

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 2025
10:30 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

SENATE BILL NO. 552, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 552, Senate Draft 1 that requires the Department of Agriculture (Department) to establish a healthy soils program. There is an unspecified appropriation for FY24-25 and the same amount for FY26-27 to establish the program and the required financial incentives. The Department offers comments and a recommendation.

A fully developed Healthy Soils Program (Program) is expected to implement and manage a system of awards, financial incentives, and educational and technical assistance to farmers to implement selected farm management practices that will achieve improving soil health and building carbon stocks by small farmers, ranchers, and landowners. Notwithstanding the appropriations contained in this measure, the Department does not possess the elements of a science-based soil management and education program and neither the expertise nor other resources to establish what is needed to operate the responsible, transparent, and effective statewide program envisioned in this measure.

This bill lacks guidance on what public and private collaboration is needed to collect and analyze data and information to establish the necessary baselines and reasonable metrics of achievement that are necessary for the Department to establish standards on which to base preferred farm management practices and educate farmers



and landowners who undertake them with awards and financial incentives from the Program.

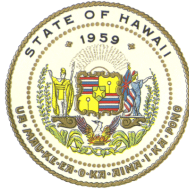
The Department strongly recommends that the Green House Gas Sequestration Task Force (Task Force) (Section 225P-4), rather than the Department of Agriculture, be assigned the tasks described in this measure. The Task Force has been in existence since 2018 and is charged with addressing numerous objectives including building healthy soils, sequestering carbon, increasing water-holding capacity, and increasing crop yields. This bill significantly duplicates the outcomes expected from the Task Force with respect to:

- Identifying agricultural practices to provide greenhouse gas benefits, identifying short-term and long-term benchmarks to indicate how effective these identified agricultural practices have been in reaching the goal;
- Identifying criteria to be used in a certification program to measure baseline levels and increases in carbon sequestration, improvements in soil health, and so forth; and
- Identifying what incentives, grants, research, and assistance are needed to promote identified agricultural practices.

The Department believes that avoiding a duplication of duties and responsibilities that are well-established in another organization is in the State's best interests.

Further, Senate Draft 1 also appears to be duplicative of the objectives of the three-year Hawaii Carbon Smart Land Management Assistance Pilot Program (Act 185, SLH 2022) established in the Department of Land and Natural Resources that has among its responsibilities, the sequestering of greenhouse gases and improving soil health by use of incentive contracts based on to-be established compensation rates.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.



**STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION & ADAPTATION
COMMISSION
POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809**

Co-Chairs:
Chair, DLNR
Director, OPSD

Commissioners:
Chair, Senate AEN
Chair, Senate WTL
Chair, House EEP
Chair, House WAL
Chairperson, HTA
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Director, DBEDT
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Director, DOH
Chairperson, DOE
Director, C+C DPP
Director, Maui DP
Director, Hawaii DP
Director, Kauai DP
The Adjutant General
Manager, CZM

**Testimony of
LEAH LARAMEE
Coordinator, Hawaii Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission**

**Before the House Committee on
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS**

**Friday, March 7, 2025
10:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325 & Videoconference**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 552, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Senate Bill 552 requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program and requires an annual report to the Legislature. **The Hawaii Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) supports this measure and offers the following comments.**

The Commission consists of a multi-jurisdictional effort between 20 different departments, committees and counties with the purpose of promoting ambitions, climate-neutral, culturally responsive strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Soil health is closely tied to ecosystem health and climate change resilience. Climate-smart land management practices that focus on building soil health, combined with stable land tenure, can provide ecological and economic resilience for agricultural communities throughout the islands and increase food system resilience. The Commission supports the testimony suggesting that the program be moved under the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

The Commission has been supporting similar efforts through the Department of Land and Natural Resources Carbon Smart Land Manager Assistance Pilot Program which provides incentives to land managers to implement climate smart practices on their lands. These programs are complimentary in that they both build resilience in our agricultural and natural lands through regenerative actions. The Carbon Smart Land Manager Assistance Pilot Program has been very well received, and land managers are hungry for additional support in these areas.

This program will also assist the state to meet our state commitment to achieving net-negative carbon emissions by 2045 by actively investing in reducing our emissions and mitigate greenhouse gases. Regenerative agriculture, forests, wetlands, and our nearshore waters and reefs serve as the

State's only carbon sinks, removing carbon from the atmosphere. Increasing carbon sequestration and improving healthy soils will assist the state in meeting food security and carbon emission goals.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 4:26:26 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i **STRONGLY SUPPORT** this bill!

Healthy soils will increase crop yields and improve food security.

**Citizens' Climate Lobby
Hawaii**

hi.ccl.lobby@gmail.com



March 6, 2025

Strong Support for SB552 SD1 Relating to Agriculture

Dear Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL) Hawai'i, I'm testifying in **Strong Support of SB552 SD1**, which if enacted would improve the health of our soils thus positively impacting our agriculture sector, economy, and environment. CCL Hawai'i has over 960 members in four chapters: Hawaii Island, Honolulu, Kauai, and Maui. CCL National has several hundred chapters throughout the US with tens of thousands of members. Support of healthy soils is one of the four environmental pillars which CCL supports.

Economically, SB552 SD1 would increase the health of our soils thereby making our agriculture sector more productive and financially help farmers. Environmentally, it would reduce the carbon footprint of the state by improving the ability of soils to sequester carbon, which would help us meet the state's emission reduction goals. Carbon sequestration is an important component of the state's necessary work to reduce its greenhouse gas footprint.

Please pass SB552 SD1 out of your committee.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Bernstein'.

Paul Bernstein

CCL Hawai'i State Co-Coordinator



To: The House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems (AGR)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Friday, March 7, 2025, 10:30am

In strong support of SB552 SD1

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and AGR Committee members;

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **strongly supports SB552 SD1** that would require the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program. This bill would incentivize farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils, land management practices that sequester carbon, as well as educating farmers and providing technical assistance to achieve these goals.

