
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii is one of the
2 most geographically isolated locations in the world. Hawaii is
3 inordinately susceptible to price fluctuations for food and
4 goods because prices of both are affected by the price of oil
5 needed to fuel their importation to the State. Further, almost
6 all food items consumed in-state must be shipped to Hawaii to
7 support the needs of the State's population.

8 Large conventional farming operations use pesticides that
9 damage the State's fragile ecosystem. The pesticides enter the
10 water and land resources of the State and finds its way into the
11 ocean. The State's food security is also compromised by other
12 factors, such as the rat lung worm that carries a virus that
13 results in long-term disability and consequently, diminishes an
14 affected person's ability to earn a living.

15 The State must explore more effective and environmentally
16 responsible ways to increase food production to feed its
17 residents. Agricultural technology, or ag-tech, should be at



1 the forefront of the effort to revitalize the agricultural
2 sector of the State and develop that industry's potential to be
3 a major contributor to state revenues.

4 The legislature further finds that vertical farming, the
5 use of indoor farming techniques in a closed and controlled
6 environment to grow produce in vertically stacked layers,
7 reduces the need for space, pesticides, and water to grow food.

8 AeroFarms in New Jersey, with its sixty-nine thousand
9 square foot facility, has demonstrated the potential of vertical
10 farming to grow healthy fruits and vegetables and to spur
11 economic activity at the same time. According to Cornell
12 University and the University of California, "Every year,
13 AeroFarms has the potential to produce up to thirty harvests and
14 yield two million pounds of greens. In comparison, a
15 traditional outdoor farm in New York state produces about three
16 lettuce harvests in a good year."

17 Hawaii must entertain alternatives to its current
18 agricultural operations by bringing in new ideas for the use of
19 land and practicing responsible land stewardship. New
20 agricultural production methods, such as vertical farming, have
21 enormous potential to increase crop yields in limited land



1 space. Several other developed countries, such as Singapore,
2 have successfully implemented vertical farming operations that
3 balance urban development and food production.

4 The purpose of this Act is to:

- 5 (1) Require the department of agriculture to conduct a
6 study on the feasibility of authorizing the department
7 to establish and designate ag-tech zones in
8 residential and commercial areas within the city and
9 county of Honolulu's urban core; and
10 (2) Appropriate funds for the feasibility study.

11 SECTION 2. The department of agriculture shall conduct a
12 study on the feasibility of authorizing the department to
13 establish and designate ag-tech zones, wherein technological
14 innovation in agriculture is used to increase food production in
15 a more effective and environmentally responsible way that also
16 contributes to state revenues.

17 SECTION 3. In conducting the study on the feasibility of
18 ag-tech zones, the department of agriculture shall be guided by
19 the following goals and objectives:

- 20 (1) Protect and expand Hawaii's agricultural production
21 for in-state consumption and export;



(2) Create a new industry that recognizes and responds to the challenges of the future of food production in context of population growth;

(3) Recruit and train Hawaii's youth for the new agricultural economy; and

(4) Promote farming techniques that reduce the use of water and pesticides.

SECTION 4. The feasibility study shall include:

(1) Research into ag-tech zoning currently used in other jurisdictions and best practices relating thereto;

(2) Identification of areas within the city and county of Honolulu suitable for ag-tech zoning;

(3) Determination of funding and staffing requirements for a statewide ag-tech program and any other implementation concerns;

(4) Recommendations for necessary legislation at the state and county level to implement a statewide ag-tech program; and

(5) Production of an economic impact report based upon the successful implementation of a state-wide ag-tech program.



1 SECTION 5. In conducting the feasibility study required by
2 this Act, the department of agriculture shall request, as
3 appropriate, the assistance of the department of land and
4 natural resources; University of Hawaii; and department of
5 business, economic development, and tourism. Those agencies
6 shall cooperate and provide necessary resources as requested by
7 the department of agriculture.

8 SECTION 6. The department of agriculture shall submit its
9 feasibility study, as required by this Act, together with its
10 findings and recommendations, including proposed legislation, to
11 the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening
12 of the regular session of 2019.

13 SECTION 7. There is appropriated out of the general
14 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
15 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the
16 department of agriculture to conduct a feasibility study as
17 required by this Act.

18 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
19 agriculture for the purposes of this Act.



1 SECTION 8. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2018.

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H.B. NO. 2099

Report Title:

Feasibility Study; Ag-Tech Zones; Department of Agriculture

Description:

Requires the Department of Agriculture to conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of ag-tech zones within the City and County of Honolulu. Appropriates funds for conducting the feasibility study.

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