
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A TWO-YEAR AGRICULTURAL CRIME PILOT PROJECT TO EXAMINE AND ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROSECUTING AGRICULTURAL CRIME CASES, INCLUDING THOSE OF AGRICULTURAL THEFT AND AGRICULTURAL VANDALISM, IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU AND COUNTY OF KAUAI.

1 WHEREAS, agricultural crimes, which include agricultural
2 theft and vandalism, are a persistent issue affecting farmers
3 and ranchers of the State; and

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5 WHEREAS, according to a recent publication by the United
6 States Department of Agriculture and Hawaii Department of
7 Agriculture, in 2019, there were nearly nineteen thousand
8 incidents of theft, vandalism, and trespassing on farms in the
9 State; and

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11 WHEREAS, these incidents cost Hawaii farms approximately
12 \$14,400,000, or ten percent of the estimated 2018 Hawaii net
13 farm income, in theft and vandalism losses and security costs;
14 and

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16 WHEREAS, some individuals often trespass onto farm
17 property, often armed with weapons and accompanied by dogs, to
18 illegally hunt, which can be particularly dangerous and
19 destructive for farming operations and can result in destroyed
20 crops, lost livestock, illegal drug use, litter, and discarded
21 animal carcasses on farm property; and

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23 WHEREAS, agricultural crimes, including agricultural theft
24 and vandalism, increase the costs of production and decrease the
25 chances for farming and ranching operations to succeed; and

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27 WHEREAS, despite the prevalence and cost of agricultural
28 crimes, many incidents go unreported and few result in
29 convictions; and

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31 WHEREAS, of the nearly nineteen thousand incidents in 2019,
32 only nine hundred seventy incidents were reported to law



1 enforcement, which resulted in seventy-nine arrests and sixty-
2 seven convictions; and

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4 WHEREAS, recognizing the challenges that local farmers face
5 regarding agricultural crimes, the Legislature passed Act 217,
6 Session Laws of Hawaii 2019, which established a two-year
7 Agricultural Theft and Vandalism Project Program to examine the
8 effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural theft and vandalism
9 cases in the counties of Hawaii and Maui, and included cases of
10 theft and vandalism that affect individuals who are not full-
11 time farmers or ranchers; and

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13 WHEREAS, the City and County of Honolulu suffered the
14 highest rates of theft or vandalism of all farms in the State
15 and the County of Kauai suffered the third highest rates of
16 theft or vandalism of all farms in the State; and

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18 WHEREAS, this body believes that it is time to replicate
19 the Agricultural Theft and Vandalism Pilot Project in the City
20 and County of Honolulu and County of Kauai as it will provide
21 resources to suppress incidences of agricultural crimes and
22 losses to farmers, ranchers, aquaculturists, and floriculturists
23 in the State; now, therefore,

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25 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
26 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
27 Session of 2024, that the Department of Agriculture is urged to
28 establish a two-year Agricultural Crime Pilot Project to examine
29 and assess the effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural crime
30 cases, including those of agricultural theft and agricultural
31 vandalism, in the City and County of Honolulu and County of
32 Kauai; and

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34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
35 is also requested to examine and assess the effectiveness of
36 prosecuting agricultural crimes, including the theft of
37 agricultural products produced for personal or commercial use on
38 any land, regardless of land classification, and agricultural
39 vandalism; and

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41 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
42 is requested to coordinate with the Department of Law



1 Enforcement, the City and County of Honolulu and County of Kauai
2 to hire one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) enforcement officer
3 for each county, to be placed within the respective prosecuting
4 attorney's office or any other law enforcement agency; and
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6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
7 is requested to assess the implementation of the pilot project,
8 including the pilot project's effectiveness, to determine
9 whether to continue, expand, or end the pilot project, by:

- 10 (1) Identifying the number of convictions for agricultural
11 crimes;
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- 13 (2) Identifying best practices for prosecuting
14 perpetrators of agricultural crimes;
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- 16 (3) Identifying best practices for the coordination of
17 local police and other enforcement officers'
18 interaction between the prosecuting attorney's office
19 and the Judiciary;
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- 21 (4) Identifying best practices for the development and
22 implementation of the public's and farmers' reporting
23 of agricultural crimes or the attempt of agricultural
24 theft or agricultural vandalism;
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- 26 (5) Identifying areas where agricultural crimes are most
27 prevalent;
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- 29 (6) Identifying best practices for preventing agricultural
30 crimes; and
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- 32 (7) Making recommendations for a statewide program to
33 address agricultural crimes; and
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
37 is requested to submit an interim report to the Legislature of
38 its findings and recommendations, including any proposed
39 legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
40 the Regular Session of 2025; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
2 is requested to submit a final report to the Legislature of its
3 findings and recommendations, including any proposed
4 legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
5 the Regular Session of 2026; and

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7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
8 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
9 Agriculture, Director of Law Enforcement, Prosecuting Attorneys
10 for the City and County of Honolulu and the County of Kauai, and
11 Chiefs of Police of the Honolulu Police Department and the Kauai
12 Police Department.

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OFFERED BY:



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