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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE LAND STUDY BUREAU SOIL RATING SYSTEM.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1       SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Act 189, Session  
2 Laws of Hawaii 2022 (Act 189), required the office of planning  
3 and sustainable development to conduct a study of the  
4 suitability of the land study bureau soil overall (master)  
5 productivity rating system (land study bureau soil rating  
6 system) and other soil classification systems used to regulate  
7 agricultural lands in the State. Accurate soil data reflecting  
8 soil characteristics, soil properties, and identification of  
9 limits, risks, and soil suitability for various uses helps  
10 optimize public and private investments in agriculture to meet  
11 the State's food and agricultural sustainability goals.

12       The legislature further finds that one of the findings of  
13 the Act 189 study is that the soil data used in the land study  
14 bureau soil rating system have not been updated since the land  
15 study bureau soil rating system was originally created in the  
16 1960s and 1970s, and there is no process to regularly  
17 incorporate new soil data. This undermines the credibility of



1 the land study bureau soil ratings used to guide the regulation  
2 of agricultural lands.

3 The legislature further finds that there is a need to  
4 update the soil data used by the land study bureau soil rating  
5 system, and establish a process for regularly updating the soil  
6 data to provide public assurance on the integrity of the land  
7 study bureau soil rating system.

8 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to update the soil  
9 data used by the land study bureau soil rating system with  
10 current data and approaches.

11 SECTION 2. (a) The office of planning and sustainable  
12 development shall update the soil data used by the land study  
13 bureau soil rating system by incorporating the latest United  
14 States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation  
15 Service's soil data for the State and soil data from other soil  
16 rating systems used in the State, developing a process for  
17 regularly incorporating United States Department of Agriculture  
18 Natural Resources Conservation Service soil data updates for the  
19 State, creating detailed digital maps that show the soils across  
20 the State, and drafting statutory and ordinance changes that may  
21 be necessary to align State and county governance with the



1 updated soil data used by the land study bureau soil rating  
2 system. The office may procure consultant services to update  
3 the soil data used by the land study bureau soil rating system.

4 (b) The office of planning and sustainable development  
5 shall collaborate with the United States Department of  
6 Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service and the  
7 American Farmland Trust to ensure that the land study bureau  
8 soil rating system aligns with national standards and best  
9 practices.

10 (c) The office of planning and sustainable development  
11 shall establish a public process for reviewing and refining the  
12 updated soil data in the land study bureau soil rating system  
13 and draft maps.

14 (d) The office of planning and sustainable development  
15 shall present the final land study bureau soil rating system  
16 that incorporates the updated soil data and maps to the  
17 legislature within twenty-four months of the effective date of  
18 this Act.

19 SECTION 3. In conducting the work required by this Act,  
20 the office of planning and sustainable development shall  
21 request, as appropriate, the assistance of the department of



1 land and natural resources, the department of agriculture, the  
2 college of tropical agriculture and human resilience of the  
3 university of Hawaii, the land use commission, and the county  
4 planning and permitting agencies, which shall cooperate with the  
5 office.

6 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$400,000 or so much  
8 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 for the  
9 office of planning and sustainable development to conduct the  
10 work required by this Act.

11 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the office of  
12 planning and sustainable development for the purposes of this  
13 Act.

14 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2050.



**Report Title:**

OPSD; Land Study Bureau Soil Rating System; Soils; Appropriation

**Description:**

Requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development, in coordination with other agencies, to update the soil data used in the land study bureau soil rating system and create a mechanism for regular soil data updates. Appropriates funds. Effective 1/1/2050. (SD1)

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