

HB 2676,
HD2

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

SHAN S. TSUTSUI
Lt. Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Deputy to the Chairperson

**TESTIMONY OF SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER, LAND, AND AGRICULTURE
AND HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ARTS**

March 21, 2016
2:50 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2676 HD2
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairpersons Gabbard and Taniguchi and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 2676 HD2, which seeks to encourage farming in Hawaii by establishing within the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources Agribusiness Incubator Program, a five-year energy independent farming community pilot project. There are two blank appropriations. The project includes land acquisition, infrastructure and housing development, land management and maintenance, and employment of technologies to cause energy and water independence. The Department of Agriculture supports the intent of this measure but defers to the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our testimony.





UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Agriculture
And
Senate Committee on Higher Education and the Arts
Monday, March 21, 2016 at 2:50 p.m.

By
Robert Bley-Vroman, Chancellor
And
Maria Gallo, Dean
And
J. Kenneth Grace, Associate Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2676 HD2 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairs Gabbard and Taniguchi, Vice Chair Nishihara, and members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Agriculture and Senate Committee on Higher Education and the Arts, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 2676 HD2, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), Agribusiness Incubator Program for the establishment of a five-year energy independent farming community pilot project.

We support this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Budget.

Beginning farmers in Hawai'i face substantial difficulties in obtaining affordable land to farm that is accessible and has adequate infrastructure. Additionally, most new farmers must live in one location, and commute to their agricultural land. The lease or mortgage costs associated with maintaining two pieces of property (residence and farm), the costs of commuting, and high risk of agricultural vandalism and theft at unattended farm lots, make this a very difficult, if not impossible, situation for the future generation of farmers. The resulting decline in those entering farming and succeeding at it threatens the food security of Hawai'i.

HB 2676 HD2 proposes to investigate and implement a novel solution to this dilemma by establishing sustainable, energy-independent farming communities on state land. These communities would share central facilities, with homes located adjacent to each tenant's farm. Modern technologies make such essentially off-the-grid communities with alternative energy sources, water reuse, and small, low-cost housing units a viable proposition.

The Agribusiness Incubator Program (AIP) has contributed to the business success of many small farmers and food producers in Hawai'i. Planning of such a farming community pilot project, including identification of economic and regulatory obstacles

and possible solutions, is within the program's area of expertise. First year costs for planning and business plan development would be \$150,000 for AIP personnel and operational support. Since it is beyond the scope of CTAHR and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to issue bonds, obtain land, build community infrastructure, and actively manage community affairs, subsequent years will require that other state agencies become involved as partners to address the business infrastructure and land stewardship needs of the pilot project.

The decline in new farmers is a serious issue for Hawai'i that demands novel approaches. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2676 HD2.



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March 21, 2016

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AND AGRICULTURE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

TESTIMONY ON HB 2676, HD2
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Room 224
2:50 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Nishihara, and Members of the Committees:

I am Randy Cabral, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,900 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 HB 2676, HD2, which establishes, within CTAHR's agribusiness incubator program, a five-year energy independent farming community pilot project.

Food security, food self-sufficiency and growing agriculture are popular concepts seen in many of the measures before the legislature this year. This Legislative Session, there have been many bills introduced that support of Hawaii's Agricultural Industry. This year, HFB has introduced a package of measures addressing the real needs of our farmers and ranchers all associated with increasing farm and ranch viability. These include land and water issues, infrastructure needs, labor, agricultural education, permitting, and regulatory assistance.

This HB 2676, HD2 supports the growth of Hawaii's agricultural industry by establishing a five-year energy independent farming community pilot project in CTAHR. This measure encourages farming by providing support to individuals seeking to become farmers. It is an innovative and comprehensive plan that can revitalize our local agricultural industry by bringing farmers and the state together to increase agricultural production, create jobs, engage in partnerships, and to provide affordable housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WLA Testimony](#)
Cc: hoonanea@aol.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2676 on Mar 21, 2016 14:50PM*
Date: Wednesday, March 16, 2016 10:29:32 AM

HB2676

Submitted on: 3/16/2016

Testimony for WLA/HEA on Mar 21, 2016 14:50PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Regina Gregory	EcoTipping Points	Support	No

Comments:

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Cc: NuWayveUnl@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2676 on Mar 21, 2016 14:50PM*
Date: Monday, March 14, 2016 1:24:18 PM

HB2676

Submitted on: 3/14/2016

Testimony for WLA/HEA on Mar 21, 2016 14:50PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
James Terrell Trice	NuWayve Unlimited	Support	No

Comments:

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**Written Testimony Presented Before the Senate Committee on Water, Land, and
Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Higher Education and the Arts
Monday, March 21, 2016, 2:50pm
By Steven Chiang**

HB 2676.HD2 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairs Taniguchi and Gabbard and members of your respective committees, please note my strong support of HB2676 HD2, which funds the Agribusiness Incubator Program to establish an energy-independent farming community pilot project.

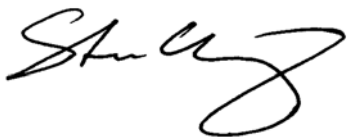
As the Director of the Agribusiness Incubator Program, which provides business consulting to new and existing agribusinesses, and as the co-founder of the GoFarm Hawaii beginning farmer training program, I am well aware of the challenges Hawaii's farmers face.

As you may know, the average age of Hawaii's farmers continues to increase. What is most troubling to me is that, despite the evident increase in the interest in and support of farming, the number of beginning farmers nationwide has declined by 20% in the five years between the most recent USDA censuses. In my experience, a significant portion of this disparity is due to the difficulty in accessing land to farm.

Passage of this bill would allow the State and other landowners to see that a cluster of extremely modest homes connected to small acreage lots and unconnected to utilities can address obstacles facing both landowners and farmers. Obstacles that, if overcome, will result in making more farmland accessible to small farmers.

Specifically, for landowners, this innovative model of energy independent clustered farm housing will obviate many infrastructure costs, simplify termination of leases, promote leasing of larger parcel sizes, enhance the agricultural appeal of lands disconnected from utilities, and generate significantly more revenue per acre. The result of which will be more farmland feasibly accessible for farmers.

My preliminary analysis on the return on investment for this model is promising. More work is needed, however, to address the real-world requirements and challenges. There is an urgent need to address the issue of farmland accessibility so that Hawaii can fulfill the desire of the people to have a vibrant agricultural industry and preserve productive use of agricultural lands. This bill will help Hawaii to develop a very promising and innovative solution that will serve as a model for governmental and private landowners in Hawaii and beyond. I strongly urge the committees to support its adoption. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven Chiang', with a stylized, flowing script.

Steven Chiang

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To: [WLA Testimony](#)
Cc: begoniabarry@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2676 on Mar 21, 2016 14:50PM*
Date: Monday, March 14, 2016 8:52:33 PM

HB2676

Submitted on: 3/14/2016

Testimony for WLA/HEA on Mar 21, 2016 14:50PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Barbara Barry	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Cc: dylanarm@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2676 on Mar 21, 2016 14:50PM*
Date: Tuesday, March 15, 2016 7:13:55 AM

HB2676

Submitted on: 3/15/2016

Testimony for WLA/HEA on Mar 21, 2016 14:50PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dylan Armstrong	Individual	Support	No

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