350Hawaii also strongly supports the proposed amendment to this measure offered by the Hawaii Farmers Union United which requested to bring existing initiatives like the Compost Reimbursement Program (HRS 141-16) and Cover Crop Pilot Program (Act 312, SLH 2022) under the umbrella of the Healthy Soils Program to streamline and bolster current efforts. These programs are complementary to the overarching goals of the proposed Healthy Soils Program and can be more effectively managed under a unified strategy aimed at improving soil health. By aligning these programs, the Department of Agriculture can more effectively issue comprehensive awards and financial incentives, ensuring that efforts to promote healthy soils are both cost-effective and impactful.

Supporting carbon sequestration efforts such as those delineated in this Healthy Soils Program is a win-win for the climate and local food production. To address the climate crisis, we need to move forward on efforts such as those described in SB552 SD1, and we need to do them in earnest.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of this important legislation with the proposed amendment to ensure this Program takes an effective and streamlined approach.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS
Hearing on March 7, 2025 at 10:30 am

SUPPORTING SB 552 SD 1

Carbon Cashback Hawaii supports SB 552 SD 1 because soil health is crucial to sustainable agriculture.

For more than a century, industrial agriculture depleted Hawaii's agricultural lands. The overuse of harmful pesticides killed microbes and other living organisms in the soil, depleting its capacity to sustain life. We now understand that we must move away from these practices.

Instead, biodiversity in the soil's ecosystem is key to sustainability and increased productivity. Healthy soils also have the added benefit of sequestering carbon dioxide, which mitigates climate change

This bill provides farmers with the education, technical assistance, and financial support needed to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

This bill is of critical importance because the current federal administration is no longer funding climate smart practices, which improve soil health. More than ever, it is important for the State to support agricultural practices that help to produce food while stewarding the land for future generations.

For the foregoing reasons, Carbon Cashback Hawaii urges the committee to pass SB 552 SD 1.



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

March 7, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON SB 552, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
10:30 AM

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, 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 552, SD1, which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program and to submit an Annual Report to the Legislature detailing the status and progress of the program.

HFB strongly supports 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 diverting discarded food and other useful wastes away from landfills. The benefits of this and composting are well-known.

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. This is another mechanism that can help locally produced goods compete with imported products, strengthening our local economy.

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

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 8:41:56 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kamanu Lind	Hawaii farmers union	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because of it's importance and validity to the earth. I am a regenerative farmer and I manage a farm where we use organic regenerative farming practices to ensure the life and health of the soil. Malama I ka honua! E Ola I ka honua. Take care of the earth, the earth is life.



March 5, 2025

To: Chair Kristin Kahaloa, Vice Chair Matthias Kusch, and the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Subject: **SB552 SD1, Relating to Agriculture**

Aloha,

I am submitting this testimony **in support of SB552 SD1**, which would appropriate funds to establish a Healthy Soils Program in the Department of Agriculture. Earlier this session, this committee voted to pass HB968, the companion bill to SB552. I am urging you to **vote to pass once again**.

Healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits by supporting healthy crops and a productive agricultural sector, capturing carbon more effectively, and making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and therefore less dependent on costly inputs. Heavy industrial practices have depleted our local soil health for over a century. We must move away from the outdated practices of sterilizing lands with pesticides and herbicides and killing the soil microbes and life, and instead support the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are beneficial to soil health, with the shared benefits of increasing crop productivity, reducing harmful pesticide use, and aiding in climate change mitigation by storing carbon.

To move towards regenerative agriculture, we must provide farmers with the education, technical assistance, and financial support needed to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils, thus supporting the health of our food, our people, and our lands.

Establishing a statewide soil health assessment with a list of practices specific to Hawai'i that are most effective in improving soil health and building soil carbon stocks is an important step towards a healthier, more sustainable food system and must be supported with appropriate funding. I urge you to **support SB552 SD1**.

Mahalo,
Jeanette Burdick & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 10:07:30 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colehour Bondera	Kanalani Ohana Farm	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members:

Please accept this as support from a long-time farmer and activist in the interests and needs of small-scale diversified and organic farmers for SB552.

This legislation is vital for Hawaii to be able to work with our farmers, with our residents and more-so to be able to effectively work with the NRCS of the USDA at the federal level.

When the HDOA was asked by a farmers group in recent legislative consideration to support a program regarding fertilizer, the reply was that there was no clear way for the HDOA to deal with soil questions/needs, since there is no program or department which deals with soils at the state level.

Frankly, if Hawaii wants to support efforts to deal with climate change and producing our own food, we must start with the soil and a healthy soil can and will mean healthy food for food consumption in Hawaii.

Please also seriously consider placing the program, through an amendment, within the Agribusiness Development Corporation, under the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. Through this means, the efforts towards soil health can be more effectively incorporated into broader agricultural economic planning.

As a farmer, it is also critical to point out that at present CTAHR has soil focused specialists, including Dr. Jonathan Deenik, who should be included in those consulted to develop useful and effective outreach and educational efforts regarding soil health. In this way CTAHR could play a serious role in meeting the needs of Hawaii farmers to develop and sustain healthier systems.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Colehour Bondera

KANALANI OHANA FARM

colemel2@gmail.com



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloe, Chair

Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

SB552 SD1

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Friday, March 7, 2025, 10:30AM

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB552 SD1** which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program. Requires an annual report to the Legislature and appropriates funds.

Healthy soils are necessary for ensuring we can continue to grow food on the land. Agriculture can be a beneficial contributor to managing the environment when the appropriate practices are deployed, and well-managed rangelands are a big player in this contribution. Managed, rotational grazing improves soil health through stimulating grass growth, allows rest and regrowth of grass cover and deeper roots, encourages moisture retention in the soil, protects from erosion and runoff, increases water infiltration, and sequesters carbon underground where it is stored stably.

