

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of
LEAH LARAMEE
Climate Change Coordinator on behalf of
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission
Co-Chair Ryan K. P. Kanaka'ole**

**Before the House Committees on
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
AND
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**Friday, February 6, 2026
9:00 AM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1621
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

House Bill 1621 establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission. The program requires an annual report to the Legislature and is appropriated funding, **The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) supports this measure.**

The Commission consists of a multi-jurisdictional effort between 20 departments, committees, and counties with the purpose of promoting ambitious, 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.

Since 2022, the Commission has supported similar efforts through the Department of Land and Natural Resources' Climate Smart Land Manager Assistance Pilot Program which provided incentives to land managers to implement climate smart practices on their lands. The Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program will continue this work to support local farmers, ranchers, and foresters while protecting the longevity of productive soils through building

resilience in our agricultural and natural lands. The Climate Smart Land Manager Assistance Pilot Program was well received. 52 applications were submitted in the last funding cycle, demonstrating that land managers are hungry for additional support in these areas.

Resilient local food systems are imperative as increasingly frequent severe storms will interrupt importation of food. With only a seven-day to two-week supply of food on island, it is vital that we support local food production by encouraging regenerative practices. This program supports regenerative soil practices, enhanced aquifer recharge, reduced soil erosion, and the protection of productive lands.

This program will also assist the State in meeting its commitment to achieving net-negative carbon emissions by 2045 by actively investing in reducing emissions and greenhouse gas generation. 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 comment on this measure.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
and
House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Friday, February 6, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

By
Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience
and
Vassilis Syrmos, PhD
Interim Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1621 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairs Chun and Lowen, Vice Chairs Kusch and Perruso, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1621 Relating to Agriculture.

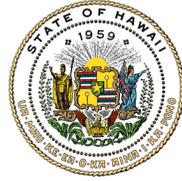
The measure establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission. Requires an annual report to the Legislature and appropriates funds.

For several years, University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) faculty and Cooperative Extension personnel have conducted research and applied the findings to assist farmers, ranchers and cultural practitioners with climate smart agricultural practices, conservation practices and culturally appropriate practices to improve local food production and protect our environment. CTAHR looks forward to collaborating with the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission to provide technical assistance and education that supports the adoption of science-based conservation practices and support local food production and economic viability.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI A KIA'I MEAOLA
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9560 FAX: (808) 973-9613

SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

WRITTEN ONLY

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS
AND ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2026
9:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**HOUSE BILL NO.1621
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

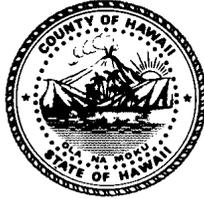
Chairs Chun and Lowen, Vice Chairs Kusch and Perruso and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1621 that establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission. An annual report and a triennial program evaluation are required. There is a \$1.5 million appropriation request. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) supports the intent of this measure to the extent it quantitatively supports local food production and the economic viability of participating agricultural operations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor

William V. Brilhante, Jr.
Managing Director



Benson Medina
Director

Dennis Lin
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

25 Aupuni Street, Room 1301 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-4252
(808) 961-8366 • Fax (808) 935-1205
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February 4, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS AND ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

FRIDAY, February 6, 2026
9:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

TESTIMONY ON HB 1621 Relating to Agriculture

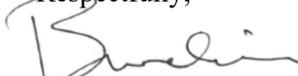
Aloha Chair Chun, Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Kusch, Vice Chair Perruso and Members of the Committees,

I am Benson Medina, Director of the Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai'i. One of the agricultural objectives of this department is to support research, development, control, and education that improves agricultural production, quality, resilience, and producer viability or reduces the impact of pests or disease on agricultural crops, livestock, forests, or the community.

The County of Hawai'i provides written testimony in **SUPPORT of HB1621**, to establish a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission.

On Hawai'i Island, ecosystems and natural resources are deeply intertwined with agricultural lands. The island continues to contend with the legacy effects of past unsustainable agricultural practices, including soil degradation, watershed alteration, and persistent contaminants from historical plantation-era operations. Invasive species and pest management as well as plant disease are top ranking issues affecting farm viability on Hawai'i Island (HDOA, 2024). Environmental stewardship of soil and water health supports agricultural systems' resilience and ensures resources are available for future generations. However, recent Federal rule changes (USDA Final Rule 2025-12877) eliminated added payment factors for race- and gender-based applicants in over 20 USDA programs, including Natural Resource Conservation Service programs (USDA). As a primary mechanism in supporting producers to adopt and maintain environmental stewardship practices, these changes in NRCS programming impact Hawai'i Island agriculture and the program proposed in HB1621 is crucial to fill these gaps. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of HB1621**.

Respectfully,


Benson Medina
Director



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Chair
Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair

HB1621
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, January 28, 2026, 3:00 PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB1621** which establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission. Requires an annual report to the Legislature.

