

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
AND
COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2023

1:00 P.M.

**CONFERENCE ROOM 224
AND VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1182, HD2
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Chairpersons Gabbard and Inouye and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1182, HD2. This bill appropriates funds to the department of agriculture for the preparation of an environmental impact statement to drill a non-potable water well on individual parcels at Panaewa agricultural park. The Department of Agriculture respectfully opposes this measure.

The lease rent is based on unimproved, vacant land (lowest possible) and therefore all individual, on property, infrastructure improvements are the responsibility of the lessee. Appropriating public funds for an individual's use is an inappropriate use of said funds. The Department respectfully suggests that grant funding be explored should the legislature desire to assist individuals. Additionally, we respectfully note that this Park is served by the County of Hawaii's Department of Water Supply, who gives a substantial discount for agricultural use.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





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March 22, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

TESTIMONY ON HB 1182, HD2
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference
1:00 PM

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Inouye, Vice Chairs Richards and Elefante, and Members of the Committees:

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 1182, HD2, which appropriates funds to the department of agriculture for the preparation of an environmental impact statement for lessees to perform drilling of non-potable water wells on individual parcels at Panaewa agricultural park.

Affordable and reliable water for irrigation is a basic requirement for sustainable agriculture. Across the country, irrigation systems are heavily subsidized. Hawaii's farmers face expenses far beyond that of their continental or foreign counterparts due to input costs, utility costs, and water. There is no doubt that water infrastructure development has lagged behind the needs of population growth across the State. In addition to new development, repair, and maintenance of aging infrastructure also need to be addressed. In addition to those meeting potable water needs, there is an equal need to address irrigation and other water requirements associated with agriculture.

Without affordable and reliable water for irrigation, Hawaii cannot sustain its farms. Although our State goals and policies encourage agriculture, farming is a difficult business, and water access continues to be a significant hurdle.

It is well-known that the requirements of the environmental impact statement law, while important, can delay beneficial projects until they are no longer feasible. In addition, the enormous cost of hiring consultants to conduct these reviews and provide reports can also preclude farmers from using land they own or lease.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a renewed awareness of the critical importance of growing food and other agricultural products. It has highlighted the need for our islands to become more self-sufficient. This bill will facilitate the achievement of those goals and our constitutional mandate because although water is essential for farming, it is not currently available to all agricultural lands that could be productive.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.