This bill will provide the support to farmers and ranchers to encourage practices that increase soil health. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council is proud to be part of a partnership led by the University of Hawaii at Manoa that will be implementing the Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities grant to provide support for farmers and ranchers who are implementing climate smart practices. While this is a 5-year grant, efforts from the state will help to reach more producers and encourage more practices to be implemented across the state. **Furthermore, the current federal administration is no longer prioritizing climate smart practices, even though these practices are targeted at improving soil health. As such, the funds for this grant are currently at risk of being rescinded, even though we are in the middle of implementation. It is important now, more than ever, for the State to support practices for farmers and ranchers that help us to produce food while stewarding the land for future generations.**

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure. 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





Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
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East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Andrea Drayer
Ka'u, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawai'i

Fawn Helekahi-Burns
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahālāwai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Moloka'i

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports and seeks to amend SB552.**

SB552 presents a promising opportunity to enhance soil health across Hawaii, which is integral to sustainable agriculture and environmental stewardship. We seek, based on consultation with multiple parties, to see a **Healthy Soils Program (HSP) established within the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) under the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT)**. This initiative will update and refine soil data, administer financial incentives, provide technical assistance, and integrate existing soil health programs under a unified framework.

Proposed Amendments to SB552:

- Provide a preamble to explain bill intent
House the Healthy Soils Program within ADC rather than HDOA, aligning it with broader agricultural economic development initiatives.
- Initiate a statewide soil study to update and refine the Land Study Bureau (LSB) soil classification system, ensuring assessments reflect current soil science and agricultural suitability.
- Transfer soil health incentives like the Compost Reimbursement Program (HRS 141-16) and Cover Crop Pilot Program (Act 312, SLH 2022) from HDOA to ADC under the umbrella of the Healthy Soils Program - creating a centralized approach to financial assistance and technical support for farmers.

Proposed language is provided on the following pages.

By modernizing soil classification, consolidating incentives, and strategically placing the HSP within ADC, SB552 ensures that soil health efforts are data-driven, well-funded, and aligned with Hawai'i's long-term sustainability and food security goals.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

SECTION 1. Findings and Purpose

The legislature finds that the Land Study Bureau (LSB) soil rating system has not been updated since its creation in the 1960s and 1970s, leading to outdated assessments of land quality and productivity. Act 189, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022, highlighted the need for regular updates to soil data to ensure that agricultural land classification reflects current soil science and supports Hawai'i's food security and sustainability goals. Without updated and accurate soil information, the State cannot effectively assess agricultural land suitability or prioritize investments in agricultural sustainability.

The legislature further finds that accurate and up-to-date soil data, including soil characteristics, properties, and limitations, is essential for identifying risks and assessing soil suitability for various agricultural uses. Reliable soil assessments can help optimize public and private investments in agriculture, ensuring that farmers, landowners, and policymakers make informed decisions that align with the State's long-term sustainability objectives. However, the lack of a standardized system for regularly updating soil information has undermined the credibility of agricultural land assessments and limited the effectiveness of state-level planning and conservation efforts.

The legislature finds that healthy soils are vital for sustainable agriculture, climate resilience, and food security in Hawai'i. Soil health directly affects crop productivity, water retention, erosion control, and carbon sequestration, all of which are essential to reducing agricultural vulnerability and enhancing environmental sustainability.

The legislature further finds that investing in soil health aligns with Hawai'i's goal of achieving net-negative carbon emissions by 2045 and promotes climate-smart agricultural practices that benefit both farmers and the broader community. Healthy soils improve nutrient cycling, reduce reliance on synthetic fertilizers, enhance microbial biodiversity, and increase resilience to extreme weather events.

The legislature also recognizes that existing soil health initiatives, such as the Compost Reimbursement Program (HRS 141-16) and the Cover Crop Pilot Program (Act 312, SLH 2022), have demonstrated strong demand and effectiveness in promoting soil restoration and conservation. However, these programs currently operate independently, and a coordinated, long-term strategy is necessary to maximize impact and ensure program

efficiency.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a Healthy Soils Program within the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) under the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT). The program shall:

1. Update and refine soil data used in the Land Study Bureau (LSB) soil rating system by incorporating the latest United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil data and other relevant soil classification systems.
2. Provide education and technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, and landowners to support the adoption of healthy soil practices.
3. Administer financial incentives and awards to encourage the implementation of regenerative agricultural practices that build soil carbon stocks and improve soil structure.
4. Integrate and manage existing programs, including the Compost Reimbursement Program and Cover Crop Pilot Program, under a unified Healthy Soils Program framework.
5. Ensure alignment with Hawai'i's climate resilience and food security goals, while coordinating with complementary initiatives such as the Carbon Smart Land Management Assistance Pilot Program to avoid redundancy and maximize efficiency.

SECTION 2. Chapter 163D, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§163D-__. Healthy Soils Program; administration of soil health initiatives.

(a) There is established within the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), under the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT), a Healthy Soils Program to support and promote farm management practices that improve soil health, increase soil carbon sequestration, and enhance agricultural sustainability. The ADC may consult with or contract third-party entities to provide technical expertise and assist in program implementation.

(b) The Healthy Soils Program shall include and administer the following initiatives:

1. The Compost Reimbursement Program, previously established under section 141-16, which provides financial assistance to farmers for compost purchases to improve soil health

and fertility.

2. The Cover Crop Pilot Program, previously established under Act 312, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022, which promotes the use of cover crops to enhance soil organic matter, reduce erosion, and increase biodiversity.

(c) The ADC shall ensure that these programs align with the objectives and standards of the Healthy Soils Program to maximize benefits to farmers and enhance statewide soil health.

(d) Subject to available funding, the Healthy Soils Program shall provide:

1. Technical assistance and education to farmers, ranchers, and landowners to support the adoption of best soil health practices.
 2. Financial incentives and awards to encourage the implementation of regenerative agricultural practices that improve soil carbon storage, water retention, and nutrient cycling.
 3. Soil health assessments and data collection to guide statewide policy decisions and program adjustments.
-

SECTION 3. Incorporating Updated Soil Data and Mapping into the Healthy Soils Program

(a) The Healthy Soils Program shall update and refine the soil data used in the Land Study Bureau (LSB) soil rating system by considering:

- The latest United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil data.
- Soil classification systems currently used in Hawai'i, including methodologies assessing soil carbon storage, water retention, and nutrient cycling.

