

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
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

**MARCH 18, 2022
9:00 A.M.
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2989 SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Hashem, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2989 SD1. The bill requires the Department to establish a healthy soils program, defining the terms “healthy soils” and healthy soils practices”, creating a statewide soil health assessment, providing farmers with outreach and technical assistance, establishing standards, and providing awards to incentivize farmers to implement appropriate farming practices contributing to healthy soils.

The Department appreciates the intent of this bill recognizing the importance of healthy soil for sustainable agricultural production and increase of carbon sequestration in Hawaii. The Department acknowledges there is another measure SB3325 SD1 that describes in detail a program to be administered by the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OP/SD) to incentivize carbon sequestration activities and improving soil health through incentive contracts that provide compensation to participating farmers and landowners. OP/SD also heads the Greenhouse Gas Sequestration Task Force which includes similar objectives of identifying practices that



improve soil health, increase use of compost, and result in increasing agricultural and aquacultural product yield (Section 225P(a)(2) and (3)).

The Department believes that SB 3325 SD1 is a more comprehensive vehicle to establish and implement a healthy soils program and the building of soil carbon stocks.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2989, S.D. 1

March 18, 2022
9:00 a.m.
Room 325 and Videoconference

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill (S.B.) No. 2989, S.D. 1, adds a new section to Chapter 141, HRS, to establish a Healthy Soils Program (HSP) within the Department of Agriculture to: define the terms “healthy soils” and “healthy soils practice”; create a statewide soil health assessment with a list of practices specific to the State that are effective in improving soil health and building soil carbon stocks; provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement practices that contribute to healthy soils; establish standards that apply to the HSP based on the findings of reports completed by the Greenhouse Gas Sequestration Task Force; and issue awards and other financial incentives to implement practices that contribute to healthy soils. This bill also establishes the HSP Special Fund (HSPSF), appropriates an undetermined amount of general funds in FY 23 to be deposited into the HSPSF, and appropriates an undetermined amount of special funds out of the HSPSF in FY 23 to effectuate the HSP.

B&F notes that, as a matter of general policy, the department does not support the creation of any special fund which does not meet the requirements of Section 37-52.3, HRS. Special funds should: 1) serve a need as demonstrated by the purpose, scope of work and an explanation why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process; 2) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon the users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and the sources of revenue; 3) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity; and 4) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining. Regarding S.B. No. 2989, S.D. 1, there does not appear to be any significant source of revenues to support the HSPSF aside from appropriations from the general fund.

B&F also notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



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Vincent Kimura
Waimanalo, Oahu

Anabella Bruch
Kauai

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the House Agriculture Committee,

The Hawaii Farmers Union United (HFUU) is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU strongly supports SB2989** and the development of a robust soil health program within the Hawaii Department of Agriculture.

The Hawaii Healthy Soils Program (HSP) is intended to house multiple incentives, like those for cover crops ([SB2675](#) and [SB2990](#)) and compost ([SB3004](#)) and [SB2288](#)). This approach is similar to [California's Healthy Soils Program](#) which funds demonstration and implementation grants that support myriad conservation agriculture practices.

The forthcoming GHG sequestration task force report will further delineate best practices that can be incorporated into future incentives. The Hawaii HSP will serve as a mechanism to expand resourcing of these and similar incentives. Conceivably the HSP, similar again to CA's approach, could be stewarded by an expert support panel, akin to or utilizing the GHG sequestration task force.

As initial incentives, compost application and cover cropping were selected because they are among the top conservation agriculture practices incorporated into NRCS plans for Hawaii farmers and from discussion with conservation planners.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Vincent Mina President HFUU/HFUF



House Committee on Agriculture

Friday, March 18th, 2022, 9:00a.m. Conference Room 325

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action Supports: SB2989 SD1

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) I am submitting testimony in support of SB2989 SD1.

SB2989 SD1 requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program.

HAPA supports a sound program and plan to build our soil structure, nutrient capacity and soil biodiversity. These practices prevent soil erosion by wind and water, which can further enhance air and water quality and have cascading positive impacts in our environment.

Healthy soil is the basis for establishing lasting soil that sustains communities, environmental services, farms, and farmers, for generations. In recent decades we have learned a great deal about the importance of microbial life, and soil biodiversity in over soil "health". As we realize the mistakes we have made over the last 60 or so years, moving our focus to more industrialized agriculture practices, we must move away from the outdated practices of sterilizing lands with pesticides and herbicides and killing the soil microbes and life¹, and instead support the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are beneficial to soil health².

In addition to important things like composting, crop rotation, covercropping and other ways that we can increase organic content, we need to be looking at rehabilitation of old and previously cleared and graded soils to restore soil biodiversity along with organic

¹ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/pesticides-are-killing-the-worlds-soils/>

² <https://www.emnz.com/article/how-pesticides-affect-soil-microbes>

content. A well structured program would include qualified soil biologists that could bring these new scientific understandings about soil ecology into the program.