Soil health is a key measure of overall health of an ecosystem. Well-managed cattle can contribute to increased soil health, in turn improving water retention and carbon sequestration. This program seeks to provide incentives, technical assistance, and education for these practices, which will make it more feasible for a wider range of producers to adopt practices that benefit the land.

This concept is similar to the Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities, a USDA grant that was cancelled in 2025 - the second year of a 5 year contract. While we were not able to finish the program to fully realize the potential of this funding, what we learned is that there is a demonstrated need for this funding to assist producers in purchasing equipment, obtaining technical assistance, and funding practices that help food production and land stewardship.

In our experience, both established ranches as well as new and small ranches could benefit from this support. A program like this is strategically proactive, providing the tools needed for our agricultural producers to continue their work for the community and future generations, improving with better practices.

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. Ranchers produce a high-quality protein and are the stewards of almost 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or nearly 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



HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:59:47 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Colehour Bondera

KANALANI OHANA FARM

PO Box 861

Honaunau, HI 96726

February 04, 2026

Aloha Chair and Committee Members:

Many thanks for hearing this important piece of legislation. As a long-time organic farmer in south Kona, we know that little attention has been paid to our vital starting point: soil.

Healthy soil yields healthy crops, and Hawaii can and should be feeding itself from each region by keeping the soils healthy and vibrant. Over half our our farms' production is sold directly to consumers at the Keauhou Farmers Market.

A lot of support and efforts have been directed towards imported inputs, including fertilizers, which are not needed, and historically were not used. We have the capacity to feed our own soils with our own production in Hawaii along the lines of using bio-char and more importantly, fish wastes.

For five full years (2011-2016) I am proud to say that it was possible to serve on the National Organic Standards Board. We took action to protect organic integrity and advise the Secretary of Agriculture on what actions to take to ensure, again, healthy soils in order to have healthy food and a healthy environment which does not contaminate the consumers or the farm workers.

This applies strongly to Hawaii and it is important that our legislators support protection from climate change impacts which will come down to healthy and sustained soils.

Please support this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Colehour Bondera



Carbon Cashback

February 4, 2026

Re: AGR/EEP hearing of HB1621 on February 6, 2026

Position: **Strong Support**

Aloha Chairs Chun and Lowen, and members of the AGR and EEP committees:

Carbon Cashback Hawai'i strongly supports HB1621

Carbon Cashback Hawai'i advocates for legislation that reduces carbon emissions and strengthens Hawai'i's energy independence while improving the health of our community. HB1621 achieves these goals as it establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (CCMAC), which will lead to a healthier and more sustainable agricultural sector and improve the health of our economy and our environment by improving the ability of our soils to sequester carbon.

By consolidating various agricultural conservation programs under CCMAC, this policy removes administrative barriers for farmers to obtain financial incentives and technical assistance and improves statewide conservation efforts.

The key benefits of HB1621 are water regulation, higher crop yield, carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, biodiversity support, pollutant filtration, and erosion prevention. To help Hawai'i make better use of its resources and better protect the environment as well as strengthen its economy, Carbon Cashback Hawai'i urges you to pass HB1621 out of your committees.

Mahalo nui loa.



To: The House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems (AGR)
and
The House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection (EEP)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Friday, February 6, 2026, 9am

In strong support of HB1621

Aloha Chairs Chun and Lowen, Vice Chairs Kusch and Perruso, and 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 HB1621** that establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission. 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.

Improving Hawaii's soil health is crucial for combating climate change and achieving food self-sufficiency. Supporting the adoption of science-based conservation practices that improve soil health, water retention, and climate resilience; increase carbon sequestration; and reduce our reliance on external inputs, including synthetic fertilizers and fossil fuels, are a win-win for the climate and local food production. Moreover, this program addresses equity and accessibility, ensuring that smaller-scale and socially disadvantaged farmers receive adequate support.

If we are serious about addressing the climate crisis, we need to move forward on efforts such as those described in HB1621, and we need to do them in earnest.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of this important legislation.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

House Committee on Energy & Environment

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: HB1621

Friday, February 6th, 2026 9:00 a.m. Conference Room 325

Aloha Chair Chun, Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Kusch, Vice Chair Perruso and Members of the Committees,

HAPA supports HB1621 which establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission.

This measure proposes to provide farmers with capacity to invest in the infrastructure to adopt practices that contribute to solid health and conservation. The practices supported in this bill prevent soil erosion by wind and water which can further enhance air and water quality and have cascading positive impacts in our environment.

Profit margins in farming are thin, incentives in this proposed program can reduce barriers to adopting a more productive system of agriculture that decreases dependence on expensive, fossil based inputs and pesticides that are subject to market volatility.