(b) The program shall develop a standardized process for the regular integration of updated soil data, ensuring soil ratings reflect current conditions and advances in soil science.

(c) The Healthy Soils Program shall create high-resolution digital soil maps that:

- Accurately depict soil properties, risks, and suitability for different agricultural uses.
- Serve as a decision-making tool for farmers, policymakers, and investors.
- Integrate real-time monitoring capabilities, allowing for adjustments as soil conditions evolve.

(d) A public review process shall be established to evaluate and refine updated soil data and draft soil maps. The Healthy Soils Program shall collaborate with:

- The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD).
- The Department of Agriculture (HDOA).
- The University of Hawai'i's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR).
- The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR).
- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) NRCS.
- The Land Use Commission (LUC).
- County planning agencies.

(e) The Healthy Soils Program shall include updates on soil data integration in its annual report to the Legislature, detailing:

- Progress on soil data updates.
- Mapping improvements and refinements.
- Recommendations for legislative or regulatory changes needed to align soil classification with updated scientific data.

SECTION 4. Appropriation of Funds

There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawai'i the sum of \$_ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to support the establishment and administration of the Healthy Soils Program, including the Compost Reimbursement Program and Cover Crop Pilot Program.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the Agribusiness Development Corporation for the purposes of this Act.



House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: SB552 SD1

Wednesday, March 7, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. Conference Room 325

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

HAPA supports SB552 SD1 which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program.

We support a sound program and plan to build our soil structure, nutrient capacity and biodiversity. These practices prevent soil erosion by wind and water, which can further enhance air and water quality and have cascading positive impacts in our environment.

We understand we must provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils and issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

Healthy soil is the basis for establishing lasting soil that sustains communities, environmental services, farms, and farmers, for generations. In recent decades we have learned a great deal about the importance of microbial life, and soil biodiversity in over soil "health". As we realize the impacts heavy industrial practices have in depleting our local soil health for over a century, we must move away from the outdated practices of sterilizing lands with pesticides and herbicides and killing the soil microbes and life¹, and instead support the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are beneficial to soil health². Healthy soils support more pest and climate change resistant crops.

In addition to important things like composting, crop rotation, cover cropping and other ways that we can increase organic content, we need to be looking at rehabilitation of old and previously cleared and graded soils to restore soil biodiversity along with organic content. A well structured program would include qualified soil biologists that could bring these new scientific understandings about soil ecology into the program.

¹ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/pesticides-are-killing-the-worlds-soils/>

² <https://www.emnz.com/article/how-pesticides-affect-soil-microbes>



Soil biodiversity provides fertile ground for advancing global sustainability because it integrates so many challenges including climate regulation, water quality, pollution remediation, food and fiber production, and habitat for organisms aboveground and underwater.³

Healthy soil is by far the most biologically diverse part of Earth. The soil food web includes beetles, springtails, mites, worms, spiders, nematodes, fungi, bacteria, and other organisms. These organisms improve the entry and storage of water, resistance to erosion, plant nutrition, and breakdown of organic matter. These vital ecosystem services are often forgotten and even destroyed through intensive industrialized agriculture⁴.

HAPA believes that SB552 SD1 can help to address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils, restore and improve soil biodiversity, while also improving the overall quality of our environment and working to sequester carbon. SB552 SD1 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment.

Please support SB552 SD1 and healthy soils for Hawai'i.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is placed above the printed name.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director

³ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/soil-biodiversity>

⁴ https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs142p2_050947.pdf

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 1:20:54 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Harriet Witt	Haleakala Chapter of Hawaii Farmers Union United	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is more than a bill about soil. This is about our ability to feed ourselves without contaminating our environemt and being dangerously dependent on the mainland. For the sake of our future, please support this. Mahalo, Harriet Witt, 43 Puu Koa Place, Haiku, HI 96708

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 3:35:26 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannette Gurung	WOCAN	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

Please support SB552 SD1. Healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits, by supporting healthy crops and a productive ag sector, capturing carbon/climate change mitigation, making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and less dependent on costly inputs.

We must provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils and issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

In recent decades we have learned a great deal about the importance of microbial life, soil biodiversity and the potential for our soil to capture carbon, aiding in mitigating climate change. The impacts heavy industrial practices have in depleting our local soil health for over a century, we must move away from the outdated practices of sterilizing lands with pesticides and herbicides and killing the soil microbes and life, and instead support the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are beneficial to soil health. Healthy soils support more pest and climate change resistant crops

SB552 SD1 can help to address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils, restore and improve soil biodiversity, while also improving the overall quality of our environment and working to sequester carbon. SB552 SD1 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Jeannette Gurung, Kailua Kona

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 11:46:49 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support. Thank you.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 6:00:39 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Glazebrook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Soil health and support of regenerative farming are crucial for strengthening Hawaii's agricultural future.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 6:11:14 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara Swift	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Choose healthy soil.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 6:29:06 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Members of the Committee,

Please suport this important bill to ensure environmental stewardship of our precious 'āina.

With aloha,

Dave Ball, Waialae-Kahala

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 7:46:11 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill. Mahalo.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 7:52:21 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Dixon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha as a Maui Resident I fully support SB 552, SD1 – Healthy Soils Program which : Requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program to support regenerative farming and improve soil health.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 7:59:28 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Himmel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am the owner of a 2.5 acre farm in Captain Cook. I have cared for this land without harmful pesticides and insecticides for 15 years. I grow tropical fruit and cacao, no coffee.

I have watched my coffee farm neighbors using round up and a newer very toxic pesticide Amine 4 2,4-D weed killer which kills what round up no longer will. The farms looks devastated.

if we don't wake up to the consequences of these dangerous chemicals, the land won't be suitable to grow anything, coffee or otherwise.

please support more sustainable farming practices for the sake of the people and the islands.

Thank you, Stacey

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 9:20:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary McClung Law	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Senators;

I am beseeching you to establish a **Healthy Soils Program** to support regenerative farming and improve soil health.