Soil biodiversity provides fertile ground for advancing global sustainability because it integrates so many challenges including climate regulation, water quality, pollution remediation, food and fiber production, and habitat for organisms aboveground and underwater.³

Healthy soil is by far the most biologically diverse part of Earth. The soil food web includes beetles, springtails, mites, worms, spiders, nematodes, fungi, bacteria, and other organisms. These organisms improve the entry and storage of water, resistance to erosion, plant nutrition, and break down of organic matter. These vital ecosystem services are often forgotten and even destroyed through intensive industrialized agriculture⁴.

HAPA believes that SB2989 SD1 can help to address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils, restore and improve soil biodiversity, while also improving the overall quality of our environment and working to sequester carbon. SB2989 SD1 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment.

Please pass SB2989 SD1.

Mahalo for your consideration,



Anne Frederick
Executive Director

³ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/soil-biodiversity>

⁴ https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs142p2_050947.pdf



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair

SB2989 SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Friday, March 18, 2022, 9:00 AM
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the five county level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB2989 SD1** to require the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program. Healthy soils are necessary for ensuring we can continue to grow food on the land. Agriculture can be a beneficial contributor to managing the environment when the appropriate practices are deployed. This bill will provide the support to farmers and ranchers to encourage practices that increase soil health.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director



SB-2989-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2022 8:24:20 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Harriet Witt	Hawaii Farmers Union United	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

You cannot be any healthier than the soil where your food grows. This is why we need this bill. Please support it. Mahalo.

SB-2989-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2022 8:29:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Climate Protectors Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: The Honorable Mark Hashem, Chair, the Honorable Amy Perruso, Vice Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture

From: Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: Hearing SB2989 SD1 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

Friday March 18, 2022, 9:00 a.m., by videoconference

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture!

The Climate Protectors Hawai'i is a group focused on reversing the climate crisis and encouraging Hawai'i to lead the world towards a safe and sustainable climate and future. **The Climate Protectors Hawai'i STRONGLY SUPPORTS SB2989 SD1!**

This bill requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a healthy soils grant program, defining the terms "healthy soils" and "healthy soils practices," creating a statewide soil health assessment, providing farmers with outreach and technical assistance, establishing standards, and awarding grants or awards to incentivize farmers to implement appropriate farming practices contributing to healthy soils.

Hawai'i imports most of its food currently, requiring substantial emissions of greenhouse gases in transporting that food. Local food can travel far less, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Healthy soils, which are needed to produce more healthy local food, can also benefit the environment by sequestering more atmospheric carbon.

The Climate Protectors Hawai'i **strongly support** this bill as a way to mitigate climate warming.

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo!

Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)



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

March 18, 2022

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON SB 2989, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Room 325 & Videoconference
9:00 AM

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

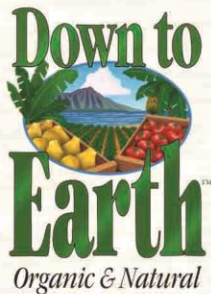
The Hawaii Farm Bureau supports SB 2989, SD1, which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program.

HFB strongly supports the concept of building soil structure and nutrient capacity. Caring for the soil is a cornerstone to having multigenerational farms that continue to provide for the people of Hawaii. Many of our farms add compost made off-site as well as utilize short-term fallow between crop cycles to increase organic content in their soils. HFB recognizes and supports the diversion of discarded food and other useful wastes away from landfills. The benefits of this and of composting are well-known.

Farming is a tough business. High production costs are a major driver of narrow profit margins for Hawaii's farmers. Land, water, labor, taxes, transportation, utilities, inputs, invasive species, and food safety regulations are all costs of doing business that often results in our farmers just being able to break even. HFB supports this initiative that could reduce the cost of production for local farmers. This is another mechanism that can help locally produced goods compete with imported products, strengthening our local economy.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important subject.

Love Life!



SB2989 SD1 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE
House Committee on Agriculture
March 18, 2022, 9:00am State Capitol

Aloha Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair, Rep. Amy A. Perruso, and Committee Members.

Down to Earth Organic and Natural testifies in support of SB2989 SD1.

Down to Earth Organic and Natural has six locations on Oahu and Maui. Since we opened in 1977, we have supported healthy lifestyles and preservation of the environment by selling local, fresh, organic and natural products, and by promoting a healthy, plant-based and vegetarian lifestyle.

We are strongly in support of SB2989 SD1, requiring the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program.

Down to Earth is proud to work with local farmers who are dedicated to organic, sustainable, and regenerative methods that preserve our land and water, while also building and enhancing our soils. We are strongly in support of efforts to improve soil health and build soil carbon stocks, as well as educating farmers and providing technical assistance to achieve these goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.

