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HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 3361
RELATING TO RENEWABLE FUEL

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:31 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 3361, which includes oilseed cover crops into the Cover Crop Reimbursement Pilot Program established by Act 312, SLH 2022.

HFB agrees that the use of cover crops and green manure increases agricultural productivity and is a beneficial management practice. We strongly support the concept of building soil structure and nutrient capacity. Caring for the soil is a cornerstone to having multigenerational farms that continue to provide for the people of Hawai'i. Many of our farms add compost made off-site as well as utilize short-term fallow between crop cycles to increase organic content in their soils. HFB recognizes and supports the diversion of discarded food and other useful wastes away from landfills. The benefits of this are well-known.

Renewable energy is important to the State's energy goals. Firm renewable energy production using biofuels can play a critical role in helping Hawai'i reach the goal of one hundred percent renewable energy by 2045, help to diversify Hawai'i's economy and agricultural sector, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce our dependence on imported oil.

HFB supports the production of energy crops, crop residues, and agricultural wastes into economically and environmentally sustainable biofuels and value-added by-products such as livestock feed.

Farming is a tough business. High production costs are a major driver of narrow profit margins for Hawai'i's farmers. Land, water, labor, taxes, transportation, utilities, inputs,

invasive species, and food safety regulations are all costs of doing business that often result in our farmers just being able to break even. HFB supports this initiative that could reduce the cost of production for local farmers by including oil seed cover crops in the Cover Crop Reimbursement Pilot Program. This is another mechanism that can help locally produced goods compete with imported products, strengthening our local economy.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important subject.