Over the last few years, anyone listening to global NGO's (who have the bigger picture on their radar and hold global well being as their greatest concern) will have heard how critical soil health is and how devastatingly close we are to turning soil into sand with current practices. Soil microbiologists and farmers who have led the charge towards soil health have had great success and so we know now what we have to do and how to do it. But it won't happen fast enough without government funding and political support. We can still turn this around, within five years if we act now. But if we don't act in this five years, as population grows, we be less able to feed everyone without healthy soils.

Thank you for your prompt and beneficial action,

Mary McClung Law

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 9:32:51 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noel Morin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and committee members,

I am in strong support of SB552 which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program.

Healthy soils are a foundation to sustainable food production and the ability to optimize natural carbon sequestration.

Sincerely,

Noel Morin

Climate, Sustainability, and Resilience Advocate

Hilo, Hawaii

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 9:41:53 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eliel Starbright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support ,Healthy Soils Program to support regenerative farming and improve soil health.Eliel .Kapaa

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 9:55:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Helmut Klauer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I definitely support this bill

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 10:04:31 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victoria Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 10:12:50 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
dale chappell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT SB 552, SD1. It requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a **Healthy Soils Program** to support regenerative farming and improve soil health.

Thank you for your kindly attentio to this!

Dale Ann Chappell

43 yr resident of Maui

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 11:26:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Kahaloa, Vice Chair Representative Kusch and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems.

Please support SB 552 SD 1 to establish a Healthy Soils Program.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 1:53:57 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gary Rosenberg	Individual	Comments	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

As our current financial system demonstrates inevitable disruption it's important that we get back to our roots, both figuratively and literally. All wealth originates in the soil. We now had the technology to introduce a third agricultural revolution one that can take us beyond food system based on killing, one that works with nature to restore soil health to adopt food system, which align optimal, human and optimal planetary health. This will require a change in thinking it will require a reconnection with the land and acknowledgment of our interdependence on all non-life as part of a trajectory, not simply as a moment in time. Bob Dylan said he not busy being born as busy dying. The Earth is a living organism and while is it the process of evolution it is busy being born. Our agricultural system forces the earth to be in constant state of dying. What is needed now, most for us all of us to embrace , a spirit of aloha. Hawaii is in a unique position. We possess a brand which is unsurpassed globally. We have the capacity and the responsibility to introduce a new story about a new agricultural system. Based on aloha on restoring soil recap the planet reanimating the planet, literally bringing the planet back to life , and life back to our communities and ourselves to reconnect with nature through laying down roots and planting the seeds of a better tomorrow. This is a message that can best emanate here in Hawaii with the potential of expanding its roots throughout the United States in a way that overcomes divisions at the spiritual level and the community level begins the process of reconnection of bringing us back together. This will require experimentation. It will require courage. It will require all of us to realize that we live in one great Kanoë and if we paddle together in rhythm we can move quickly through , turbulent waters. Here in Hawaii we can buy together a colonial and an indigenous narrative and row together towards a better future, both for ourselves and for people on the continent there's too much ascension in division on the continent to introduce this new story. However, we hear in Hawaii Can demonstrate the work that needs to be done and invite those people from the continent to come here and do the proof of concept work to show that building stronger, healthier, more vibrant soils we can begin to introduce a food system that is regenerative one that can align us to the land and our communities and begin the process of healing our bodies our spirits And the planet

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 6:25:36 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jan K Baldado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support SB 552 SD 1.

Mahalo nui.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 6:25:36 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jan K Baldado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support SB 552 SD 1.

Mahalo nui.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 7:07:59 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan J Poe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha ,

My name is Ryan Poe, I am the school garden coordinator for Hana High and Elementry School. Soil health is extremely important, the Department of Agriculture should establish a **Healthy Soils Program** to support regenerative farming and improve soil health. Healthy soil encourgaes healthy growth! Things can grow abundently with out poisoning the aina with chemicals! The Department of Agricuture should help educate the public to build better soils.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 7:16:04 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Virginia Graham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a tax paying resident I support this bill as agriculture is important for our community.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 7:17:09 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Virginia Tinch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of the Healthy Soils program. i buy local products at Foddland and Farmlink. Everything we can do to support our farmers improve the quality of their soil benefits them, us and the environment.

Regards,

Virginia

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 7:59:05 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ben Narwold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- Economically, it would increase the productivity and health of our soils.
- Environmentally, it would reduce the carbon footprint of the state by improving the ability of soils to sequester carbon.
- Carbon sequestration is an important component of the state's necessary work to reduce its greenhouse gas footprint.
- To move towards regenerative agriculture, we must provide farmers with the education, technical assistance, and financial support needed to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils, thus supporting the health of our food, our people, and our lands

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 8:34:19 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danae Marin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please recognize the importance of support regenerative farming and improving soil health especially after much of the soil health has been compromised by past failures to monitor and protect this much needed, food producing resource. Our entire community deserves health soil and our future generations will be needing this the most.

Respectfully,

Ms. Danae Marin

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 8:42:16 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dennis F Lokmer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill for agriculture in Hawaii and its people.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 8:58:56 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle Frohlich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to support SB 552, establishing and funding the Hawai‘i Healthy Soils Program. As a botanist and invasive species specialist in Hawai‘i, I have seen firsthand the critical need for improved soil health and sustainable land management practices across the state. Investing in soil health is essential for our agricultural resilience, environmental sustainability, and long-term food security.

Healthy soils provide numerous ecological benefits, including increased water retention, reduced erosion, enhanced carbon sequestration, and improved agricultural productivity. These benefits are particularly crucial in Hawai‘i, where fragile ecosystems, limited agricultural land, and climate change pose significant challenges to food production and environmental conservation.

This program would empower farmers, ranchers, and land stewards with financial and technical support to implement regenerative practices such as cover cropping, reduced tillage, compost application, and agroforestry. By adopting these strategies, we can enhance soil fertility, reduce reliance on synthetic inputs, and promote climate resilience across our islands.

