
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that allowing composting
2 in agricultural districts will facilitate production of local
3 organic material that farmers can use to improve soil health,
4 increase drought resistance, and reduce the need for
5 supplemental water and fertilizers while also increasing crop
6 yields. The legislature further finds that composting is
7 currently not a permissible activity in agricultural districts,
8 which is a barrier for composting entities who seek to establish
9 operations in the districts from obtaining the necessary
10 permits.

11 The legislature further finds that increased composting,
12 including composting of food waste, will also divert materials
13 from landfills, which are rapidly reaching capacity and facing
14 the burden of closure and re-siting, a process that will cost
15 each county hundreds of millions of dollars and create community
16 resentment. Increased composting will also move the State
17 closer to achieving the following:



- 1 (1) The Aloha+ Challenge, which is a statewide commitment
2 to realize the United Nations' Sustainable Development
3 Goals, including the goals of seventy per cent waste
4 reduction before disposal and doubling of local food
5 production by 2030;
- 6 (2) The Hawaii 2050 sustainability plan, which also sets a
7 mandate for the State to achieve full sustainability
8 and resilience through increased food production and
9 dramatic waste reduction via recycling and
10 bioconversion strategies; and
- 11 (3) Increasing the generation of local compost to
12 sequester more carbon and mitigate climate change
13 pursuant to the strategy identified by the greenhouse
14 gas sequestration task force permanently established
15 by Act 15, Session Laws of Hawaii 2018, codified as
16 section 225P-4, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

17 The legislature additionally finds that there is a single
18 general permit for all prospective food waste composters that is
19 designed to handle all potential applicants ranging from small-
20 to large-scale operations. Potential small-scale food waste
21 composters have indicated that the application process is too



1 daunting, deterring them from applying. As a result, the State
2 has lost a valuable opportunity to reduce the amount of waste
3 that enters landfills, create economic benefits for composters,
4 and increase the supply of local organic soil enhancers for
5 Hawaii's agricultural and horticultural industries.

6 The legislature finds that the solid and hazardous waste
7 branch of the department of health had intended to develop an
8 additional, simplified application process for its general
9 permit targeting small-scale composters of green waste and food
10 waste to encourage more small-scale composters to apply for
11 permits. The simplified process would have increased the
12 workload on the solid and hazardous waste branch to provide
13 education to prospective applicants, process applications,
14 conduct site inspections, and respond to complaints. However,
15 an environmental health specialist position dedicated to these
16 types of solid waste facilities was eliminated and the
17 responsibilities of that position were absorbed by other
18 positions, leaving the solid and hazardous waste branch unable
19 to expand services to include the simplified general permit
20 application process for small-scale composters.

21 The purpose of this Act is to:



- 1 (1) Encourage the production of local compost and the
- 2 diversion of certain materials from the State's waste
- 3 streams by allowing composting and co-composting
- 4 operations in agricultural districts, under certain
- 5 conditions; and
- 6 (2) Establish and appropriate funds for an environmental
- 7 health specialist IV position in the solid and
- 8 hazardous waste branch of the department of health.

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

- 11 "(d) Agricultural districts shall include:
- 12 (1) Activities or uses as characterized by the cultivation
- 13 of crops, crops for bioenergy, orchards, forage, and
- 14 forestry;
- 15 (2) Farming activities or uses related to animal husbandry
- 16 and game and fish propagation;
- 17 (3) Aquaculture, which means the production of aquatic
- 18 plant and animal life within ponds and other bodies of
- 19 water;
- 20 (4) Wind-generated energy production for public, private,
- 21 and commercial use;



- 1 (5) Biofuel production, as described in section
- 2 205-4.5(a)(16), for public, private, and commercial
- 3 use;
- 4 (6) Solar energy facilities; provided that:
- 5 (A) This paragraph shall apply only to land with soil
- 6 classified by the land study bureau's detailed
- 7 land classification as overall (master)
- 8 productivity rating class B, C, D, or E; and
- 9 (B) Solar energy facilities placed within land with
- 10 soil classified as overall productivity rating
- 11 class B or C shall not occupy more than ten per
- 12 cent of the acreage of the parcel, or twenty
- 13 acres of land, whichever is lesser, unless a
- 14 special use permit is granted pursuant to section
- 15 205-6;
- 16 (7) Bona fide agricultural services and uses that support
- 17 the agricultural activities of the fee or leasehold
- 18 owner of the property and accessory to any of the
- 19 above activities, regardless of whether conducted on
- 20 the same premises as the agricultural activities to
- 21 which they are accessory, including farm dwellings as