Healthy soil is the foundation of a healthy and resilient food system. In recent decades we have learned a great deal about the importance of microbial life, and soil biodiversity. Healthy soils support more pest and climate change resistant crops and more nutrient dense food. Heavy industrial practices dating back to the plantation era have depleted our local soil health for over a century, by sterilizing lands with pesticides and herbicides which not only kill pests but kill all the beneficial microbes and life¹ that support healthy crops. HB1621 provides critical support for farmers seeking to implement practices that enhance the biodiversity of insects and microbes that are beneficial to soil health² and the environment. Transitioning from conventional, pesticide intensive practices to a regenerative system can be challenging because it requires considerable effort to rehabilitate depleted soil and often requires a different kind of infrastructure.

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 resilience, water quality, pollution remediation³, food and fiber production, and habitat for organisms above ground and underwater.⁴

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 destroyed through intensive industrialized agriculture⁵.

HAPA believes that HB1621 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 by preventing harmful run-off into marine environments, and conserving soil as a resource for a productive food system. SB1621 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment.

Please support HB1621 and healthy soils for Hawai'i.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is positioned below the word 'Respectfully,'.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director

³ <https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/12/hawaii-farmers-look-back-to-the-future-to-deal-with-climate-change/>

⁴ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/soil-biodiversity>

⁵ https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs142p2_050947.pdf



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Kaua'i

Aloha Chairs Chun & Lowen, Vice Chairs Kusch & Perruso, and Committee Members,

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 strongly supports HB1621.**

The establishment of the Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program under HB1621 is an essential initiative for ensuring the long-term sustainability and resilience of Hawaii's agricultural sector. By focusing on soil health and conservation agriculture, this program empowers farmers with the tools and resources necessary to transition away from reliance on high-cost imported chemical inputs. Instead, it promotes self-sustaining practices that enhance soil vitality, increase water retention, and ultimately improve crop yield. Given the challenges posed by decades of industrial monocropping, which have eroded Hawaii's precious topsoil, such a program is vital to reversing damage and fostering a more sustainable agricultural landscape.

Furthermore, HB1621 addresses both economic and environmental concerns by providing the much-needed financial support to facilitate these transformative agricultural practices. With climate change increasingly impacting Hawaii through unpredictable weather patterns and extended periods of drought, farmers need to adopt adaptive strategies that bolster the stability of the local food supply. By incorporating science-based conservation practices, this bill equips farmers with the means to ensure food security and preserve Hawaii's natural resources for future generations. Supporting HB1621 not only aligns with sustainable farming goals but also strengthens the resilience of Hawaii's agricultural economy against climate-related disruptions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
Supporting HB1621, Relating to Agriculture
Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
February 6, 2026 at 9:00 am
Conference Room 325 and via Videoconference**

Dear Chairs Chun and Lowen, Vice Chairs Kusch and Perruso, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Hawai'i and Palmyra supports HB1621, which establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (CCMAC).

Healthy soil is one of Hawai'i's most important foundations for climate mitigation, watershed health, and agricultural resilience. As climate change accelerates soil degradation and stresses our watersheds, the need for stronger systems that support soil health and food security continues to grow. Supporting conservation agriculture strengthens ecosystem functions across the landscape and helps protect Hawai'i's natural resources.

Agricultural conservation programs are currently fragmented, under-resourced and difficult to access, especially for small (<50 acres), beginning, Native Hawaiian, and socially disadvantaged farmers who steward some of the most vulnerable lands. This bill addresses these gaps by providing financial incentives and technical assistance to support the adoption of proven conservation practices, while prioritizing equitable access across farming communities.

By consolidating program administration under the CCMAC, an agency with strong land stewardship, planning, and climate expertise, this measure removes administrative barriers and improves statewide conservation efficiency.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1621.

Guided by science, TNC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 84,000 acres in 13 nature preserves and 18 managed areas and have supported over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands.

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LATE

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:33:59 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noel Morin	Citizens Climate Lobby - Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Citizens' Climate Lobby Hawaii

hi.ccl.lobby@gmail.com

cclhawaii.org

Aloha Chairs Chun and Lowen, and members of the AGR and EEP committees:

Citizens' Climate Lobby - Hawaii strongly supports HB1621

CCL-Hawaii advocates for legislation that reduces carbon emissions and strengthens Hawai'i's energy independence while improving the health of our community.

HB1621 achieves these goals as it establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (CCMAC), which will lead to a healthier and more sustainable agricultural sector and improve the health of our economy and our environment by improving the ability of our soils to sequester carbon.

By consolidating various agricultural conservation programs under CCMAC, this policy removes administrative barriers for farmers to obtain financial incentives and technical assistance and improves statewide conservation efforts.

The key benefits of HB1621 are water regulation, higher crop yield, carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, biodiversity support, pollutant filtration, and erosion prevention.

To help Hawai'i make better use of its resources and better protect the environment as well as strengthen its economy, Citizens Climate Lobby - Hawai'i urges you to pass HB1621 out of your committees.

