
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SOLAR ENERGY.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that due to existing
2 agricultural land use and soil classifications, siting and
3 installation of utility scale type photovoltaic projects is a
4 permitted use in a residential subdivision within an
5 agricultural land-use classification district. The legislature
6 is aware that industrial-type solar facilities are permitted on
7 all land in an agricultural district with poor soil. However,
8 on the island of Hawaii, there are many large residential
9 subdivisions, also known as "non-conforming subdivisions," that
10 were created prior to 1980, that do not meet current subdivision
11 standards. The legislature acknowledges that these non-
12 conforming subdivisions are not illegal, but created prior to
13 1980 for speculation purposes with no infrastructure
14 requirements. Historically, these non-conforming subdivisions
15 which were created for solely residential purposes remain
16 designated in the agricultural district.



1 The legislature further finds that while the agricultural
2 designation may be assumed to mean large tracts of agricultural
3 farmlands located far from a designated urban or residential
4 areas, there exist on the island of Hawaii many non-conforming
5 subdivisions that are residential in nature, yet are designated
6 as agriculture which allows for certain uses not normally
7 allowed in designated residential areas. This Act recognizes
8 that while large, industrial-scale solar installations are very
9 desirable and essential for Hawaii's future and are ideally
10 suited for large tracts of agricultural land with poor soil,
11 these facilities obviously were not intended to be situated
12 within residential subdivisions without proper permits.

13 The legislature also finds that most households relying on
14 solar power for standard residential needs require photovoltaic
15 systems with a nameplate capacity of less than five kilowatts.
16 The limitation of fifteen kilowatts is far in excess of the
17 needs for residents of rural communities. This Act is not
18 intended to inconvenience households that choose to install
19 large photovoltaics as a renewable source of energy.

20 This Act is not intended to be retroactive and will not
21 impact existing or currently permitted solar energy facilities.



1 The purpose of this Act is to protect the property values,
2 health, safety and welfare of people who live in previously
3 created non-conforming residential subdivisions that
4 unfortunately, because of their agricultural designation, would
5 allow an incompatible use without having to go through a special
6 use permit process to determine impacts to surrounding residents
7 and the community at large.

8 This Act requires a special permit approval for solar
9 energy facilities larger than fifteen kilowatts on non-
10 conforming residential subdivisions located on land with soil
11 classified with an overall productivity rating of class D or E.

12 SECTION 2. Section 205-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
13 amended by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

14 "(d) Agricultural districts shall include:

- 15 (1) Activities or uses as characterized by the cultivation
16 of crops, crops for bioenergy, orchards, forage, and
17 forestry;
- 18 (2) Farming activities or uses related to animal husbandry
19 and game and fish propagation;



- 1 (3) Aquaculture, which means the production of aquatic
2 plant and animal life within ponds and other bodies of
3 water;
- 4 (4) Wind-generated energy production for public, private,
5 and commercial use;
- 6 (5) Biofuel production, as described in section
7 205-4.5(a)(16), for public, private, and commercial
8 use;
- 9 (6) Solar energy facilities; provided that:
- 10 (A) This paragraph shall apply only to land with soil
11 classified by the land study bureau's detailed
12 land classification as overall (master)
13 productivity rating class B, C, D, or E; [and]
- 14 (B) Solar energy facilities placed within land with
15 soil classified as overall productivity rating
16 class B or C shall not occupy more than ten per
17 cent of the acreage of the parcel, or twenty
18 acres of land, whichever is lesser, unless a
19 special use permit is granted pursuant to section
20 205-6; and



1 (C) Solar energy facilities placed within land with
2 soil classified by the land study bureau's
3 detailed land classification as overall (master)
4 productivity rating class D or E shall require a
5 special use permit pursuant to section 205-6 if
6 the facilities are larger than fifteen kilowatts
7 and placed on a single lot or multiple lots in a
8 non-conforming residential subdivision. For
9 purposes of this subparagraph, "non-conforming
10 residential subdivision" means a subdivision
11 located in an agricultural district created prior
12 to January 1, 1980 for primarily residential
13 purposes which does not conform to current county
14 codes and has been identified by each county;

15 (7) Bona fide agricultural services and uses that support
16 the agricultural activities of the fee or leasehold
17 owner of the property and accessory to any of the
18 above activities, regardless of whether conducted on
19 the same premises as the agricultural activities to
20 which they are accessory, including farm dwellings as
21 defined in section 205-4.5(a)(4), employee housing,



