
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LAND USE.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the State and
2 counties have not made effective use of the state rural land use
3 district, one of four districts established by the state land
4 use law in chapter 205, Hawaii Revised Statutes. Currently,
5 there are 10,454 acres in the rural district, which amount to
6 0.3 per cent of all lands in the State, and there are no rural
7 district lands on Oahu. Marginal agricultural lands in the
8 agricultural land use district are being used for rural
9 lifestyle farms and residences with no farm activity, which
10 increases the cost of land in the agricultural district used for
11 bona fide farming operations.

12 The legislature further finds that there is potential for
13 greater use of the rural district to differentiate rural
14 communities and lifestyle farms from working or commercial
15 agricultural lands and to enable better protection of productive
16 agricultural lands and the open space character of Hawaii's
17 rural areas. Redefinition and expansion of the rural district



1 would enable better land use management of existing rural
2 settlements and rural centers and residential dwellings engaged
3 in subsistence or lifestyle agriculture, which are not
4 explicitly permitted in the agricultural district.

5 The office of planning and sustainable development
6 completed a state land use review of districts report in January
7 2022 pursuant to section 205-18, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The
8 review found that the potential for preserving much of Hawaii's
9 open space, rural communities, and working lands may be realized
10 by redefining the policy framework for the rural district and
11 facilitating the reclassification of lands from the agricultural
12 to the rural district to accommodate lower-density rural
13 settlement patterns and subsistence farming lifestyles.

14 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

- 15 (1) Require the office of planning and sustainable
16 development to conduct a study to refine rural
17 district policies;
- 18 (2) Identify strategies for expansion of the rural
19 district; and
- 20 (3) Appropriate funds for the study.



1 SECTION 2. The office of planning and sustainable
2 development shall conduct a study that includes but is not
3 limited to:

4 (1) An analysis of the rural district policies and
5 standards within the land use law to redefine and
6 increase the effectiveness of the rural district in
7 protecting agricultural working lands;

8 (2) Research of best practices for rural land use policy
9 and land use regulation in other jurisdictions for
10 consideration in the redefinition of the rural
11 district;

12 (3) Development of options and identification of areas for
13 expansion of the rural district through the
14 reclassification of areas in the agricultural district
15 to the rural district; and

16 (4) Development of recommendations for legislation to:

17 (A) Redefine the rural district policies and
18 standards; and

19 (B) Facilitate the reclassification of areas in the
20 agricultural district to the rural district.



1 SECTION 3. In conducting the study required by this Act,
2 the office of planning and sustainable development shall
3 coordinate its efforts with the land use commission, department
4 of agriculture, and county planning departments. The office of
5 planning and sustainable development shall engage community
6 stakeholders, including farming interests and interested members
7 of the general public, in the development of study
8 recommendations.

9 SECTION 4. The office of planning and sustainable
10 development shall submit:

- 11 (1) An interim report of its findings and recommendations,
12 including any proposed legislation, to the legislature
13 no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
14 the regular session of 2024; and
- 15 (2) A final report of its findings and recommendations,
16 including any proposed legislation, to the legislature
17 no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
18 the regular session of 2025.

19 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
20 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
21 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and



1 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
2 year 2024-2025 for the office of planning and sustainable
3 development to conduct the study and complete all required
4 reports pursuant to this Act.

5 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
6 of business, economic development, and tourism for the purposes
7 of this Act.

8 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

Office of Planning and Sustainable Development; Land Use; Rural District Study; Appropriation

Description:

Requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to conduct a study to refine rural district policies and make recommendations to facilitate the reclassification of lands from the agricultural district to the rural district. Requires reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD1)

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