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WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

MONDAY, MARCH 17, 2025
1:01 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 139, SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 157
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO DESIGNATE
KUNIA, LEILEHUA PLATEAU, AND POAMOHU AS THE CENTRAL OAHU
AGRICULTURAL CORRIDOR AND TO ESTABLISH A LIST PRIORITIZING
POTENTIAL AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS
THAT WOULD PROVIDE THE MOST VALUE TO THE STATE.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Concurrent Resolution No. 139 and House Resolution 157. These resolutions request the Department of Agriculture (Department) to designate Kunia, Leilehua Plateau, and Poamoho as the Central Oahu Agricultural Corridor and to establish a list prioritizing potential agricultural infrastructure improvement projects that would provide the most value to the State. These resolutions also request the Department of Transportation to consider traffic signage for speed limits and "no passing" zones. The Department offers comments on the proposed Corridor designation and a list of prioritized agricultural infrastructure improvements.

With respect to the requested designation of the proposed Central Oahu Agricultural Corridor, the Department would consider identifying, rather than designating, the Corridor, as we have no program or authority to formally designate a geographic area. We also recommend the resolutions declare a purpose for the proposed designation or identification of the Corridor. For the Committee's information, the Department has identified and testified about the need to protect the "Kunia Corridor" from non-agricultural uses and activities. As we informally describe it, the "Kunia Corridor" extends from the Royal Kunia community and the Hawaii Agricultural Research Center to the south and Schofield Barracks and Wheeler Army Airfield to the north, with the Kunia Road at its core.



The resolutions request the Department to “establish a list prioritizing potential agricultural infrastructure improvement projects that would provide the most value to the State...” The resolutions identify infrastructure needed by farmers to include roads and water systems. The resolutions should specify whether this list of prioritized infrastructure is to be limited to the proposed Central Oahu Agricultural Corridor or the island of Oahu, or the entire State. If the list of prioritized infrastructure is specific to the agricultural lands within the proposed Corridor, then the Department would respectfully recommend that the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism be the requested agency in these resolutions as the ADC controls thousands of acres of agricultural land, operates the Waiahole Ditch, and is a major party to the Wahiawa Irrigation System.

The Department notes that “potential agricultural infrastructure improvement projects” may be expressed in general terms in county plans. County zoning ordinances and State land use law identify permitted and permissible uses on agricultural land and do not identify specific infrastructure projects. Therefore, there is little, if any, utility to include county zoning and State land use law in establishing the list of prioritized potential agriculture infrastructure improvement projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these resolutions.