1 defined in section 205-4.5(a)(4), employee housing,
 2 farm buildings, mills, storage facilities, processing
 3 facilities, photovoltaic, biogas, and other small-
 4 scale renewable energy systems producing energy solely
 5 for use in the agricultural activities of the fee or
 6 leasehold owner of the property, agricultural-energy
 7 facilities as defined in section 205-4.5(a)(17),
 8 vehicle and equipment storage areas, and plantation
 9 community subdivisions as defined in section
 10 205-4.5(a)(12);

11 (8) Wind machines and wind farms;

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

18 (10) Agricultural parks;

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



1 provided that the agricultural tourism activity is
 2 accessory and secondary to the principal agricultural
 3 use and does not interfere with surrounding farm
 4 operations; and provided further that this paragraph
 5 shall apply only to a county that has adopted
 6 ordinances regulating agricultural tourism under
 7 section 205-5;

8 (12) Agricultural tourism activities, including overnight
 9 accommodations of twenty-one days or less, for any one
 10 stay within a county; provided that this paragraph
 11 shall apply only to a county that includes at least
 12 three islands and has adopted ordinances regulating
 13 agricultural tourism activities pursuant to section
 14 205-5; provided further that the agricultural tourism
 15 activities coexist with a bona fide agricultural
 16 activity. For the purposes of this paragraph, "bona
 17 fide agricultural activity" means a farming operation
 18 as defined in section 165-2;

19 (13) Open area recreational facilities;

20 (14) Geothermal resources exploration and geothermal
 21 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) ~~[+]~~; and



1 (17) Composting and co-composting operations; provided that
 2 operations that process their own green waste and do
 3 not require permits from the department of health
 4 shall use the finished composting product only on
 5 their own premises to minimize the potential spread of
 6 invasive species.

7 Agricultural districts shall not include golf courses and golf
 8 driving ranges, except as provided in section 205-4.5(d).

9 Agricultural districts include areas that are not used for, or
 10 that are not suited to, agricultural and ancillary activities by
 11 reason of topography, soils, and other related characteristics."

12 SECTION 3. Section 205-4.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
 13 amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

14 "(a) Within the agricultural district, all lands with soil
 15 classified by the land study bureau's detailed land
 16 classification as overall (master) productivity rating class A
 17 or B and for solar energy facilities, class B or C, shall be
 18 restricted to the following permitted uses:

- 19 (1) Cultivation of crops, including crops for bioenergy,
 20 flowers, vegetables, foliage, fruits, forage, and
 21 timber;



- 1 (2) Game and fish propagation;
- 2 (3) Raising of livestock, including poultry, bees, fish,
3 or other animal or aquatic life that are propagated
4 for economic or personal use;
- 5 (4) Farm dwellings, employee housing, farm buildings, or
6 activities or uses related to farming and animal
7 husbandry. "Farm dwelling", as used in this
8 paragraph, means a single-family dwelling located on
9 and accessory to a farm, including clusters of single-
10 family farm dwellings permitted within agricultural
11 parks developed by the State, or where agricultural
12 activity provides income to the family occupying the
13 dwelling;
- 14 (5) Public institutions and buildings that are necessary
15 for agricultural practices;
- 16 (6) Public and private open area types of recreational
17 uses, including day camps, picnic grounds, parks, and
18 riding stables, but not including dragstrips,
19 airports, drive-in theaters, golf courses, golf
20 driving ranges, country clubs, and overnight camps;



- 1 (7) Public, private, and quasi-public utility lines and
2 roadways, transformer stations, communications
3 equipment buildings, solid waste transfer stations,
4 major water storage tanks, and appurtenant small
5 buildings such as booster pumping stations, but not
6 including offices or yards for equipment, material,
7 vehicle storage, repair or maintenance, treatment
8 plants, corporation yards, or other similar
9 structures;
- 10 (8) Retention, restoration, rehabilitation, or improvement
11 of buildings or sites of historic or scenic interest;
- 12 (9) Agricultural-based commercial operations as described
13 in section 205-2(d)(15);
- 14 (10) Buildings and uses, including mills, storage, and
15 processing facilities, maintenance facilities,
16 photovoltaic, biogas, and other small-scale renewable
17 energy systems producing energy solely for use in the
18 agricultural activities of the fee or leasehold owner
19 of the property, and vehicle and equipment storage
20 areas that are normally considered directly accessory



1 to the above-mentioned uses and are permitted under
2 section 205-2(d);

3 (11) Agricultural parks;

