money?" This bill is an important step towards that goal of helping our own. Please support SB245. Thank you.

Chester Naka

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 3:51:24 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Stayton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senators,

I am writing as a family farmer and a concerned citizen of Hawaii for 37 years.

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai'i's agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai'i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

Thank you for your consideration,

Susan, Lawai, Kauai

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 4:11:15 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Priscilla Stuckey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Committee Members, please support SB245 to set limits on who may own Hawai'i's agricultural lands. Hawai'i's precious lands should not be in the hands of speculators and profiteers. Our lands need to be in the care of local producers who can help the islands move toward food self-sufficiency. The state should prioritize, first, Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place and, second, other local producers. This bill is an important step in disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:52:44 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christina Puakea Busby	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Christina Busby and I am a Native Hawaiian woman and resident of Honolulu. I am a former public school educator and a current doctoral student in Education. I support SB245 which prohibits certain entities from owning, purchasing, or acquiring ownership of agricultural lands. With extensive experience teaching Aloha Aina Education with secondary age students, I have had the opportunity to volunteer at many farms and traditional food production sites around Oahu such as lo'i (taro terraces) and loko i'a (fish ponds). Various organizations have spent the last several decades rebuilding traditional food sites in order to develop Hawai'i's food sovereignty. Traditional sites like Pu'uloa (Pearl Harbor) and Waikiki were fertile lands abundant with fishponds and lo'i which produced enough food to feed tens of thousands of people. As you know, Hawai'i today depends on the majority of its food being imported from out of state. For Hawai'i to move toward increased food security again, the state should prioritize access for local producers, especially Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place and aina. It is the Indigenous people, who are descendants of the land, who have intimate knowledge on the proper stewardship of the land.

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai'i's agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands to feed our communities. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands, and Hawai'i should follow their lead to ensure our own food security. Prior to western contact, the population of Hawai'i is estimated to have been nearly one million people. The health of the land and the abundance of food production was able to sustain nearly one million people. We must prioritize keeping the stewardship and ownership of our lands local.

Mahalo

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 6:47:30 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lana Bilbo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is increasing concern about the ownership of large amounts of Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands by foreign or out of state corporations for land speculation and investment. This creates an increasingly uneven playing field for local producers who are struggling to gain access to affordable lands. For Hawai‘i to move towards increased food security, the state should prioritize access for local producers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners with lineal ties to place. This bill is an important step in prioritizing agricultural lands for local food producers and disincentivizing land speculation. Twenty five states already have restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural lands. Please support SB245.

thank you,

Lana B.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:26:26 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaitlin Joy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Local food sovereignty is important. We need to keep our land accessible and available to local food producers who have their communities best interests in mind.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:41:16 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassandra Werner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Cassandra Werner and I support SB245.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:33:52 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tom Coffman	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is one way we can get a better handle on our own future.

SB-245

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 5:41:10 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I appreciate the changes made to this legislation from the previous version; however, I continue to have deep concerns over what the bill labels as "Prohibited Entities". There would be value in ensuring greater scrutiny over foreign land acquisition attempts, particularly from adversarial countries and sanctioned entities. This bill remains *too broad* in its prohibition applications.

I continue to urge this Committee to OPPOSE further consideration of this bill OR include amendments to more narrowly tailor the prohibited entity section.