



**STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF PLANNING  
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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Coastal Zone  
Management  
Program

Environmental Review  
Program

Land Use Commission

Land Use Division

Special Plans Branch

State Transit-Oriented  
Development

Statewide Geographic  
Information System

Statewide  
Sustainability Branch

Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS**  
Director, Office of Planning and Sustainable Development  
before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING**  
Thursday, February 3, 2022  
9:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

in consideration of  
**HB 1751**  
**RELATING TO RURAL DISTRICTS.**

Chair Nakamura, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the House  
Committee on Housing.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) offers **comments** on HB 1751, which would amend HRS Chapter 205 to increase the density of the State Rural District by allowing a minimum density of not more than one house per one-quarter acre provided that each dwelling house shall be consistent with the county general plan and community development plans.

OPSD supports measures that promote the development of housing and recognizes that the State Rural District, which includes only 0.3% of all the lands in the State, has been underutilized. We are concerned, however, that HB 1751 may exacerbate unintended residential sprawl in the Rural District. Therefore, OPSD prefers and strongly supports HB 1929 which requires OPSD to perform a study to refine Rural District policies and make recommendations to facilitate the reclassification of lands from the State Agricultural District to the Rural District. Any potential amendments to HRS Chapter 205 regarding Rural District density would be better informed by the results of the study.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

**LATE**

**HB-1751**

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 11:53:05 AM

Testimony for HSG on 2/3/2022 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Morris Atta	Hawaii Department of Agriculture	Comments	Yes

Comments:

Available for questions.

DAVID Y. IGE  
Governor

JOSH GREEN  
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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**LATE**

TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2022  
9:30 A.M.  
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

HOUSE BILL NO. 1751  
RELATING TO RURAL DISTRICTS

Chairperson Nakamura and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1751 that seeks to double the allowable housing density on the minimum one-half acre lot size in the Rural District provided that the counties adopt ordinances to do so and are consistent with the county general and community development plans. Currently, only one dwelling is permitted on one-half acre Rural District lots. The intent of this proposed amendment is to increase "...housing opportunities where appropriate" (page 1, line 8). The Department of Agriculture has concerns.

Section 205-2(c) describes the State Rural District as "...areas where "city-like" concentration of people, structures, streets, and urban level of services are absent, and where small farms are intermixed with low density residential lots..." The Department questions whether doubling the allowable housing on one-half acre Rural District lots would change the fundamental character of the District. Further, the Department is concerned that the proposed amendment may lead to an increase in petitions to reclassify Agricultural District lands to the Rural District. In turn, this may increase land



values for agricultural properties that anticipate reclassification and make more costly the acquisition of agricultural lands by bona fide farmers for agricultural production.

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



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February 3, 2022

**The Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura, Chair**

House Committee on Housing

Via Videoconference

**RE: H.B. 1751, Relating to Rural Districts**

**HEARING: Thursday, February 3, 2022, at 9:30 a.m.**

Aloha Chair Nakamura, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee,

I am Ken Hiraki, Director of Government Affairs, testifying on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® ("HAR"), the voice of real estate in Hawai'i, and its over 10,800 members. HAR **supports** H.B. 1751, which authorizes the counties to adopt ordinances that allow up to one dwelling per quarter-acre in rural districts.

According to the Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism's 2019 report on Housing Demand in Hawai'i, the State needs up to 46,000 housing units to meet demand in Hawai'i by 2030. Ultimately, we have a housing supply problem, and this measure is a creative approach to address those challenges, by providing counties the authority and flexibility to adopt ordinances to permit dwellings on a quarter-acre of rural lands instead of a half-acre.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



**LATE**

**HB-1751**

Submitted on: 2/2/2022 12:43:21 PM

Testimony for HSG on 2/3/2022 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Gerald Gordner	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am a researcher in urban planning and land use policy and I strongly support this bill. Recent research has found that mandatory minimum lot sizes are the single most significant contributor to housing prices in high-demand areas. These regulations force homebuyers to purchase more land than they want or need, which increases the minimum cost of a home and prevents that land from being used for other purposes (including more housing units). MMLS also undermine important planning goals, including sustainability and walkability, by legally mandating low-density, car-centric living arrangements on most land. This committee should take every opportunity to permit counties to reduce or eliminate these regulations.