1 farm buildings, mills, storage facilities, processing
 2 facilities, photovoltaic, biogas, and other small-
 3 scale renewable energy systems producing energy solely
 4 for use in the agricultural activities of the fee or
 5 leasehold owner of the property, agricultural-energy
 6 facilities as defined in section 205-4.5(a)(17),
 7 vehicle and equipment storage areas, and plantation
 8 community subdivisions as defined in section
 9 205-4.5(a)(12);

10 (8) Wind machines and wind farms;

11 (9) Small-scale meteorological, air quality, noise, and
 12 other scientific and environmental data collection and
 13 monitoring facilities occupying less than one-half
 14 acre of land; provided that these facilities shall not
 15 be used as or equipped for use as living quarters or
 16 dwellings;

17 (10) Agricultural parks;

18 (11) Agricultural tourism conducted on a working farm, or a
 19 farming operation as defined in section 165-2, for the
 20 enjoyment, education, or involvement of visitors;
 21 provided that the agricultural tourism activity is



- 1 accessory and secondary to the principal agricultural
2 use and does not interfere with surrounding farm
3 operations; and provided further that this paragraph
4 shall apply only to a county that has adopted
5 ordinances regulating agricultural tourism under
6 section 205-5;
- 7 (12) Agricultural tourism activities, including overnight
8 accommodations of twenty-one days or less, for any one
9 stay within a county; provided that this paragraph
10 shall apply only to a county that includes at least
11 three islands and has adopted ordinances regulating
12 agricultural tourism activities pursuant to section
13 205-5; provided further that the agricultural tourism
14 activities coexist with a bona fide agricultural
15 activity. For the purposes of this paragraph, "bona
16 fide agricultural activity" means a farming operation
17 as defined in section 165-2;
- 18 (13) Open area recreational facilities;
- 19 (14) Geothermal resources exploration and geothermal
20 resources development, as defined under section 182-1;



- 1 (15) Agricultural-based commercial operations registered in
2 Hawaii, including:
- 3 (A) A roadside stand that is not an enclosed
4 structure, owned and operated by a producer for
5 the display and sale of agricultural products
6 grown in Hawaii and value-added products that
7 were produced using agricultural products grown
8 in Hawaii;
- 9 (B) Retail activities in an enclosed structure owned
10 and operated by a producer for the display and
11 sale of agricultural products grown in Hawaii,
12 value-added products that were produced using
13 agricultural products grown in Hawaii, logo items
14 related to the producer's agricultural
15 operations, and other food items;
- 16 (C) A retail food establishment owned and operated by
17 a producer and permitted under chapter 11-50,
18 Hawaii administrative rules, that prepares and
19 serves food at retail using products grown in
20 Hawaii and value-added products that were



1 produced using agricultural products grown in
2 Hawaii;

3 (D) A farmers' market, which is an outdoor market
4 limited to producers selling agricultural
5 products grown in Hawaii and value-added products
6 that were produced using agricultural products
7 grown in Hawaii; and

8 (E) A food hub, which is a facility that may contain
9 a commercial kitchen and provides for the
10 storage, processing, distribution, and sale of
11 agricultural products grown in Hawaii and value-
12 added products that were produced using
13 agricultural products grown in Hawaii.

14 The owner of an agricultural-based commercial
15 operation shall certify, upon request of an officer or
16 agent charged with enforcement of this chapter under
17 section 205-12, that the agricultural products
18 displayed or sold by the operation meet the
19 requirements of this paragraph; and

20 (16) Hydroelectric facilities as described in section
21 205-4.5(a)(23). Agricultural districts shall not



1 include golf courses and golf driving ranges, except
2 as provided in section 205-4.5(d). Agricultural
3 districts include areas that are not used for, or that
4 are not suited to, agricultural and ancillary
5 activities by reason of topography, soils, and other
6 related characteristics."

7 SECTION 3. This Act does not affect rights and duties that
8 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were
9 begun before its effective date.

10 SECTION 4. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
11 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

12 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on January 28, 2045.



Report Title:

Solar Energy Facilities; Agricultural District; Special Use Permits

Description:

Requires special permit approval for solar energy facilities larger than fifteen kilowatts on one or more lots in non-conforming residential subdivisions, which have been identified by the county, located on land with soil classified with an overall productivity rating of class D or E. (HB2665 HD1)

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