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## HOUSE RESOLUTION

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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 Hawai'i'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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29 WHEREAS, the article also noted that some agricultural  
30 parks are popular, while others have undesirable plots that sit



1 empty for so many years that the Department of Agriculture stops  
2 advertising their availability; and  
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4 WHEREAS, these issues, among others, have raised questions  
5 among small farmers about whether the Agricultural Park Program  
6 is still serving its original purpose and have prompted calls  
7 for the Department of Agriculture to make changes; and  
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9 WHEREAS, the Agribusiness Development Corporation was  
10 created in 1994 to develop an aggressive and dynamic program to  
11 fill the void created by the closure of sugar and pineapple  
12 plantations; and  
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14 WHEREAS, a legal action has been filed against the  
15 Department of Agriculture regarding its management practices for  
16 a certain agricultural park and is currently pending; and  
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18 WHEREAS, in January 2021, the Office of the Auditor  
19 released Report No. 21-01, entitled "Audit of the Agribusiness  
20 Development Corporation", which found that the agency was  
21 deficient in several key areas; and  
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23 WHEREAS, a broader issue is whether the Department of  
24 Agriculture is adequately managing its farm lands to help Hawaii  
25 grow more of its own food; now, therefore,  
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27 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
28 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
29 of 2022, that the Office of the Auditor is requested to conduct  
30 a performance audit of the ten agricultural parks operated by  
31 the Agricultural Resource Management Division of the Department  
32 of Agriculture; and  
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34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of the Auditor is  
35 requested to submit a report of its performance audit, including  
36 any findings, recommendations, and proposed legislation, to the  
37 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
38 the Regular Session of 2023; and  
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40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
41 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of  
42 Agriculture and Auditor.

