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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO REGIONAL AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTION.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds the State's long-term  
2 food security, rural economic resilience, and institutional  
3 procurement strategies depend on a clear, data-driven  
4 understanding of what crops can be grown profitably, at scale,  
5 in different regions of the State. Current food systems plans  
6 frequently rely on assumptions regarding production capacity,  
7 supply readiness, and labor availability, rather than  
8 comprehensive agricultural feasibility assessments.

9           The legislature further finds that comprehensive  
10 agricultural feasibility assessments require a coordinated,  
11 multi-agency, evidence-based planning framework that integrates  
12 agro-ecological science, economic modeling, workforce analysis,  
13 and infrastructure feasibility to ensure food systems plans are  
14 adequate to support agriculture in the State. A working group  
15 is therefore necessary to produce the necessary data and  
16 information to support farmers at all scales; strengthen  
17 neighbor island food system development; align production



1 capacity with institutional demand; and guide state investment  
2 in agricultural infrastructure, regional kitchens, and  
3 procurement initiatives.

4 The purpose of this Act is to establish the regional  
5 agricultural feasibility and food systems production studies  
6 working group to provide coordinated, region-specific  
7 agricultural production and crop feasibility analysis across the  
8 State.

9 SECTION 2. (a) The department of agriculture and  
10 biosecurity shall establish and implement a two-year regional  
11 agricultural feasibility and food systems production studies  
12 working group to conduct island- and region-specific  
13 agricultural feasibility studies to inform statewide food system  
14 planning, public procurement strategies, and agricultural  
15 investment.

16 (b) The working group shall be conducted through a  
17 multi-agency framework that shall consist of the following  
18 members:

19 (1) A representative from the university of Hawaii at  
20 Manoa college of tropical agriculture and human  
21 resilience, who shall be responsible for



- 1 agro-ecological analysis, crop suitability, soil  
2 health, assessments, climate and elevation modeling,  
3 and production systems research;
- 4 (2) A representative from the department of business,  
5 economic development, and tourism, who shall be  
6 responsible for economic modeling, cost-of-production  
7 analysis, institutional demand alignment, regional  
8 market feasibility, and integration with economic  
9 development strategies;
- 10 (3) A representative from the agribusiness development  
11 corporation who shall be responsible for a feasibility  
12 analysis of state agricultural lands, irrigation and  
13 water systems, processing and aggregation  
14 infrastructure, and other relevant agricultural  
15 facilities relevant to projected production scenarios;
- 16 (4) A representative from the department of agriculture  
17 and biosecurity, who shall be responsible for  
18 statewide agricultural policy coordination and  
19 alignment with food security and agricultural  
20 development initiatives; and



1 (5) A representative from the department of land and  
2 natural resources, who shall serve in an advisory  
3 capacity to provide information on land  
4 classification, water resource availability, and  
5 constraints relevant to agricultural suitability.

6 (c) The regional agricultural feasibility and food systems  
7 production studies working group shall conduct island- and  
8 region-specific agricultural feasibility studies that assess:

9 (1) Crop feasibility and production potential, including:

10 (A) Crops that can be grown profitably by island,  
11 region, elevation, and climate zone;

12 (B) Expected production volumes under real-world  
13 conditions; and

14 (C) Production risks associated with pests, water  
15 constraints, weather variability, and market  
16 volatility;

17 (2) Infrastructure constraints and requirements,  
18 including:

19 (A) Processing, aggregation, and cold storage  
20 capacity;



- 1 (B) Access to land, water, electricity, and
- 2 transportation corridors; and
- 3 (C) Regional gaps in equipment, technology, and
- 4 shared-use facilities;
- 5 (3) Labor and mechanization needs, including:
  - 6 (A) Current and projected agricultural labor gaps by
  - 7 crop and production systems;
  - 8 (B) Opportunities to improve labor efficiency through
  - 9 mechanization or automation; and
  - 10 (C) Workforce development needs, training capacity,
  - 11 and barriers to entry for new growers;
- 12 (4) Controlled environment agriculture opportunities,
- 13 including:
  - 14 (A) Identification of crops best suited for vertical
  - 15 farming, aquaponics, and other controlled
  - 16 environment systems;
  - 17 (B) Feasibility of locating controlled environment
  - 18 systems in industrial areas or enterprise zones;
  - 19 and
  - 20 (C) Strategies to reduce pressure on arable lands
  - 21 while expanding local production capacity; and



- 1 (5) Alignment of agricultural supply with institutional
- 2 demand, including:
- 3 (A) Comparison of cost-of-production to institutional
- 4 price points;
- 5 (B) Compatibility with regional kitchen and
- 6 farm-to-school procurement forecasts; and
- 7 (C) Capacity for small-, mid-, and large-scale farms
- 8 to supply institutional buyers, including
- 9 off-grade products.
- 10 (d) The regional agricultural feasibility and food systems
- 11 production studies working group shall prioritize neighbor
- 12 island needs by:
- 13 (1) Conducting island-specific studies that reflect
- 14 regional conditions, infrastructure gaps, and market
- 15 access constraints;
- 16 (2) Developing recommendations that do not assume
- 17 Oahu-level economies of scale; and
- 18 (3) Providing tailored strategies for infrastructure,
- 19 procurement readiness, and production scaling.
- 20 (e) The working group may consult with:
- 21 (1) County agricultural offices;



- 1 (2) Farmers, ranchers, processors, and agricultural  
2 cooperatives;
- 3 (3) Institutional buyers, including the department of  
4 education, university of Hawaii, and health care  
5 institutions;
- 6 (4) The Hawaii emergency management agency, for climate  
7 resilience considerations; and
- 8 (5) Any other community or technical partners the working  
9 group deems relevant.
- 10 (f) The working group shall submit an interim report of  
11 its preliminary findings, recommendations, and any identified  
12 data gaps, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to  
13 the convening of the regular session of 2027.
- 14 (g) The working group shall submit a final statewide  
15 agricultural feasibility and food systems production report,  
16 including island- and region-specific feasibility assessments,  
17 policy recommendations, and proposed investment strategies, to  
18 the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening  
19 of the regular session of 2028.
- 20 (h) Each report identified in subsections (f) and (g)  
21 shall include:



- 1 (1) Region-by-region crop feasibility maps and production
- 2 scenarios;
- 3 (2) Infrastructure investment priorities;
- 4 (3) Workforce and mechanization needs assessments;
- 5 (4) Controlled-environment agriculture recommendations;
- 6 (5) Institutional procurement alignment analyses; and
- 7 (6) Strategies to support small-, mid-, and large-scale
- 8 farmers.

9 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
11 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for  
12 the department of agriculture and biosecurity to implement the  
13 regional agricultural feasibility and food systems production  
14 studies working group.

15 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
16 agriculture and biosecurity for the purposes of this Act.

17 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050, and  
18 shall be repealed on June 30, 2028.



**Report Title:**

DAB; Agriculture; Regional Agriculture Feasibility; Food Systems Planning; Study; Working Group; Reports; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes the Regional Agricultural Feasibility and Food Systems Production Studies Working Group within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to provide coordinated, region-specific agricultural production and crop feasibility analysis across the State. Requires reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Repeals 6/30/2028. Effective 7/1/2050.  
(SD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

