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## HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A KONA AREA  
AGRICULTURAL WORKING GROUP TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT, AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

1 WHEREAS, a thriving and sustainable agriculture industry  
2 serves as a critical component of Hawaii County's rural  
3 lifestyle, character, and economy by producing food, fiber,  
4 energy, and ornamentals for local consumption and export; and  
5

6 WHEREAS, Hawaii island agriculture will continue to be a  
7 stabilizing foundation of the local economy for the foreseeable  
8 future; and  
9

10 WHEREAS, agriculture exports to neighbor islands and the  
11 North American and Asian continents provide a critical infusion  
12 of money originating off-island; and  
13

14 WHEREAS, the agriculture industry on the island of Hawaii  
15 would greatly benefit from the availability of services that are  
16 not currently being provided, such as improving food security by  
17 encouraging the consumption of locally produced agricultural  
18 goods, developing county-provided services to the agriculture  
19 producers or processors at economically viable rates, and  
20 creating other programs to encourage and more fully develop this  
21 important industry on Hawaii island; and  
22

23 WHEREAS, the Kona area provides a plethora of singular  
24 ventures that can improve agriculture, economic development, and  
25 affordable housing opportunities by working together with state  
26 and county agencies; and  
27

28 WHEREAS, the construction of the Keahole Agricultural Park  
29 was intended to strengthen diversified agriculture through a  
30 plan that consolidates and concentrates agricultural activities



1 in a centralized location to improve production and  
2 distribution; and

3  
4 WHEREAS, the one hundred seventy-nine acre Keahole  
5 Agricultural Park is in consonance with state policy and  
6 complements the existing rural environment, provides employment,  
7 and stimulates the agricultural economy in the area; and

8  
9 WHEREAS, due to constraints in water availability, the  
10 agricultural park has been implemented in phases, and over one  
11 hundred acres of state-owned land immediately mauka of the  
12 agricultural park remain undeveloped and unproductive; and

13  
14 WHEREAS, the close proximity of the Palamanui Campus of  
15 Hawaii Community College to the Keahole Agriculture Park offers  
16 opportunities for courses in landscape agriculture and  
17 engineering; and

18  
19 WHEREAS, energy and ocean-related research, education, and  
20 commercial aquaculture are centered at the Natural Energy  
21 Laboratory of Hawaii Authority (NELHA) on three hundred  
22 twenty-two acres at Keahole Point, and NELHA provides an  
23 opportunity to expand production of fresh aquaculture food  
24 products, promote marketing of locally grown aquaculture  
25 products, provide stable cash flow for aquaculture farmers, and  
26 create a varied and large market for local aquaculture; and

27  
28 WHEREAS, currently, the County of Hawaii hauls its west  
29 side green waste to Hilo for processing; however, these  
30 nutrient-rich waste products can be mixed with West Hawaii's  
31 abundant green waste to produce a nitrogen-rich and valuable  
32 compost for agricultural park farmers, who struggle to operate  
33 on volcanic lands; and

34  
35 WHEREAS, for the last decade, the Kealakehe Wastewater  
36 Treatment Plant has treated and disposed of sewage collected  
37 from the North Kona Sewerage system, which extends across the  
38 greater Kailua-Kona region; and

39  
40 WHEREAS, current flows, rich in nitrogen and phosphorus, to  
41 the plant are approximately 1,800,000 gallons per day migrating  
42 through groundwater and delivered directly above Honokohau



1 Harbor through the adjacent porous shorelines, thereby resulting  
2 in West Hawaii's coastal waters being rated as impaired by the  
3 Department of Health; and  
4

5 WHEREAS, treating and reusing the water to irrigate the  
6 Keahole Agricultural Park, NELHA, and resorts and homes in  
7 between the two locations can reduce the demand for freshwater,  
8 which will help relieve high demand on high-elevation wells and  
9 reduce irrigation costs; and  
10

11 WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation's Keahole Airport  
12 has its own wastewater treatment plant that produces an excess  
13 of recycled water to irrigate its airport facilities and may  
14 also help irrigate neighboring state facilities, including the  
15 Keahole Agricultural Park; and  
16

17 WHEREAS, a 2015 report by the Department of Business,  
18 Economic Development, and Tourism titled "Measuring Housing  
19 Demand in Hawaii, 2015-2025" projected that Hawaii County's  
20 population will grow by twenty-nine per cent by 2025, creating a  
21 forecast demand for 18,610 additional housing units, which is  
22 approximately thirty per cent of the total projected demand of  
23 64,700 housing units needed across the State; and  
24