Additionally, SB 552 aligns with state and federal goals to combat climate change by increasing carbon sequestration in soils. As Hawai‘i continues to experience more extreme weather events, supporting our agricultural producers with science-based soil management practices will help mitigate the impacts of drought, erosion, and land degradation.

I urge you to pass SB 552 to ensure that Hawai‘i invests in the long-term health of our lands and communities. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important measure.

Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to Hawai‘i’s agricultural and environmental future.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 9:30:41 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronald "Ron" Reilly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Strong Support for a Hawaii Healthy Soils program (SB552, SD1)

Chair Kakaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the Agricultural Committee,

Hawaii's wide range of climate zones and soil types will benefit greatly from organized measuring and mapping of our natural land resources. This is especially relevant as we continue to deal with fallow, uncared for land that was formerly devoted to pineapple and sugar.

It is hoped that monitoring via healthy soils program will encourage planting of highly beneficial crops such as giant clumping bamboo that grow quickly, limit soil erosion, conserve water, sequester atmospheric carbon, and can produce locally-grown, long-lasting building materials such as wall board and dimensional lumber. A funded pilot program is needed to grow and process local bamboo.

Please support SB 552 SD1.

Thank you,
Ron Reilly, Volcano Village, Hawaii

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 9:52:50 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Graham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB552 SD1. Establishing a Healthy Soils Program would be a good investment in local food production/security and maximizing our lands' ability to store carbon.

Thank you for passing this important bill.

Thomas Graham, Honolulu

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 9:56:44 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyler Iwami-Ariola	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representative, Kirstin Kahaloa

Vice Chair Representative, Matthias Kusch

House Committee on Agriculture

Wednesday, March 6

9:30AM, House conference room 325

Hawaii State Capitol

Support for H.B. No.752

Aloha, Chair Gates and representatives, my name is Kyler Iwami-Ariola and I am a student of Mililani High school who is also taking classes in environmental science. I am testifying in support of SB 552.

I am testifying in support of having the Department of Agriculture make the requirement of having to establish healthy soils programs and have to submit their annual progress to the legislature. With the increase in people and invasive species and threats, it becomes a more apparent threat against our food production and making the supply and demand to feed the people. Creating a healthy soil program would allow at the very least to not only have a way/section to improve the state's soil, but also provide a way to ensure the protection of our grown foods to meet the demand and health of the people.

I hope you will consider passing SB 552 to be seen as a step to make our island and our state a more healthy and sustainable place for our plants and growing resources.

Sincerely,

Kyler Iwami-Ariola

Student from Mililani High School

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 10:14:29 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kingston Flores	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representative Kristin Kahaloa

Representative Matthias Kusch

House Finance Committee

Thursday March 7

10:30 am Conference Room 308

Hawai'i State Capitol

Support for S.B. No. 552

Aloha, Chair Kahaloa and vice chair Kusch and Members of the House Finance Committee.

My name is Kingston Flores and I am a senior at Mililani High School. I am testifying in support of S.B. No. 552.

I am testifying specificall in support of the establishment of the healthy soils program. I believe if we can make our soil more healthy our crop yield would be better. Also it provides our local farmers with an education on improving soil health. This bill is important because it is an important step to maintaining the future of our agriculture.

I hope you will consider House Bill 552 because it is a positive step towards improving the soil health of our land.

Sincerely,

Kingston Flores

Mililani High School

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 10:58:58 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keith Neal	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,

Support for SB552_SD1

This bill if enacted would provide for regenerative agriculture, provide farmers with the education, technical assistance, and financial support needed to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

Hawaii must do more to support the growing of healthy food, people, and our agricultural lands

Carbon sequestration is an important component of the state's necessary work to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

Economically, it would increase the productivity and the health of our soils.

Respectively submitted,

Keith Neal

Waimea

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 11:33:58 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kencho Gurung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

Please support SB552 SD1. Healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits, by supporting healthy crops and a productive ag sector, capturing carbon/climate change mitigation, making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and less dependent on costly inputs.

We must provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils and issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

In recent decades we have learned a great deal about the importance of microbial life, soil biodiversity and the potential for our soil to capture carbon, aiding in mitigating climate change. The impacts heavy industrial practices have in depleting our local soil health for over a century, we must move away from the outdated practices of sterilizing lands with pesticides and herbicides and killing the soil microbes and life, and instead support the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are beneficial to soil health. Healthy soils support more pest and climate change resistant crops

SB552 SD1 can help to address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils, restore and improve soil biodiversity, while also improving the overall quality of our environment and working to sequester carbon. SB552 SD1 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Kencho Gurung, Hilo

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 11:37:02 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mina Ellison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

Please support SB552 SD1. Healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits, by supporting healthy crops and a productive ag sector, capturing carbon/climate change mitigation, making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and less dependent on costly inputs.

We must provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils and issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

In recent decades we have learned a great deal about the importance of microbial life, soil biodiversity and the potential for our soil to capture carbon, aiding in mitigating climate change. The impacts heavy industrial practices have in depleting our local soil health for over a century, we must move away from the outdated practices of sterilizing lands with pesticides and herbicides and killing the soil microbes and life, and instead support the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are beneficial to soil health. Healthy soils support more pest and climate change resistant crops.

SB552 SD1 can help to address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils, restore and improve soil biodiversity, while also improving the overall quality of our environment and working to sequester carbon. SB552 SD1 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Mina Ellison, Ke'ei, Kona Hema

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 11:38:01 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kimdonghyeon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

Please support SB552 SD1. Healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits, by supporting healthy crops and a productive ag sector, capturing carbon/climate change mitigation, making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and less dependent on costly inputs.

We must provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils and issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

In recent decades we have learned a great deal about the importance of microbial life, soil biodiversity and the potential for our soil to capture carbon, aiding in mitigating climate change. The impacts heavy industrial practices have in depleting our local soil health for over a century, we must move away from the outdated practices of sterilizing lands with pesticides and herbicides and killing the soil microbes and life, and instead support the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are beneficial to soil health. Healthy soils support more pest and climate change resistant crops

SB552 SD1 can help to address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils, restore and improve soil biodiversity, while also improving the overall quality of our environment and working to sequester carbon. SB552 SD1 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment.

