

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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**TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**FEBRUARY 3, 2020
1:15 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2703
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Senate Bill 2703. This bill establishes a grant program to assist beginning ranchers and farmers. The Department of Agriculture strongly supports this bill.

Hawaii's farmers now average over 60 years of age and many will soon be retiring or scaling down their operations. If Hawaii is to be more food self-sufficient, there is a need to get new farmers into the pipeline to assure greater production of locally grown crops and livestock. The proposed grant program will encourage and support beginning farmers and ranchers during the challenging start-up phase as they gain experience with markets, crop growing requirements, pests, diseases, regulatory requirements, business management and labor issues, etc. Data gathered from grant recipients will be used to assist other new farmers and ranchers by providing information such as common problems and issues as well as recommendations on best practices and "what I wished I had known before starting the business".

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



SB-2703

Submitted on: 1/28/2020 8:37:57 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2020 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nicole K Galase	Testifying for Hawaii Cattlemen's Council	Support	No

Comments:



MAUI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 224
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2020 AT 1:15 P.M.**

To The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair;
The Honorable Russell E. Ruderman, Vice Chair; and
Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Environment;

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2703 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Aloha, my name is Pamela Tumpap and I am the President of the Maui Chamber of Commerce, with approximately 650 members. I am writing share our support of SB2703.

The Maui Chamber of Commerce supports the bill to create a grant program and appropriate funding for a program to assist beginning farmers and ranchers to start farm or ranch operations. Agriculture is a very important industry to our community and our sustainability, but it is a very difficult industry to successfully start and sustain. There are many unpredictable factors and expenses to starting a farm or ranch, even for experienced agriculturalists and this bill will help to offset many of those expenses and spur new farm enterprises.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this matter and ask that this bill be passed.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.



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February 3, 2020

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 2703
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Room 224
1:15 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Ruderman, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 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 SB 2703, which creates a grant program and appropriates funding for a program to assist beginning farmers and ranchers to start farm or ranch operations.

The cost of establishing a new agricultural operation in Hawaii is very difficult if not impossible. Operating capital is not easy to obtain with the traditional methods of financing. As our farmers and ranchers are aging, we need to assist those that are able to successfully operate an agricultural operation such as college graduates or trainees that have graduated from a certified program. This grant program will help these new farmers and ranchers by reducing the cost of production so that their locally produced goods can compete with imported products, giving them a greater opportunity for success.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this important matter.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Monday, February 3, 2020 — 1:15 p.m. — Room 224

Ulupono Initiative supports SB 2703, Relating to Agriculture.

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

My name is Amy Hennessey, and I am the Senior Vice President of Communications & External Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-based impact investment firm that strives to improve our community's quality of life by creating more locally produced food; increasing affordable clean renewable energy and transportation options; and better managing waste and fresh water resources.

Ulupono supports SB 2703, which creates a grant program and appropriates funding for a program to assist beginning farmers and ranchers to start farm or ranch operations.

Ulupono supports the development of the next generation of local producers statewide. This program seeks to provide much needed capital for those looking to begin farming or ranching in the State of Hawaii. The grant program seeks to bridge the gap that exists between newly trained and educated agriculturalists looking to initiate entrepreneurial operations within the State. Without the initial investments needed to start an agricultural operation, such as land purchase/rent, land preparation, seeds, equipment, and infrastructure, new farmers and ranchers will not be able to enter the local markets.

Providing that initial capital for new producers is key for the State in directly moving the needle toward food security and self-sufficiency.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Amy Hennessey, APR
Senior Vice President, Communications & External Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i

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SB-2703

Submitted on: 1/30/2020 3:27:20 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2020 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Megan Blazak	Individual	Support	No

Comments:



January 30, 2020

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Comments in Support of SB 2703 Relating to Agriculture (Creates a grant program and appropriates funding for a program to assist beginning farmers and ranchers to start farm or ranch operations.)

Monday, February 3, 2020, at 1:15 p.m., in Conference Room 224

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers and utility companies. LURF's mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express its **support of SB 2703** and of the various agricultural stakeholder groups who defend the goals of viable agricultural operations and the conservation and protection of agriculture, including important agricultural lands (IAL) in Hawaii. The bill conveys the need to support the efforts of beginning farmers and ranchers attempting to start operations which will improve the economic viability of the State's agricultural industry.

SB 2703. The purpose of this bill is to establish in the Department of Agriculture a grant program, and to appropriate funding for the program to assist beginning farmers and ranchers in meeting the operating costs to start their farm or ranch operations.

LURF's Position. LURF believes that the proposed grant and appropriation of funds for the grant program are consistent with the underlying intent and objectives of the IAL laws (Hawaii Revised Statutes [HRS], Sections 205-41 to 52), which were enacted to fulfill the mandate in Article XI, Section 3 of the Hawaii State Constitution, "to conserve and protect agricultural lands, promote diversified agriculture, increase agricultural self-sufficiency and assure the availability of agriculturally suitable lands." As noted in HRS Section 205-41, the intent of Act 183 (2005) was to develop agricultural incentive programs to promote agricultural viability, sustained growth of the agricultural industry, and the long-term use and protection of important agricultural lands for agricultural use.

Passage of the long-awaited IAL legislation would be pointless without implementation of these programs, incentives and inducements which require the cooperation and support of agricultural, business, and educational organizations, as well as government agencies, which this bill is intended to cultivate and promote.

LURF members include property owners, farmers and ranchers who own, maintain, and engage in agricultural enterprises, and who consider incentives such as this grant program significant to the establishment and continued conduct of their operations and to help sustain and preserve their businesses into the future. Regrettably, interest in agriculture continues to decline due to misguided assumptions of the trade as entailing hard work for low pay, and requiring little, if any appreciable skills.

LURF believes efforts like the grant program and the appropriation of funds therefor would greatly assist in the perpetuation of the agricultural industry in this State by assisting the industry with efforts to help farmers and ranchers start businesses and comply with onerous regulatory requirements; as well as providing knowledge and inspiring interest in agriculture, which will promote agricultural viability and improve Hawaii's long-term resilience and sustainability.

As the establishment of the proposed grant program significantly helps to promote economically viable agriculture and food self-sufficiency in Hawaii, LURF is in **support of SB 2703**.

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