Sincerely,
Citizens' Climate Lobby Hawai'i

cclhawaii.org
hi.ccl.hawaii@gmail.org

Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots advocacy organization focused on national policies to address climate change solutions. CCL Hawaii's members are part of a 268,500+ global organization. For more information, visit citizensclimatelobby.org.



LATE

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

February 6, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

TESTIMONY ON HB 1621
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:00 AM

Aloha Chairs Chun and Lowen, Vice-Chairs Kusch and Perruso, 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 HB 1621, which establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program to assist farmers with the adoption of conservation practices that support long-term agricultural viability.

HFB supports efforts that promote soil health, conservation, and resilient farming practices. Many farmers already invest in soil health practices to manage costs, improve productivity, and sustain long-term farm operations. These approaches can provide benefits to agricultural productivity, resource stewardship, and farm sustainability when programs are designed with practical, on-the-ground implementation in mind.

As this measure moves forward, HFB encourages close coordination with existing agricultural agencies and partners to ensure that the program is accessible, easy to navigate, and responsive to the operational realities faced by farmers and ranchers. Clear communication, streamlined application processes, and effective technical assistance will be critical to ensuring that farmers can participate without unnecessary administrative burden.

HFB also encourages continued engagement with the agricultural community as program details are developed to ensure that incentives align with a wide range of farming operations, scales, and production systems across the State. A flexible, farmer-focused implementation approach will be essential to the program's success.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

LATE

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 7:19:32 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Chun and Lowen, Vice Chairs Kusch and Perruso, and honorable members of committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, as co chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i , we ask that you give your full support for HB1621. As an organic farm worker myself I understand the need to grow our food in healthy soils . Healthy soils provide many environmental ,economic , and health 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system. This again seems like a no brainer, OF COURSE WE WANT 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. Please support HB1621.

We are what we eat!

Mahalo

Susan RobertsEmery

Co Chair Green Party of Hawai'i

Paauilo

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:33:02 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committees on Agriculture & Food Systems and Energy & Environmental Protection,

I am writing in strong support of HB1621.

Healthy soils are essential to a strong and resilient food system. They support productive crops, strengthen Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, improve resilience to pests and climate impacts and reduce reliance on costly chemical inputs. Healthy soils also capture carbon and play an important role in mitigating climate change.

HB1621 would establish a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program to provide farmers with education, technical assistance, and financial incentives to adopt practices that improve soil health. These supports are critical to helping farmers transition to sustainable management practices that protect both their livelihoods and our environment.

Research over recent decades has shown the importance of soil biodiversity and microbial life in maintaining healthy soils and capturing carbon. After more than a century of industrial practices that have depleted soil health, we must move away from methods that rely on heavy pesticide and herbicide use and instead support farming practices that encourage beneficial insects, microbes, and soil biodiversity.

Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system and I respectfully urge you to support HB1621.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Molly Mamaril

Kaimukī, O‘ahu

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:09:54 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Waters	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Writing in strong support. Mahalo.

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:02:19 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Chun and Lowen and members of the AGR and EEP committees:

I support HB1621 because it will help improve the quality of the State's soils, a critically important resource for food production as well as carbon sequestration.

It's worth investing in our soils and in our farmers!

I urge you to pass HB1621 out of your committees.

Thank you,

Thomas Graham, Honolulu

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:09:25 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chairs Chun and Lowen, and members of the AGR and EEP committees:

I support HB1621 because this bill improves the health of our agricultural sector and our environment.

This bill establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (CCMAC).

By consolidating various agricultural conservation programs under CCMAC, this policy removes administrative barriers for farmers to obtain financial incentives and technical assistance and improves statewide conservation efforts.

The key benefits of HB1621 are water regulation, higher crop yield, carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, biodiversity support, pollutant filtration, and erosion prevention. To help Hawaii make better use of its resources and better protect the environment as well as strengthen its economy, I urge you to pass HB1621 out of your committees.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Carbon Cashback Hawai‘i Member

Hawai‘i Workers Center Board Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

Hawai‘i Tax Fairness Coalition

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:09:47 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya Aynessazian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committees on Agriculture & Food Systems and Energy & Environmental Protection,

I strongly support HB1621 because it addresses something fundamental to Hawai‘i’s future: healthy soil, healthy farms, and a healthy climate.

HB1621 helps Hawai‘i’s farmers—especially small and family-scale operations—get more productivity from their land while working *with* natural systems instead of against them. By establishing a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission, this bill streamlines access to financial incentives and technical support that farmers need but too often struggle to navigate.

Consolidating conservation agriculture programs under CCMAC reduces unnecessary administrative barriers and improves statewide coordination. That matters on the ground. When farmers can more easily access support, we see better outcomes across the board: improved water regulation, stronger soils, higher yields, better nutrient cycling, increased biodiversity, reduced erosion, and cleaner waterways.

This bill also directly supports Hawai‘i’s climate goals. Healthier soils sequester more carbon, reduce net emissions, and increase resilience to drought and extreme weather—while strengthening our local food system and rural economy.

