

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEXTER KISHIDA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024
1:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2363
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2363. This bill requires the Department of Agriculture (Department) to establish a two-year agricultural crime pilot project to examine the effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural crimes, including agricultural theft and agricultural vandalism, in the City and County of Honolulu and County of Kauai. The Department is in strong support of this bill.

Considering the totals for theft, vandalism losses and security measure costs of \$14.3 million as reported by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) for 2019 and recognizing that this represents about 10 percent of income to the farmers, ranchers, aquaculturists, and floriculturists statewide, this bill provides needed resources to agriculture operations to further quantify the problem and lead to processes to suppress incidences and losses.

Hawaii County represents 67 percent or \$9.6 million of the total. Hawaii County has a program for agricultural theft and vandalism. This bill provides for a crime pilot program for Kauai County and Honolulu City and County. The findings can be applied



to Maui County while acknowledging the importance of recovery and restoration for the county over the next years.

Agricultural operations, in 2019, reported spending over \$11 million on security measures to prevent theft, vandalism and trespassing. The highest expenditure was reported by the livestock* industry at \$3.8 million for security systems, guards, and fencing/barriers. Despite those efforts, livestock reported 392 incidents of theft and losses of \$530,000 with machinery/equipment losses reported as \$279,000, representing half of the totals and is costly to replace.

Respectively, commodities of fruit, vegetable, macadamia nut and coffee reported spending \$1.4 million, \$1 million, \$1.7 million, and \$700,000 on security measures, a total of \$4.8 million to prevent theft, vandalism and trespassing.

Another statistic in the NASS report is the number of vandalism incidents, by type of vandalism, by economic size of farm which showed that of the 1,112 incidents, 772 or 69 percent occurred on farms with value of sales of less than \$50,000 annually and 42 percent were on farms reporting value of sales of less than \$10,000 annually. Small farms need support with agricultural crimes.

The statistics bring attention to the impact thieves and trespassers have on farmers, ranchers, aquaculturists and floriculturists and the need for this bill.

The Department supports the provisions in Section 2 and defers to the City and County of Honolulu and Kauai County for implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

*Livestock includes cattle, poultry, aquaculture, bee and honey and all other livestock.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



WENDY L. GADY
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**TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND
ENVIRONMENT**

Monday, February 5, 2024
1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

**SENATE BILL NO. 2363
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Gabbard. Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 2363, which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a two-year agricultural crime pilot project to examine the effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural crimes, including agricultural theft and agricultural vandalism, in the City and County of Honolulu and County of Kauai. Appropriates funds.

Agricultural commodity theft and vandalism has been a chronic problem for Hawaii's agriculture community. These crimes are on the rise and continue to plague our farmers as their crops and equipment remain a target for thieves. The ADC has hired a security firm, with increased patrols of our properties, particularly at night, to discourage illegal activity and theft/vandalism. Although

these services are effective at reducing crime in the area, they come at a high cost.

The ADC appreciates and supports the Legislature's efforts to tackle the problem and address the growing concern amongst the agriculture community.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill.



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February 5, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 2363
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:00 PM

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

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 2363, which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a two-year agricultural crime pilot project to examine the effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural crimes, including agricultural theft and agricultural vandalism, in the City and County of Honolulu and County of Kauai.

Agricultural crime is a persistent problem facing agriculture. Weather, drought, pests, weeds, disease, unstable markets, transportation, labor issues, and a changing climate all contribute to uncertainty for farmers and ranchers. Few businesses face such challenges, yet we are charged with producing food, feed, fiber, fuel, and flowers for the 99% of non-farmers. Add in the constant threat and impacts of trespass, theft, and vandalism, and it's a wonder farms and ranches remain viable.

Sadly, agricultural crime is a growing trend in Hawai'i. Farmers and ranchers are often victims of those who are looking for easy targets. Despite our efforts to install cameras, form community ag watch groups, and patrol our farms, these criminals know that being caught and prosecuted is unlikely. Our police departments are trying to help but they don't have the staffing and resources to be everywhere at all times either.

In recent years, not only have crops and livestock been stolen, but also tractors, trucks, farm equipment, and tools. Too often a farmer or rancher has sweated, worried, and worked to the bone to produce a crop or raise livestock, only to wake up one morning to find that an opportunistic criminal has helped themselves to the harvest. Farmers and ranchers are fed up with this activity and frankly, deserve better. We understand that law

enforcement resources are often prioritized for public health and safety. Is the health, safety, and livelihood of a farmer and his family any less important? We think not.

HFB believes that dedicated enforcement officers housed in the county prosecutor's office would be a giant step forward in minimizing agricultural crimes and enhancing public safety. We hope that this will serve as a deterrent to would-be criminals. The agricultural crime pilot project could help prevent agricultural crimes and thereby help our farmers and ranchers stay in business.

HFB will continue to work with the police and prosecutor's office to find ways to help deter, apprehend, and convict individuals who are committing agricultural crimes.

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



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND
ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

SB2363

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Monday, February 5, 2024, 1:00 PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB2363** which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a two-year agricultural crime pilot project to examine the effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural crimes, including agricultural theft and agricultural vandalism, in the City and County of Honolulu and County of Kauai.

We hear so many instances of trespassing, fence cutting, and theft that ranchers deal with. We also know that there are many times when we don't hear about it, because ranchers know that there likely won't be any penalty for the crime. Without the threat of a penalty, ag crimes will continue to flourish, to the detriment of our food producers. There needs to be a clear way for ranchers and farmers to report crimes, and an effective way to prosecute the crime.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director



SB-2363

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 3:40:35 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
penny levin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill and encourage it's expansion to Maui!