4 (12) Plantation community subdivisions, which as used in
5 this chapter means an established subdivision or
6 cluster of employee housing, community buildings, and
7 agricultural support buildings on land currently or
8 formerly owned, leased, or operated by a sugar or
9 pineapple plantation; provided that the existing
10 structures may be used or rehabilitated for use, and
11 new employee housing and agricultural support
12 buildings may be allowed on land within the
13 subdivision as follows:

14 (A) The employee housing is occupied by employees or
15 former employees of the plantation who have a
16 property interest in the land;

17 (B) The employee housing units not owned by their
18 occupants shall be rented or leased at affordable
19 rates for agricultural workers; or



1 (C) The agricultural support buildings shall be
2 rented or leased to agricultural business
3 operators or agricultural support services;

4 (13) Agricultural tourism conducted on a working farm, or a
5 farming operation as defined in section 165-2, for the
6 enjoyment, education, or involvement of visitors;
7 provided that the agricultural tourism activity is
8 accessory and secondary to the principal agricultural
9 use and does not interfere with surrounding farm
10 operations; and provided further that this paragraph
11 shall apply only to a county that has adopted
12 ordinances regulating agricultural tourism under
13 section 205-5;

14 (14) Agricultural tourism activities, including overnight
15 accommodations of twenty-one days or less, for any one
16 stay within a county; provided that this paragraph
17 shall apply only to a county that includes at least
18 three islands and has adopted ordinances regulating
19 agricultural tourism activities pursuant to section
20 205-5; provided further that the agricultural tourism
21 activities coexist with a bona fide agricultural



1 activity. For the purposes of this paragraph, "bona
2 fide agricultural activity" means a farming operation
3 as defined in section 165-2;

4 (15) Wind energy facilities, including the appurtenances
5 associated with the production and transmission of
6 wind generated energy; provided that the wind energy
7 facilities and appurtenances are compatible with
8 agriculture uses and cause minimal adverse impact on
9 agricultural land;

10 (16) Biofuel processing facilities, including the
11 appurtenances associated with the production and
12 refining of biofuels that is normally considered
13 directly accessory and secondary to the growing of the
14 energy feedstock; provided that biofuel processing
15 facilities and appurtenances do not adversely impact
16 agricultural land and other agricultural uses in the
17 vicinity.

18 For the purposes of this paragraph:

19 "Appurtenances" means operational infrastructure
20 of the appropriate type and scale for economic
21 commercial storage and distribution, and other similar



1 handling of feedstock, fuels, and other products of
2 biofuel processing facilities.

3 "Biofuel processing facility" means a facility
4 that produces liquid or gaseous fuels from organic
5 sources such as biomass crops, agricultural residues,
6 and oil crops, including palm, canola, soybean, and
7 waste cooking oils; grease; food wastes; and animal
8 residues and wastes that can be used to generate
9 energy;

10 (17) Agricultural-energy facilities, including
11 appurtenances necessary for an agricultural-energy
12 enterprise; provided that the primary activity of the
13 agricultural-energy enterprise is agricultural
14 activity. To be considered the primary activity of an
15 agricultural-energy enterprise, the total acreage
16 devoted to agricultural activity shall be not less
17 than ninety per cent of the total acreage of the
18 agricultural-energy enterprise. The agricultural-
19 energy facility shall be limited to lands owned,
20 leased, licensed, or operated by the entity conducting
21 the agricultural activity.



1 As used in this paragraph:

2 "Agricultural activity" means any activity
3 described in paragraphs (1) to (3) of this subsection.

4 "Agricultural-energy enterprise" means an
5 enterprise that integrally incorporates an
6 agricultural activity with an agricultural-energy
7 facility.

8 "Agricultural-energy facility" means a facility
9 that generates, stores, or distributes renewable
10 energy as defined in section 269-91 or renewable fuel
11 including electrical or thermal energy or liquid or
12 gaseous fuels from products of agricultural activities
13 from agricultural lands located in the State.

14 "Appurtenances" means operational infrastructure
15 of the appropriate type and scale for the economic
16 commercial generation, storage, distribution, and
17 other similar handling of energy, including equipment,
18 feedstock, fuels, and other products of agricultural-
19 energy facilities;

20 (18) Construction and operation of wireless communication
21 antennas, including small wireless facilities;



1 provided that, for the purposes of this paragraph,
2 "wireless communication antenna" means communications
3 equipment that is either freestanding or placed upon
4 or attached to an already existing structure and that
5 transmits and receives electromagnetic radio signals
6 used in the provision of all types of wireless
7 communications services; provided further that "small
8 wireless facilities" shall have the same meaning as in
9 section 206N-2; provided further that nothing in this
10 paragraph shall be construed to permit the
11 construction of any new structure that is not deemed a
12 permitted use under this subsection;