HB1621 is a practical, common-sense investment in conservation, climate resilience, and agricultural sustainability. I urge you to pass this measure and move it forward.

Tanya Yamanaka Aynessazian

Hilo

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:13:55 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bobbie Best	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Too many benefits to the environment to enumerate

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:37:47 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Chun and Lowen, and members of the AGR and EEP committees:

I support HB1621 because this bill improves the health of our agricultural sector and our environment.

This bill establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (CCMAC).

By consolidating various agricultural conservation programs under CCMAC, this policy removes administrative barriers for farmers to obtain financial incentives and technical assistance and improves statewide conservation efforts.

The key benefits of HB1621 are water regulation, higher crop yield, carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, biodiversity support, pollutant filtration, and erosion prevention. To help Hawaii make better use of its resources and better protect the environment as well as strengthen its economy, I urge you to pass HB1621 out of your committees.

Mahalo!

Virginia Tincher

Honolulu

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:10:01 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gilbert Keith-Agaran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Cory M. Chun, Chair

Honorable Matthias Kusch, Vice-Chair

Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Honorable Nicole E. Lowen, Chair

Honorable Amy A. Perruso, Vice-Chair

Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection

To the Chairs, Vice-Chairs and members of the joint committee:

I support the Healthy Soils Bill because this measure will improve the health of our agricultural sector and our environment. This bill establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (CCMAC) and includes a modest amount of funding to establish CCMAC. By consolidating program administration under the CCMAC, an agency with strong land stewardship, planning, and climate expertise, this measure removes administrative barriers and improves statewide conservation efficiency.

Maintaining and sustaining healthy soil is one of Hawai‘i’s most important foundations for climate mitigation, watershed health, and agricultural resilience. As climate change accelerates soil degradation and stresses our watersheds, the need for stronger systems that support soil health and food security continues to grow. Supporting conservation agriculture strengthens ecosystem functions across the landscape and helps protect Hawai‘i’s natural resources.

It's an unfortunate historical reality that agricultural conservation programs have been and are currently fragmented, under-resourced and difficult to access, especially for small, newer farmers, and socially disadvantaged farmers who work some of our islands' more vulnerable lands. This bill addresses these gaps by providing financial incentives and technical assistance to support the adoption of proven conservation practices, while prioritizing equitable access across farming communities.

The key benefits of this bill are water regulation, higher crop yield, carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, biodiversity support, pollutant filtration, and erosion prevention.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran

Kahului, Maui, Hawaii

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:23:37 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Daleiden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Chun and Lowen, and members of the AGR and EEP committees:

I support HB1621 because this bill improves the health of our agricultural sector and our environment.

This bill establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (CCMAC).

By consolidating various agricultural conservation programs under CCMAC, this policy removes administrative barriers for farmers to obtain financial incentives and technical assistance and improves statewide conservation efforts.

The key benefits of HB1621 are water regulation, higher crop yield, carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, biodiversity support, pollutant filtration, and erosion prevention. To help Hawaii make better use of its resources and better protect the environment as well as strengthen its economy, I urge you to pass HB1621 out of your committees.

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:26:34 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

In support of. Thank you.

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:32:02 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Strong support!

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:35:08 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this bill

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:44:26 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB1621, which would establish a critical program to protect and regenerate Hawai‘i’s agricultural foundation: our soil.

Healthy soil is not just dirt; it is a living ecosystem and our most fundamental agricultural asset. It is the bedrock of local food security, farm profitability, and environmental resilience. HB1621 recognizes this by providing farmers with the education, technical assistance, and financial incentives needed to transition to management practices that build soil health.

The benefits of investing in soil are profound and multifaceted. Healthy soils:

- Increase crop resilience, reducing vulnerability to pests, drought, and extreme weather.
- Enhance water retention and reduce dependence on costly synthetic fertilizers and chemical inputs.
- Act as a powerful natural carbon sink, directly mitigating climate change by drawing atmospheric carbon underground.

For over a century, heavy industrial practices, including reliance on soil-sterilizing pesticides and herbicides, have depleted this vital resource, harming the microbial life and biodiversity that make soil function. Modern science now gives us a better path forward. We understand that fostering a rich ecosystem of beneficial insects and microbes is key to productive, sustainable agriculture.

This bill represents a necessary and forward-looking shift. It moves us from an outdated model of extraction to one of regeneration. By supporting our farmers in adopting practices like cover cropping, reduced tillage, and composting, we invest in the long-term viability of local agriculture, strengthen our food system against global shocks, and protect our natural environment.

HB1621 is a win for farmers, consumers, and the ‘āina. I urge you to pass this legislation and commit to building a future where Hawai‘i’s agriculture is not only productive but also restorative and resilient.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:53:30 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Chun and Lowen, and members of the AGR and EEP committees:

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1621 because this bill improves the health of our agricultural sector and our environment.

