
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A PERFORMANCE
AUDIT OF THE TEN AGRICULTURAL PARKS OPERATED BY THE
AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE.

1 WHEREAS, agricultural parks are areas set aside
2 specifically for agricultural activities to encourage
3 continuation or initiation of agricultural operations; and
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5 WHEREAS, the Governor announced in 2016 that he was
6 committed to doubling Hawaii's food production by 2020; and
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8 WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture, through its
9 Agricultural Resource Management Division, operates ten
10 agricultural parks on the islands of Hawai'i, O'ahu, Kaua'i, and
11 Moloka'i; and
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13 WHEREAS, the agricultural parks contain a total of two
14 hundred twenty-seven plots that provide access to irrigation and
15 other infrastructure designed to support small family farms; and
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17 WHEREAS, the State's Agricultural Park Program is intended
18 to make land available to small farmers at reasonable cost with
19 long-term leases; and
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21 WHEREAS, a February 2021 article in the *Honolulu Civil*
22 *Beat*, entitled "Hawaii Farmers Need Land. State Efforts to Help
23 Aren't Working", noted that the State's Agricultural Park
24 Program has allowed small, family farms to flourish, but the
25 application process is burdensome and the most effective way to
26 get a plot is to take over an existing lease, which may shut out
27 small farmers with thinner profit margins; and
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1 WHEREAS, the article also noted that some agricultural
2 parks are popular, while others have undesirable plots that sit
3 empty for so many years that the Department of Agriculture stops
4 advertising their availability; and
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6 WHEREAS, these issues, among others, have raised questions
7 among small farmers about whether the Agricultural Park Program
8 is still serving its original purpose and have prompted calls
9 for the Department of Agriculture to make changes; and
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11 WHEREAS, the Agribusiness Development Corporation was
12 created in 1994 to develop an aggressive and dynamic program to
13 fill the void created by the closure of sugar and pineapple
14 plantations; and
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16 WHEREAS, a legal action has been filed against the
17 Department of Agriculture regarding its management practices for
18 a certain agricultural park and is currently pending; and
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20 WHEREAS, in January 2021, the Office of the Auditor
21 released Report No. 21-01, entitled "Audit of the Agribusiness
22 Development Corporation", which found that the agency was
23 deficient in several key areas; and
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25 WHEREAS, a broader issue is whether the Department of
26 Agriculture is adequately managing its farm lands to help Hawaii
27 grow more of its own food; now, therefore,
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29 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
30 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
31 of 2022, the Senate concurring, that the Office of the Auditor
32 is requested to conduct a performance audit of the ten
33 agricultural parks operated by the Agricultural Resource
34 Management Division of the Department of Agriculture; and
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of the Auditor is
37 requested to submit a report of its performance audit, including
38 any findings, recommendations, and proposed legislation, to the
39 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
40 the Regular Session of 2023; and
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42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
43 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
44 Board of Agriculture and Auditor.