Alison Riggs
Public Policy & Government Relations Manager
Down to Earth

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corporate@downtoearth.org

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kahului@downtoearth.org

www.downtoearth.org

SB-2989-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2022 7:03:03 PM

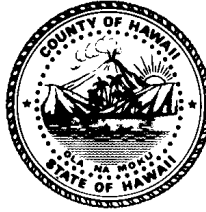
Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
laurel brier	Kauai women's caucus	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It's an Emergency! We need to decarbonize AND sequester carbon. The IPCC, the science, has made it clear. Nature systems are our best avenue for sequestration. This bill would support Hawaii's food independence and soil remediation. It's a win WIN

REBECCA VILLEGAS
Council Member
District 7, Central Kona



PHONE: (808) 323-4267
FAX: (808) 323-4786
EMAIL: Rebecca.villegas@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

March 16, 2022

TESTIMONY OF REBECCA VILLEGAS
COUNCIL MEMBER, HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL
ON SB 2989 SD1, RELATING TO AGRICULTURE
Committee on Agriculture
Friday, March 18, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

Aloha Chair Hashem and Members of the Committee:

I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2989 SD1, relating to agriculture.

To help our State progress and reach our sustainability goals we must establish a healthy soil grant program, which shall:

- (1) Define the terms "healthy soils" and "healthy soils practices";
- (2) Create a statewide soil health assessment with a list of practices specific to the State that are most effective in improving soil health and building soil carbon stocks;
- (3) Provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils;
- (4) Establish standards that shall apply to the healthy soils grant program, based on the findings of reports completed by the greenhouse gas sequestration task force established pursuant to section 225P-4 for minimum levels of soil carbon and water content and required soil health practices; and
- (5) Subject to available funding, award grants and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

For the reasons stated above I urge the Committee on Agriculture to support this measure. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (808) 323-4267.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Rebecca Villegas
Council Member, Hawai'i County Council

SB-2989-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2022 3:38:23 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
De Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable chair and vice-chair, Senators Hashem and Perusso, as well as distinguished members of the Committee on Agriculture,

I support the bill SB2989 SD1.

If we are to develop a robust, local agricultural industry to help diversify our tourism-dependent economy, our land must be healed from the years of chemical abuse by former farm and land corporations.

Under some circumstances, land can be revitalized over time, with cover crops and similar. However, the rich soil of the Hawaiian islands has been extremely maltreated by the chemical and inorganic farming methods from the plantation era forward.

It is our duty to take care of our land, morally as well as spiritually. As a person of Native Hawaiian heritage, I feel obligated to point out that having, and funding, a system of land regeneration and revitalization is not only logical, it's Hawaiian, at its core.

I support this bill SB 2989 SD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

D Austin

Kihei, Hawaii

SB-2989-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2022 4:19:45 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sunny Savage	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

in support

SB-2989-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2022 11:55:45 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support SB2989 SD1

SB-2989-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2022 3:08:03 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this measure. There is not a statewide assessment of soil health or a roadmap to improving Hawaii's soils that were depleted during the plantation era due to industrial farming practices. This bill will incentivize regenerative farming, ranching, and land management practices that improve soil health and capture carbon. Supporting the capture of carbon in the soil is a win-win for the climate and local food production. Please pass this bill. Mahalo.

SB-2989-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2022 7:40:00 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruth Lewis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is not a statewide assessment of soil health or a roadmap to improving Hawai'i's soils that were depleted during the plantation era due to industrial farming practices. This bill will incentivize regenerative farming, ranching, and land management practices that improve soil health and capture carbon. Supporting the capture of carbon in the soil is a win-win for the environment and local food production.

I strongly support measures to revitalize our soil quality.

Ruth Lewis

4585 Kikala RD, Kalaheo, HI 96741

808-332-5032

SB-2989-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2022 8:11:21 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2022 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Legislators,

I am writing as a resident of Kauai and a small farmer in SUPPORT of SB2989 SD1.

There is not a statewide assessment of soil health or a roadmap to improving Hawai'i's soils that were depleted during the plantation era due to industrial farming practices. This bill will incentivize regenerative farming, ranching, and land management practices that improve soil health and capture carbon. Supporting the capture of carbon in the soil is a win-win for the environment and local food production.

Thanks for your consideration,

Susan

SB-2989-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2022 5:28:29 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Nanea Lo. I'm born and raised and from this land. I'm currently a Mō'ili'ili resident. I'm writing in support SB2989 SD1.

This bill requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program. Establishes a Healthy Soils Program Special Fund. Provides a comprehensive framework and long-term program to both assess and improve soil health and incentivize regenerative practices statewide.

There is not a statewide assessment of soil health or a roadmap to improving Hawaii's soils that were depleted during the plantation era due to industrial farming practices. This bill will incentivize regenerative farming, ranching, and land management practices that improve soil health and capture carbon. Supporting the capture of carbon in the soil is a win-win for the environment and local food production.

Support SB2989 SD1 too!

me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo

SB-2989-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2022 8:44:35 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
P Noel Bobilin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I stronly support this bill. Healthy soils program has a direct correlation to reducing climate change and builds a more resillient foundation for growing food in Hawaii - making us more capable of supporting our own population.

Mahalo

Noel Bobilin 96771

SB-2989-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2022 5:33:06 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
luann casey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of all measures that can be taken to establish a Healthy Soils Program. Please support funding required for this.

Thank you, Luann Casey