Mahalo for your consideration!

kimdonghyeon

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 11:41:30 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liat Portner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

Please support SB552 SD1. Healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits, by supporting healthy crops and a productive ag sector, capturing carbon/climate change mitigation, making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and less dependent on costly inputs.

We must provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils and issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

In recent decades we have learned a great deal about the importance of microbial life, soil biodiversity and the potential for our soil to capture carbon, aiding in mitigating climate change. The impacts heavy industrial practices have in depleting our local soil health for over a century, we must move away from the outdated practices of sterilizing lands with pesticides and herbicides and killing the soil microbes and life, and instead support the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are beneficial to soil health. Healthy soils support more pest and climate change resistant crops

SB552 SD1 can help to address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils, restore and improve soil biodiversity, while also improving the overall quality of our environment and working to sequester carbon. SB552 SD1 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Liat Portner, Hale'iwa, O'ahu

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 11:53:00 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of SB552. I believe it will be a great investment for our state that will reap dividends in the future through environmental and economic benefits. Healthy soil will help crops contain more micronutrients and create a more productive ag sector, as increasing the microbial life and biodiversity will help strengthen our local food supply, which I believe is an important factor in creating a sustainable future where we can develop resilience as an island community, both for biosecurity, climate change and economic independence against geopolitical and natural disruptions to food shipping, such as what we experienced during COVID-19. Another benefit is mitigating climate change through carbon capture, which is an added boon to our oceans as they have been the main carbon sink over the decades. Healthy soil will be able to produce plants that are more pest and climate impact resilient, which will reduce dependency on costly inputs. Assisting farmers in this way through this program will be a win for all of us.

SB552 can help to address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils, restore and improve soil biodiversity, while also improving the overall quality of our environment and working to sequester carbon. SB552 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment.

In recent decades we have learned a great deal about the importance of microbial life, soil biodiversity and the potential for our soil to capture carbon, aiding in mitigating climate change. The impacts heavy industrial practices have in depleting our local soil health for over a century, we must move away from the outdated practices of sterilizing lands with pesticides and herbicides and killing the soil microbes and life, and instead support the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are beneficial to soil health. Healthy soils support more pest and climate change resistant crops.

SB552 can help to address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils, restore and improve soil biodiversity, while also improving the overall quality of our environment and working to sequester carbon. SB552 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment.

Please pass this most important bill. Mahalo.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 11:55:19 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

Please support SB552 SD1. Healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits, by supporting healthy crops and a productive ag sector, capturing carbon/climate change mitigation, making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and less dependent on costly inputs.

We must provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils and issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

In recent decades we have learned a great deal about the importance of microbial life, soil biodiversity and the potential for our soil to capture carbon, aiding in mitigating climate change. The impacts heavy industrial practices have in depleting our local soil health for over a century, we must move away from the outdated practices of sterilizing lands with pesticides and herbicides and killing the soil microbes and life, and instead support the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are beneficial to soil health. Healthy soils support more pest and climate change resistant crops

SB552 SD1 can help to address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils, restore and improve soil biodiversity, while also improving the overall quality of our environment and working to sequester carbon. SB552 SD1 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 11:59:48 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. Thank yoo

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 12:12:30 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Ford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

Please support SB552 SD1. Healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits, by supporting healthy crops and a productive ag sector, capturing carbon/climate change mitigation, making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and less dependent on costly inputs.

We must provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils and issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

In recent decades we have learned a great deal about the importance of microbial life, soil biodiversity and the potential for our soil to capture carbon, aiding in mitigating climate change. The impacts heavy industrial practices have in depleting our local soil health for over a century, we must move away from the outdated practices of sterilizing lands with pesticides and herbicides and killing the soil microbes and life, and instead support the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are beneficial to soil health. Healthy soils support more pest and climate change resistant crops

SB552 SD1 can help to address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils, restore and improve soil biodiversity, while also improving the overall quality of our environment and working to sequester carbon. SB552 SD1 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Sarah Ford, Waianae

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 12:15:19 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dita Škalic	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

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Mahalo for your consideration!

Dita Škalič

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 12:20:44 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lory Ono	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

Please support SB552 SD1. Healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits, by supporting healthy crops and a productive ag sector, capturing carbon/climate change mitigation, making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and less dependent on costly inputs.

We must provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils and issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

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SB552 SD1 can help to address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils, restore and improve soil biodiversity, while also improving the overall quality of our environment and working to sequester carbon. SB552 SD1 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment. I have long believed in regenerative agriculture.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Lory Ono, Kaneohe

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 12:25:05 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KIMI ABBOTT-JACKSON	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a backyard gardener, I support this bill completely with all the bombing and pesticides being used on the island. It is getting harder to know that what we are growing is not contaminated please help us keep this land fertile so that we can be self sustainable. Thank you.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 12:28:30 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrick Owens	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Legislation that encourages, supports or enhances local food production and/or distribution benefits the wellbeing of our residents and the strength of our economy.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 12:48:09 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The **Healthy Soils Program** is important for Hawaii if we are to raise more food for ourselves instead of importing 90% of what we eat. Healthy soils produce nutritious food. The more food we grow the more important it becomes for farmers to know how to keep the soil healthy. Please support SB552.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 12:50:01 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tane Datta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill which will strengthen our farms

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 12:51:52 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mariana Monasi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

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Mahalo for your consideration!
mariana monasi

kurtistown, hi

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 1:23:22 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Annalise Hart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

Please support SB552 SD1. Healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits, by supporting healthy crops and a productive ag sector, capturing carbon/climate change mitigation, making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and less dependent on costly inputs.

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Mahalo for your consideration!

Annalise Hart

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 1:37:00 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leo Nahe Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

Please support SB552 SD1. Healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits, by supporting healthy crops and a productive ag sector, capturing carbon/climate change mitigation, making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and less dependent on costly inputs.

