

JAN 21 2026

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## A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the State's  
2 long-term food security and agricultural resilience depend upon  
3 the availability of land and water resources that can support  
4 diversified, sustainable agricultural production. When the  
5 agribusiness development corporation (corporation) was  
6 established in 1994 by Act 264, Session Laws of Hawaii 1994, and  
7 codified as chapter 163D, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the  
8 legislature envisioned that the State's transition from  
9 plantation agriculture would release approximately seventy-five  
10 thousand acres of agricultural lands and fifty million gallons  
11 of irrigation water per day for reuse by diversified  
12 agriculture.

13 However, three decades later, the full potential of these  
14 resources has not been realized. The consolidation of  
15 agricultural parcels, rehabilitation of irrigation systems, and  
16 establishment of modern agricultural infrastructure remain  
17 incomplete due to complex land ownership patterns, dormant



1 assets, and inadequate coordination among state agencies. The  
2 lack of a clear mechanism for the State to assemble  
3 strategically located agricultural lands and critical  
4 infrastructure has impeded Hawaii's ability to achieve food  
5 self-sufficiency and reduce dependence on imported foods.

6 The legislature further finds that the corporation was  
7 created to facilitate the conversion of former plantation lands  
8 and water systems to diversified agricultural use, coordinate  
9 the development of agricultural infrastructure, and assist local  
10 producers in overcoming structural barriers to agricultural  
11 growth. Yet, despite its broad authority to acquire and manage  
12 lands, the corporation presently lacks explicit statutory  
13 authority to acquire lands or easements by condemnation for  
14 public agricultural purposes, even in situations where voluntary  
15 acquisition is impracticable or contrary to the public interest.

16 The legislature recognizes that the power of eminent domain  
17 is an extraordinary authority that must be exercised only for a  
18 demonstrable public use, subject to the constitutional  
19 guarantees of just compensation and due process, and with full  
20 regard for the State's obligations under article XI, section 7,  
21 of the Hawaii State Constitution to protect, control, and



1 regulate the use of the State's water resources for the benefit  
2 of its people. The legislature further acknowledges that lands  
3 and water systems are integral to Native Hawaiian customary and  
4 traditional rights, and to the rights of beneficiaries under the  
5 Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920.

6 The legislative intent of the authority established by this  
7 Act is not to promote private commercial gain, nor to displace  
8 existing public uses of land without compelling justification  
9 and legislative review. Rather, the legislature seeks to  
10 restore coherence and capacity to the State's agricultural  
11 infrastructure policy, enabling the public sector to acquire and  
12 manage essential agricultural resources for the long-term  
13 benefit of the State's people, environment, and economy.

14 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to authorize the  
15 agribusiness development corporation to acquire real property or  
16 any interest therein by condemnation, pursuant to chapter 101,  
17 Hawaii Revised Statutes, solely for legitimate public  
18 agricultural uses, such as the establishment or preservation of  
19 irrigation systems, reservoirs, processing and distribution  
20 facilities, and other infrastructure that directly supports  
21 local agricultural producers and food-security initiatives.



1 SECTION 2. Section 163D-4, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
2 amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

3 " (a) Except as otherwise limited by this chapter, the  
4 corporation may:

- 5 (1) Sue and be sued;
- 6 (2) Have a seal and alter the same at its pleasure;
- 7 (3) Make and alter bylaws for its organization and  
8 internal management;
- 9 (4) Adopt rules under chapter 91 necessary to effectuate  
10 this chapter in connection with its projects,  
11 operations, and properties;
- 12 (5) Make and execute contracts and all other instruments  
13 necessary or convenient for the exercise of its powers  
14 and functions under this chapter;
- 15 (6) Acquire or contract to acquire by grant or purchase  
16 any real, personal, or mixed property or any interest  
17 therein for its immediate or future use for the  
18 purposes of this chapter; own, hold, improve, and  
19 rehabilitate any real, personal, or mixed property  
20 acquired, and sell, assign, exchange, transfer,



1           convey, lease, or otherwise dispose of, or encumber  
2           the same;

3       (7) Acquire by condemnation pursuant to chapter 101 any  
4       real property, including fixtures and improvements, or  
5       any interest in real property, for the purposes of  
6       this chapter; provided that the corporation makes a  
7       determination that the property is necessary for the  
8       corporation's immediate or future use.

9       Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, any  
10      real property acquired by condemnation shall not  
11      thereafter be transferred or taken for any other  
12      public use without the consent of the corporation;

13     [+7] (8) By itself, or in partnership with qualified  
14     persons, acquire, construct, reconstruct,  
15     rehabilitate, improve, alter, or repair any  
16     infrastructure or accessory facilities in connection  
17     with any project; own, hold, sell, assign, transfer,  
18     convey, exchange, lease, or otherwise dispose of, or  
19     encumber any project;

20     [+8] (9) In cooperation with the department of agriculture  
21     and biosecurity, pursuant to chapter 167, or otherwise



1           through direct investment or coventure with a  
2           professional investor or enterprise or any other  
3           person, or otherwise, to acquire, construct, operate,  
4           and maintain water facilities for conveying,  
5           distributing, and transmitting water for irrigation  
6           and agricultural uses at rates or charges determined  
7           by the corporation; provided that:

8           (A) This chapter shall not be construed to permit or

9               allow the department of agriculture and

10              biosecurity or [any] agribusiness development

11              corporation to:

12              (i) Amend or modify rights or entitlements to

13               water as provided for by article XI, section

14               7, of the Constitution of the State of

15               Hawaii, or the Hawaiian Homes Commission

16               Act, 1920, as amended, and chapter 168;

17              (ii) Diminish or abridge the traditional and

18               customary rights of ahupua'a tenants who

19               inhabited the Hawaiian Islands [prior to]

20               before 1778 under sections 1-1 and 7-1; and



10 [+] (10) Receive, examine, and determine the acceptability  
11 of applications of qualified persons for allowances  
12 or grants for the development of new crops and  
13 agricultural products, the expansion of established  
14 agricultural enterprises, and the altering of existing  
15 agricultural enterprises;

16 [+] (11) Coordinate its activities with any federal or  
17 state farm credit programs;

18 [+] (12) Grant options to purchase any project or to renew  
19 any lease entered into by it in connection with any of  
20 its projects, on the terms and conditions it deems  
21 advisable;



1       [+12] (13) Provide advisory, consultative, training, and  
2                    educational services, technical assistance, and advice  
3                    to any person, partnership, or corporation, either  
4                    public or private, in order to carry out the purposes  
5                    of this chapter, and engage the services of  
6                    consultants on a contractual basis for rendering  
7                    professional and technical assistance and advice;

8        [+13] (14) Procure insurance against any loss in connection  
9                    with its property and other assets and operations in  
10                  [sueh] amounts and from [sueh] insurers as it deems  
11                  desirable;

12      [+14] (15) Accept gifts or grants in any form from any  
13                  public agency or any other source; and

14      [+15] (16) Do all things necessary or proper to carry out  
15                  the purposes of this chapter."

16           SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
17           and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

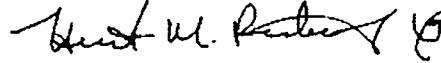
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1 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

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S.B. NO. 2169

**Report Title:**

ADC; Real Property; Condemnation; Eminent Domain; Public Use

**Description:**

Authorizes the Agribusiness Development Corporation to acquire by condemnation any real property or interest in real property, under certain conditions. Prohibits any real property acquired by the Corporation by condemnation from subsequently being transferred or taken for any other public use without the Corporation's consent.

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