13 (19) Agricultural education programs conducted on a farming
14 operation as defined in section 165-2, for the
15 education and participation of the general public;
16 provided that the agricultural education programs are
17 accessory and secondary to the principal agricultural
18 use of the parcels or lots on which the agricultural
19 education programs are to occur and do not interfere
20 with surrounding farm operations. For the purposes of
21 this paragraph, "agricultural education programs"



1 means activities or events designed to promote
2 knowledge and understanding of agricultural activities
3 and practices conducted on a farming operation as
4 defined in section 165-2;

5 (20) Solar energy facilities that do not occupy more than
6 ten per cent of the acreage of the parcel, or twenty
7 acres of land, whichever is lesser or for which a
8 special use permit is granted pursuant to section
9 205-6; provided that this use shall not be permitted
10 on lands with soil classified by the land study
11 bureau's detailed land classification as overall
12 (master) productivity rating class A;

13 (21) Solar energy facilities on lands with soil classified
14 by the land study bureau's detailed land
15 classification as overall (master) productivity rating
16 B or C for which a special use permit is granted
17 pursuant to section 205-6; provided that:

18 (A) The area occupied by the solar energy facilities
19 is also made available for compatible
20 agricultural activities at a lease rate that is



1 at least fifty per cent below the fair market
2 rent for comparable properties;

3 (B) Proof of financial security to decommission the
4 facility is provided to the satisfaction of the
5 appropriate county planning commission prior to
6 date of commencement of commercial generation;
7 and

8 (C) Solar energy facilities shall be decommissioned
9 at the owner's expense according to the following
10 requirements:

11 (i) Removal of all equipment related to the
12 solar energy facility within twelve months
13 of the conclusion of operation or useful
14 life; and

15 (ii) Restoration of the disturbed earth to
16 substantially the same physical condition as
17 existed prior to the development of the
18 solar energy facility.

19 For the purposes of this paragraph, "agricultural
20 activities" means the activities described in
21 paragraphs (1) to (3);



1 (22) Geothermal resources exploration and geothermal
2 resources development, as defined under section 182-1;
3 [~~or~~]

4 (23) Hydroelectric facilities, including the appurtenances
5 associated with the production and transmission of
6 hydroelectric energy, subject to section 205-2;
7 provided that the hydroelectric facilities and their
8 appurtenances:

9 (A) Shall consist of a small hydropower facility as
10 defined by the United States Department of
11 Energy, including:

12 (i) Impoundment facilities using a dam to store
13 water in a reservoir;

14 (ii) A diversion or run-of-river facility that
15 channels a portion of a river through a
16 canal or channel; and

17 (iii) Pumped storage facilities that store energy
18 by pumping water uphill to a reservoir at
19 higher elevation from a reservoir at a lower
20 elevation to be released to turn a turbine
21 to generate electricity;



- 1 (B) Comply with the state water code, chapter 174C;
- 2 (C) Shall, if over five hundred kilowatts in
- 3 hydroelectric generating capacity, have the
- 4 approval of the commission on water resource
- 5 management, including a new instream flow
- 6 standard established for any new hydroelectric
- 7 facility; and
- 8 (D) Do not impact or impede the use of agricultural
- 9 land or the availability of surface or ground
- 10 water for all uses on all parcels that are served
- 11 by the ground water sources or streams for which
- 12 hydroelectric facilities are considered~~[-]~~; or
- 13 (24) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary,
- 14 composting and co-composting operations; provided that
- 15 operations that process their own green waste and do
- 16 not require permits from the department of health
- 17 shall use the finished composting product only on
- 18 their own premises to minimize the potential spread of
- 19 invasive species."

20 SECTION 4. There is established one full-time equivalent
 21 (1.0 FTE) permanent environmental health specialist IV position

1 in the solid and hazardous waste branch of the department of
2 health.

3 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
4 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
5 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for
6 one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) permanent environmental
7 health specialist IV position for the solid and hazardous waste
8 branch of the department of health.

9 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
10 health for the purposes of this Act.

11 SECTION 6. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
12 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

13 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.

14



Report Title:

Composting; Co-composting; Agricultural Districts; Permitted
Uses; Environmental Health Specialist IV; Appropriation

Description:

Permits composting and co-composting operations in agricultural
districts, under certain conditions. Establishes and
appropriates funds for an environmental health specialist IV
position in the solid and hazardous waste branch of the
department of health. Effective 7/1/2050. (HD3)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is
not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