This bill establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (CCMAC).

By consolidating various agricultural conservation programs under CCMAC, this policy removes administrative barriers for farmers to obtain financial incentives and technical assistance and improves statewide conservation efforts.

The key benefits of HB1621 are water regulation, higher crop yield, carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, biodiversity support, pollutant filtration, and erosion prevention. To help Hawai'i make the best of its resources, protect the environment, and strengthen our economy, I respectfully urge you to pass HB1621 out of your committees.

Mahalo!

David Murray, Kaneohe

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:09:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beryl Blaich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Representatives,

Pesticides containing Telone II (1,3 -Dichloropropene) have no place in Hawai'i. Our isolated island ecology, including vulnerable water sources and windy weather, require vigilant, responsible protection.

Thank you.

Beryl Blaich, Kīlauea, HI 96754

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:14:37 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
randy wolfshagen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha - I want to ask you to support your constituents by helping make HB1621 (The Healthy Soils Program) become law - ASAP !

Are you aware that soil used to contain over 70% of the earth's CO2?

Since we've ruined our soils we have climate warming due to this gas (and others such as methane.) Unless we recreate the healthy soil again, no amount of shuttering of power plants and gas powered autos will make a dent in the warming trend due to CO2.

This is an easy AYE for you. Let's heal the land and do the pono thing - let's take back our farms from BigAg and industrialized crops and make the earth healthy again - and create the foods we need locally.

Thanks for supporting your constituents who live here - Randy Mirka and Pueo Wolfshagen

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:19:27 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laila Moire-Selvage	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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. Please support HB1621.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Laila Moire-Selvage, Mountain View, HI 96771

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:42:11 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

Please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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Mahalo for your consideration!

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:42:26 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Hagan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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

Doug Hagan

Paia HI

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:51:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:11:39 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mariana Monasi	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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!

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:22:49 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Hagan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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. Please support HB1621.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Erin Hagan

Waialua



Restore the Commons

Friday, February 6, 2026, 9:00 am

House Committees on Agriculture and Food Systems and on Energy and Environmental Protection
HOUSE BILL 1621 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Position: Strong Support

Me ke Aloha, Chairs Chun and Lowen, Vice Chairs Kusch and Perruso, and Members of the Committees on Agriculture and Food Systems and on Energy and Environmental Protection

HB1621 establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission.

Extractive agriculture is a primary source of carbon emissions to the atmosphere and to land degradation and non-point source toxic runoff. To counter that, soil health programs can nurture and protect microbes that contribute to plant fertility and nutrition.

The bill establishes detailed program elements, demonstrating knowledge of the breadth of activities to be guided by the new functionality, including the preparation of administrative rules.

These include, for example, systemic agroecological transitions rather than input substitution; long-term maintenance and knowledge transfer of farming practices that promote agricultural conservation and soil health; projects that incorporate traditional Native Hawaiian ecological knowledge and ecocultural restoration; projects that generate co-benefits including jobs, food security, water security, biodiversity gains, and invasive species management; providing technical assistance to program participants; coordinating with the University of Hawaii and relevant federal agencies to **evaluate program outcomes**; prioritize financial and technical assistance for agricultural projects for small farm beginning farmers, Native Hawaiian farmers, and socially disadvantaged farmers.

Management practices include cover cropping; crop rotation and diversification; organic matter amendments, including compost, biochar, and local inputs; rotational grazing systems, efficient nutrient and water management; integrated pest management; conservation tillage; and traditional Native Hawaiian agricultural practices, including lo'i kalo restoration; reforestation and agroforestry systems, including windbreaks, living barriers, silviculture, and silvipasture; traditional Native Hawaiian farming restoration; invasive species control and ecosystem restoration; organic waste management and composting infrastructure; water conservation systems; and soil and water conservation structures.

For our islands, so dependent on importing extractively produced foods, such a program is an important rung on the ladder to greater food security and the reduction of runoff deleterious to nearshore fisheries.

Mahalo for the opportunity to address this issue,

/s/ Charley Ice, Hoa'āina, Waimalu, O'ahu;

retired Hydrologist, Commission on Water Resource Management (25 years) and Planner at DHHL (10 years);

former Chair of O'ahu Democratic Party Region 5 ('Aiea-Pearl City);

**Building the new normal with People and Land: Food Security Health Care Public Banking
Regenerating Soils Cutting Waste Eliminating GHG emissions**

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:33:48 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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. Please support HB1621.

Mahalo for your consideration!

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:54:49 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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Mahalo for your consideration!

kimdonghyeon

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:49:00 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kamalani Brun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of HB1621 Relating to Agriculture as a participant of a Hawaii State Soil Health Incentive Program. These programs align with the priorities of Hawaii and its people and I hope to see them continue in the future. Mahalo for your time.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Kamalani Brun

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:03:28 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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. Please support HB1621.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Natalie Norberg , Pukalani Maui

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 6:43:31 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Dorsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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Thank you

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:14:15 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Chun and Lowen, and members of the AGR and EEP committees:

I support HB1621 because this bill improves the health of our agricultural sector and our environment.