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Mahalo for your consideration!

Leo Nahe Smith, Pearl City

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 1:52:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill!

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 1:31:42 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB552 SD1. Healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits, by supporting healthy crops and a productive ag sector, capturing carbon/climate change mitigation, making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and less dependent on costly inputs.

We must provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils and issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

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SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 1:54:53 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicole LeClaire	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Regenerative farming practices are needed now!

Healthy soils are the foundation of a climate friendly, regenerative food system, but farmers need support in transitioning their practices. Additionally to support a more regenerative food system, smaller producers need access to markets. Food hubs can help connect producers to new markets providing local residents with access to healthy, local food. Supporting healthy soils and food hubs is an important step towards creating an environmentally just and localized food future for Hawai'i!

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 2:01:37 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pamela burrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

Needless to say healthy soils = healthy life...not just for humans . The benifits are far reaching and a long lasting balance .

Please support SB552.

Mahalo for your valuable time and consideration.

Pamela Burrell, Kalihiwai, Kaua'i. 96754

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 2:45:54 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Hennessy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

Please support SB552 SD1. Healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits, by supporting healthy crops and a productive ag sector, capturing carbon/climate change mitigation, making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and less dependent on costly inputs.

We must provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils, and issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

In recent decades we have learned a great deal about the importance of microbial life, soil biodiversity and the potential for our soil to capture carbon, aiding in mitigating climate change. The impacts heavy industrial practices have on depleting our local soil health for over a century, we must move away from the outdated practices of sterilizing lands with pesticides and herbicides and killing the soil microbes and life, and instead support the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are beneficial to soil health. Healthy soils support more pest and climate change resistant crops, SB552 SD1 can help to address a range of important issues we face related to degraded and damaged soils, restore and improve soil biodiversity, while also improving the overall quality of our environment, and working to sequester carbon. SB552 SD1 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Lisa Hennessy, Princeville

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 2:59:04 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert ZUckerman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to support this bill to ensure a healthy environmental sustainable future for our people.

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 3:02:55 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lehua Abrigo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

Please support SB552 SD1. Healthy soil is the foundation of a strong local food system. It helps farmers grow better crops with fewer costly inputs, makes plants more resilient to pests and extreme weather, and even helps fight climate change by capturing carbon.

To make this happen, we need to support our farmers with education, hands-on assistance, and financial incentives to improve soil health.

For over a century, industrial farming practices have stripped our soils of life, relying on pesticides and herbicides that kill the microbes and insects that keep soil healthy. Science has shown us a better way—working with nature instead of against it. By rebuilding soil biodiversity, we can grow stronger crops, reduce chemical use, and protect our environment for future generations.

SB552 SD1 is a common-sense step toward healthier soil, stronger farms, and a more sustainable Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Lehua Abrigo

Malu'ōhai Homestead, Kapolei, O‘ahu

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 3:39:36 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marla Tomorug	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

Please support SB552 SD1. Healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits, by supporting healthy crops and a productive ag sector, capturing carbon/climate change mitigation, making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and less dependent on costly inputs.

We must provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils and issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

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Mahalo for your consideration!

Marla Tomorug, Lahaina

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 3:59:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emelia Briscoe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

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Mahalo for your consideration!

Emelia Briscoe, Honolulu

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 4:04:00 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Palma-Glennie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

i ask that you support SB552 SD1. I live on ag land in Kona and have pursued agricultural work and play for the 25 years we've owned this property. my experience with organic gardening has shown me first-hand that healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits, by supporting healthy crops and a productive ag sector, capturing carbon/climate change mitigation, making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and less dependent on costly inputs.

Our farmers need education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils and issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils. This bill would help.

The work of live elements in our soils help create soil biodiversity while allowing our soil to capture carbon, aiding in mitigating climate change. The impacts heavy industrial practices have in depleting our local soil health for over a century, we must move away from the outdated practices of sterilizing lands with pesticides and herbicides and killing the soil microbes and life, and instead support the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are beneficial to soil health. Healthy soils support more pest and climate change resistant crops

SB552 SD1 is a strong measure that can help farmers as well as address a range of important island issues related to degraded and damaged soils, restore and improve soil biodiversity, while also improving the overall quality of our environment and working to sequester carbon. SB552 SD1 is important for our local food production agricultural sector and is a solid step toward protecting and enhancing our local natural and ag environments.

Mahalo and sincerely,

janice palma-glennie

kailua-kona

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 4:17:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Chun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

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Mahalo for your consideration!

Malia Chun, Kekaha, Kauaʻi

SB-552-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 4:23:44 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

I hope this message finds you well! I'm writing to kindly ask for your support of SB552 SD1. Healthy soils are truly the foundation of so many benefits—not only for our environment but also for our economy. They help grow strong, healthy crops, support a thriving agricultural sector, capture carbon to combat climate change, and make plants more resilient to pests and extreme weather, all while reducing the need for expensive inputs.

To make this a reality, it's essential that we provide farmers with the education and technical assistance they need to adopt practices that promote healthy soils. Additionally, offering awards and financial incentives can encourage even more farmers to take part in these efforts.

Over the past few decades, we've learned so much about the incredible role of microbial life and soil biodiversity, as well as the potential for soil to capture carbon and help mitigate climate change. Unfortunately, heavy industrial practices over the last century have taken a toll on our local soil health. It's time to move away from outdated methods like sterilizing land with pesticides and herbicides, which harm the very microbes and life that keep soil healthy. Instead, let's focus on supporting the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are so vital to maintaining healthy soils. After all, healthy soils mean crops that are better equipped to handle pests and the challenges of a changing climate.

SB552 SD1 is a meaningful step toward addressing the critical issues of degraded and damaged soils. It can help restore and improve soil biodiversity, enhance the overall quality of our environment, and contribute to carbon sequestration. This bill isn't just important for our local agricultural sector and food production—it's a win for our environment as a whole.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. Your support would make a real difference!

Mahalo nui loa!

Jennifer Lum, 'Ewa Beach