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State of Hawai'i
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SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 2025
10:30 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 88
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH AND
ADMINISTER A MICROBIAL ALGAE SOIL PRODUCTS PILOT PROGRAM.

Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 88 that requests the Department of Agriculture (Department) to establish and administer a microbial algae soil products pilot program (Pilot Program). The Department offers comments.

At the core of the Pilot Program is the cooperation of farmers who will have met 5 strict standards to qualify to be part of the Program. These farmers will apply the microbial algae soil products that are to be acquired from an unspecified source. The Department, in collaboration with the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR), will produce reports prior to the convening of the 2026 and 2027 legislatures containing findings and recommendations for the long-term application of microbial algae soil products to Hawaii's agricultural sector.

The Department defers to CTAHR with respect to supplying the qualified farmers with microbial algae and how best to measure the efficacy of its application to improve soil health, nutrient cycling and reduce fertilizer dependency without funding and other resources.

As this resolution does not provide for funding, we defer to CTAHR whether the following activities can be undertaken: data collection; analysis of soils of participating



farms; soil testing; crop yielding; purchase of farming supplies to carry out the Pilot Program; educational outreach, and so forth. Without these activities taking place, we are uncertain if the true utility of applying microbial algae soil products can be determined.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Friday, April 11, 2025 at 10:30 a.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

**SCR 88 – REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH
AND ADMINISTER A MICROBIAL ALGAE SOIL PRODUCTS PILOT PROGRAM**

Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SCR 88 that requests the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to establish and administer a microbial algae soil products pilot program (Pilot Program). The DOA, in collaboration with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) will produce reports prior to the convening of the 2026 and 2027 legislatures containing findings and recommendations for the long-term application of microbial algae soil products to Hawai'i's agricultural sector. CTAHR respectfully offers comments.

CTAHR has one faculty member conducting research with microbial algae and CTAHR currently has inadequate personnel and limited capacity to provide soil analysis and soil testing for the Pilot Program. As resolutions do not provide for funding, without additional resources it will be challenging for CTAHR to collaborate effectively with DOA to undertake the activities of a microbial algae soil products pilot program, and produce reports prior to the convening of the 2026 and 2027 legislatures.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony offering comments on the measure.

SCR-88

Submitted on: 4/8/2025 1:21:48 PM

Testimony for AGR on 4/11/2025 10:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Izzy Perchard | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Izzy Perchard and I am testifying in support of SCR88 to conduct a microbial algae soil products pilot program.

When I first learned that soil was an abundant microbiome teeming with life, I was shocked. The soil ecosystem is incredibly beneficial for the health of larger biomes. It is illogical that the common method for treating soil is with synthetic chemical fertilizers. Considering the natural benefits of algae, such as nutrient density, pathogen suppression, and water retention, it is sensible that algae is tested for soil benefit.

Promoting food security is crucial in these uncertain times; this bill can help support local farmers by enriching soil cultures. The proposed plan will majorly benefit farmers and their crops. As a former intern at an aquaponics farm, I see the advantages that this bill posits.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Izzy Perchard