This bill establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (CCMAC).

By consolidating various agricultural conservation programs under CCMAC, this policy removes administrative barriers for farmers to obtain financial incentives and technical assistance and improves statewide conservation efforts.

The key benefits of HB1621 are water regulation, higher crop yield, carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, biodiversity support, pollutant filtration, and erosion prevention. To help Hawaii make better use of its resources and better protect the environment as well as strengthen its economy, I urge you to pass HB1621 out of your committees.

Mahalo!

Benjamin Narwold, Kapaa, Hawaii

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:17:44 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

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HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:59:29 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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. Please support HB1621.

Mahalo for your consideration!

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:18:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Weitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1621.

We are what we eat. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system, which is the foundation for healthy people. I want to avoid food that comes from poisoned soil, and always consume nutritious food that comes from healthy soil, so I can be healthy, feel good, and accomplish plenty in life.

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.

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.

Mahalo,

Elizabeth Weitz, Honolulu

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:28:52 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jaymen Laupola	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Chun and Lowen, and members of the AGR and EEP committees:

I support HB1621 because this bill improves the health of our agricultural sector and our environment.

This bill establishes a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (CCMAC).

By consolidating various agricultural conservation programs under CCMAC, this policy removes administrative barriers for farmers to obtain financial incentives and technical assistance and improves statewide conservation efforts.

The key benefits of HB1621 are water regulation, higher crop yield, carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, biodiversity support, pollutant filtration, and erosion prevention. To help Hawaii make better use of its resources and better protect the environment as well as strengthen its economy, I urge you to pass HB1621 out of your committees.

Mahalo!

Jaymen Laupola, Honolulu

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:16:15 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelsey Mapa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because we need healthy soils to grow our food and make us more climate change resilient. Thank you for supporting the Healthy Soils Program!

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 12:31:25 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Fern Anuenue Holland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1621

Healthy Soils Program

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

Healthy soils are the foundation of a resilient and productive food system. Decades of scientific research show that soils rich in organic matter and microbial life improve crop yields, retain water more effectively, reduce erosion, suppress pests naturally, and decrease dependence on costly chemical inputs. Healthy soils also play a critical role in climate change mitigation by capturing and storing carbon, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and increasing farm resilience to drought, flooding, and extreme weather.

In recent decades, our understanding of soil biology has expanded dramatically. We now know that healthy soils are living systems, supported by complex communities of bacteria, fungi, insects, and other organisms that cycle nutrients, build soil structure, and protect plants from disease. Practices that support soil biodiversity, such as cover cropping, reduced tillage, compost application, and diversified cropping systems, consistently show improved farm productivity and long-term economic benefits.

Conversely, more than a century of heavy industrial agricultural practices, including the routine use of pesticides, herbicides, and soil-sterilizing inputs, has depleted soil health across many landscapes in Hawai‘i. These practices disrupt microbial communities, degrade soil structure, increase erosion, and lock farmers into cycles of increasing chemical dependency and rising costs. Continuing down this path is neither economically nor environmentally sustainable.

HB1621 recognizes that farmers need support to transition toward healthier soil practices. Education, technical assistance, and financial incentives are essential to help farmers adopt regenerative and soil-building management practices that improve yields while reducing input costs over time. These investments not only benefit farmers, but also protect water quality, strengthen food security, and support Hawai‘i’s climate goals.

HB1621 is a forward-looking investment in Hawai‘i’s agricultural resilience, environmental health, and economic stability. By supporting living soils, we support farmers, communities, and future generations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB1621.

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 6:23:20 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cherie Schwartz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Without good soul there is no future for anyone.

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 7:55:59 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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. Please support HB1621.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Malia Chun, Kekaha, Kaua'i

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:19:15 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amber Johannson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a maui resident living close to farmlands, I am writing to urge you to please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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!

Amber Johannson, Makawao

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:22:29 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Simonds	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1621. The practices described are a wide variety of current agricultural best practices that support healthy and diverse ecosystems into perpetuity. However, many of these practices face high up-front costs or genuine short-term economic disadvantages. When markets operate inefficiently because costs can be externalized spatially or temporally, it is the role of the government to step in and offer incentives or create guardrails to correct the outcomes. In this case, the costs when CO2 is released from soils are externalized and shared by all of us. The costs associated with degraded soils are borne by future generations. The costs of cultural repression and knowledge loss are even harder to quantify. When the producer of a good does not pay all the costs to produce said good, in this case a crop, the market finds an unreasonably low price and incentivizes that production practice. We need to correct this balance in agriculture, and this bill provides a starting point to do so.

