
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LAND USE PLANNING.

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

1 SECTION 1. Farmers are required to have an approved
2 conservation plan to be in compliance with local grading and
3 grubbing ordinances and to access various federal Farm Bill
4 funding programs. However, the number of individuals in Hawaii
5 qualified to write conservation plans is insufficient to meet
6 the need. This shortage of qualified individuals can leave many
7 Hawaii farmers, who may run relatively small operations compared
8 to those on the mainland, waiting two to four years to receive a
9 conservation plan. Without an approved conservation plan,
10 farmers are technically out of compliance with local
11 regulations, leaving them vulnerable to significant penalties.

12 Data from fiscal year 2013 indicates that just one hundred
13 seventy new conservation plans were developed in Hawaii, which
14 represents approximately 2.5 per cent of the seven thousand
15 farms operating in the State. The vast majority of Hawaii
16 farmers do not have any conservation plan in place; it is likely
17 that most of them are small agricultural producers. The



1 application assistance program created by this Act will help the
2 Hawaii farmers who do not have a conservation plan to obtain
3 one.

4 The current conservation-plan application system is
5 available only to employees of the Natural Resources
6 Conservation Service of the United States Department of
7 Agriculture and to individuals working from local Natural
8 Resources Conservation Service offices. The national Natural
9 Resources Conservation Service policy prioritizes applications
10 from farms seeking federal Farm Bill funding. Because very few
11 Hawaii farmers seek such assistance, it is estimated that about
12 98 per cent of Hawaii farms lack ready access to this federal
13 resource and are thus unable to obtain a conservation plan in a
14 timely manner.

15 The state of Idaho developed an online program called the
16 Idaho OnePlan, which provides data and software to help
17 agricultural producers develop a single conservation plan that
18 can be pre-endorsed by state and federal regulatory agencies to
19 ensure that farmers are in compliance with applicable
20 regulations and are eligible for available financial-assistance
21 programs. The purpose of this Act is to create a similar, user-



1 based data and software initiative, to be called Hawaii One, for
2 this State's agricultural producers.

3 An online interface will save both time and resources for
4 all parties involved in the development and approval of
5 conservation plans. For conservation-plan applicants, the wait
6 time to process a conservation plan would be reduced
7 substantially. A full and comprehensive conservation plan
8 currently requires approximately fifty hours of staff time to
9 analyze. For a conservation plan that incorporates standardized
10 data and form, such as one developed under the Idaho OnePlan or
11 a similar model, the amount of time needed by technical staff to
12 process the application could be reduced to an estimated fifteen
13 hours. The combination of a focused and streamlined Hawaii One
14 application system will greatly reduce processing time and allow
15 Hawaii farmers to more readily obtain an approved conservation
16 plan.

17 The anticipated design of Hawaii One incorporates a series
18 of modules to allow an applicant to access data and software for
19 as many or as few plan areas as necessary to meet each farmer's
20 planning needs. The current implementation model calls for an
21 initial offering of a soil-erosion module and the eventual



1 addition of further planning modules for plan areas, such as
2 wildlife or pesticide management.

3 The department of agriculture and department of land and
4 natural resources have taken steps in the past to develop an
5 online conservation plan application system. However,
6 insufficient access to server space and funding cuts for both
7 agencies caused by the recession in 2008 brought that initiative
8 to an end. The department of agriculture now has the capacity
9 to house a host server, if necessary, and interested non-
10 governmental organizations have obtained financial and in-kind
11 support from local partners. These resources are sufficient to
12 form the basis of a public-private partnership to successfully
13 develop and deliver Hawaii One.

14 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
15 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
16 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2015-2016 and the
17 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
18 2016-2017 for the department of agriculture to implement and
19 operate the Hawaii One program to allow agricultural producers
20 to develop conservation plans online.



1 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
2 of agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

3 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on January 20, 2050.



Report Title:

Conservation Plan; Hawaii One Program; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for the Department of Agriculture to implement and operate a Hawaii One Program to allow agricultural producer to develop conservation plans online. (HB439 HD1)

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