25 WHEREAS, the County of Hawaii lacks a comprehensive plan  
26 that defines strategies and target deadlines to create more  
27 housing over the short- and long-term, as well as the type and  
28 location of housing needed, how to fund critical infrastructure,  
29 ways to foster public-private partnerships, recommendations to  
30 leverage state and federal policy tools and funding streams, and  
31 policy changes to reduce barriers to address the island's  
32 housing crisis with a clearly defined purpose, vision, and  
33 values; and  
34

35 WHEREAS, the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands owns  
36 six hundred acres in the Keahole Agricultural Park area, with  
37 four hundred vacant acres zoned for residential development,  
38 one hundred acres zoned for agricultural development, and  
39 one hundred acres zoned for commercial development; and



1 WHEREAS, development in this area can contribute to  
2 creating a significant number of homes for Hawaiians on Hawaii  
3 island; and  
4

5 WHEREAS, the Hawaii Opportunity Zones Program provides  
6 incentives for investors to re-invest realized capital gains  
7 into Opportunity Funds in exchange for temporary tax deferral  
8 and other benefits; and  
9

10 WHEREAS, the Opportunity Funds are then used to provide  
11 investment capital in certain economically distressed  
12 communities called Opportunity Zones; and  
13

14 WHEREAS, the Kona area is home to Opportunity Zone 215.4  
15 and 216.1; and  
16

17 WHEREAS, the Opportunity Zone designation makes them  
18 extremely attractive to private investors, so these  
19 opportunities do not necessarily require state funding due to  
20 the presence of federal infrastructure development financing;  
21 now, therefore,  
22

23 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
24 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
25 of 2021, the Senate concurring, that the Department of  
26 Agriculture is urged to form an inter-governmental Kona Area  
27 agricultural working group to help navigate opportunities of  
28 agriculture, economic development, and affordable housing; and  
29

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested  
31 to develop a framework to:  
32

- 33 (1) Improve communication to increase efficiency and  
34 strengthen partnerships between Hawaii County, the  
35 agriculture industry, landowners, and the Hawaii  
36 island community;  
37
- 38 (2) Increase profitability of Hawaii island's agricultural  
39 businesses through cost reduction strategies and  
40 greater market share for local products;



- 1           (3)    Increase the availability and quality of agricultural  
2           education on Hawaii island;
- 3
- 4           (4)    Secure affordable land with long-term tenure for  
5           farming and ranching and allow for the production of  
6           residential units on Hawaiian home lands;
- 7
- 8           (5)    Provide adequate and affordable agricultural water for  
9           farmers, livestock producers, and food processors;
- 10
- 11          (6)    Reduce the cost of energy and fuel for agricultural  
12          producers;
- 13
- 14          (7)    Maximize transportation infrastructure resources and  
15          minimize transporting green waste within the Kona  
16          area;
- 17
- 18          (8)    Promote environmental conservation and minimize  
19          discharges of wastewater;
- 20
- 21          (9)    Facilitate practical, applied research that will  
22          assist farmers in crop and livestock production using  
23          sustainable techniques and establish Hawaii island as  
24          a center for tropical agricultural research; and
- 25
- 26          (10)   Promote investment opportunities in areas in the  
27          federal Opportunity Zone designation and maximize  
28          opportunities to realize federal infrastructure  
29          development; and
- 30

31           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group's membership  
32 is requested to consist of the following members:

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- 34          (1)    One member of the Senate, to be appointed by the  
35          President of the Senate;
- 36
- 37          (2)    One member of the House of Representatives, to be  
38          appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
39          Representatives;
- 40
- 41          (3)    One representative of the Department of Agriculture;



- 1 (4) One representative of the Department of Business,  
2 Economic Development, and Tourism;
- 3
- 4 (5) One representative of the Department of Hawaiian Home  
5 Lands;
- 6
- 7 (6) One representative of the Department of Health;
- 8
- 9 (7) One representative of the Department of  
10 Transportation;
- 11
- 12 (8) One representative of Hawaii Community College;
- 13
- 14 (9) One representative of the Office of the Mayor of the  
15 County of Hawaii;
- 16
- 17 (10) One representative of the Hawaii County Department of  
18 Environmental Management; and
- 19
- 20 (11) One representative of the Hawaii County Department of  
21 Water Supply; and
- 22

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chairperson of the Board of  
24 Agriculture is requested to serve as the chair of the working  
25 group; and

26

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group, with the  
28 administrative assistance of the Department of Agriculture, is  
29 requested to submit a report of its findings and  
30 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the  
31 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
32 the Regular Session of 2022; and

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34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
35 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the  
36 Board of Agriculture; Director of Business, Economic  
37 Development, and Tourism; Director of Health; Chairperson of the  
38 Hawaiian Homes Commission; Director of Transportation; President  
39 of the University of Hawaii System; Mayor of the County of  
40 Hawaii; Director of the Hawaii County Department of  
41 Environmental Management; and Manager of the Hawaii County  
42 Department of Water Supply.