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:28:09 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emilie Parry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 1621

It is urgent that the Hawaiian legislature support local farms and strengthen food systems in a manner that increases carbon sequestration (mitigates global post-Industrial temperature rise) and whole-systems climate resilience, and can link into effective emergency planning and disaster risk management.

I myself hold decades of experience within community food systems and emergency response, recovery, and disaster risk reduction. In my own research through the University of Oxford and Oxfam America, and the research of many other professionals within the humanitarian and food systems spaces, a smaller upfront investment in local food systems and community networked capacities saves an enormous amount of money when compared to the costs of emergency response and recovery that has not invested and coordinated with community-based disaster risk management and Emergency Response Systems. Here in Hawai'i, we are a disaster away from severe vulnerability and expensive (and life-costing) loss and damage that would follow. It is imperative to invest now in the local small farmer capacities (most of Hawai'i's farmers are small farmers) through climate-adaptive and ecologically regenerative strategies.

This bill drew from the Carbon Smart Land Management pilot that included the essential carbon soil and climate-health / resilience soil testing with 9-point key soil & climate health indicators-- from agroforestry with alleycropping, wind breaks, and Hawaiian traditional practices for food systems management, increased ground cover and other sequestration and soil health strategies.

- The need and interest by farmers for this kind of support is massive and clear;
- Soil health and Carbon sequestration methodologies and measures appropriate for the cultures, ecologies and conditions of Hawai'i are sorely needed, and this proposed program will go far to deepening and expanding the knowledge;
- Our import-based food systems are extremely vulnerable to severe complex emergencies

and climate shocks / disruption of supply chains, and this program takes another step towards strengthening and supporting local food systems, which is also another step towards mitigating risk and loss and damage to the islands.

Thank you for your time and serious consideration of this bill. Sincerely, Emilie Parry

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:35:55 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Chun and Lowen, and members of the AGR and EEP committees:

I support HB1621.

The key benefits of HB1621 are:

- 1- water regulation,
- 2- higher crop yield,
- 3- carbon sequestration,
- 4- nutrient cycling,
- 5- biodiversity support,
- 6- pollutant filtration,
- 7- and erosion prevention.

To help Hawaii make better use of its resources and better protect the environment as well as strengthen its economy, I urge you to pass HB1621 out of your committees.

Ron Reilly, Volcano Village, Hawaii

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:38:52 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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. Please support HB1621.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Leo Nahe, Nu‘uanu

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:48:26 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pat gegen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support sustainable agriculture and healthy soils.

LATE

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:05:06 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Barker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chairs Chun & Lowen, Members of committees,

Please support [HB1621](#). which establishes and funds a Conservation Agriculture and Soil Health Incentive Program within the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission.

By consolidating various agricultural conservation programs under CCMAC, this policy removes administrative barriers for farmers to obtain financial incentives and technical assistance and improves statewide conservation efforts.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

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LATE

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:11:38 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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Mahalo for your consideration!

LATE

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 10:16:42 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Hansen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha: we must support our farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that will contribute to healthy soil. Please support HB 1621. Mahalo.

Elizabeth Hansen,

Hakalau HI 96710

LATE

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 11:40:35 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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Mahalo for your consideration!

Jennifer Cole. Anahola

LATE

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 2:51:59 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raquel Ilima Dillender	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support bill SB 2110 in implementing the conservation agriculture and soil health incentive program.

Farmers play a key role in our society by providing food for our growing population. In order to produce large harvests many farmers use things like pesticides and fertilizers to ensure crop growth. This can degrade the soil, contaminate groundwater, and reduce organic matter in the soil. While there are more sustainable alternatives to these farming practices, they're usually much more expensive which makes it unrealistic for the farmers to implement.

This bill would provide financial assistance for small farmers which would help them be able to minimize the harm done to both their farm's soil and the surrounding environment around the farm. This is beneficial for everyone since the farmer would be able to produce more crops.

Support SB 2110.

LATE

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 5:29:55 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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Mahalo for your consideration!

Andrew Isoda
Lahaina, Mau'i

LATE

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:50:14 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maile Risch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1621. 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. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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Mahalo for your consideration!

Maile Risch, Pukalani

LATE

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 10:29:58 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1621. Healthy soils provide many environmental and economic benefits, by supporting healthy crops and a productive ag sector, making plants more pest and climate impact resilient and less dependent on costly inputs. Healthy soils are the foundation of a healthy food system.

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Mahalo for your consideration,

Kathy Shimata

LATE

HB-1621

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 7:07:35 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Joell Edwards, and I live and work in Wainiha, a rural taro-farming community. I also own a small local market that supports our farmers and serves local families.

Please support HB1621. Healthy soils are the foundation of healthy crops and a strong local food system. Our farmers need living, healthy soils to grow food for our community, and our residents deserve food grown in a way that protects our land and future.

Investing in education, technical assistance, and incentives for healthy soil practices supports farmers, strengthens local agriculture, and builds resilience for generations to come.

Mahalo for your consideration.