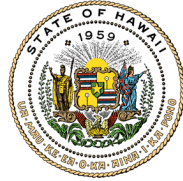


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

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

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**MARCH 23, 2026
3:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1953, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1953, House Draft 1. This bill establishes the Conservation and Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Pilot Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department). Appropriates funds and requires a report to the Legislature. The Department supports this bill.

Federal conservation programs are at times not a good fit for Hawaii's smaller producers due to tropical weather conditions, island soil conditions, mixed land use tenure agreements, local growing techniques and cultural stewardship models. Having a Hawaii focused statewide coordinated system that provides conservation training, cost-share or implementation assistance and infrastructure development will allow for environmental stewardship, improved soil and water health, and carbon emissions reduction.

The Department would recommend that a longer timeline be provided for program development due to the statewide comprehensive nature of the program and respectfully requests that a position be provided to properly oversee implementation of the proposed program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

March 23, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON HB 1953, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
3:00 PM

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

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 1953, HD1, which establishes a Conservation and Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Pilot Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers operate in diverse tropical environments that require locally adapted conservation practices. A voluntary, incentive-based program that supports soil health, water conservation, erosion control, composting, and other stewardship practices can strengthen long-term agricultural productivity while protecting natural resources.

By providing training opportunities, cost-share support, and infrastructure funding, this pilot program offers practical tools to help producers implement conservation practices that improve resilience and sustainability. Investments in soil health and water management directly contribute to the long-term viability of Hawai'i agriculture.

HFB appreciates that this measure establishes a pilot program with reporting requirements, allowing the Legislature to evaluate outcomes and refine the program before broader expansion.

Mahalo for your consideration and for supporting Hawai'i's agricultural community.



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

HB1953 HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

March 23, 2026, 3:00 PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB1953 HD1** which establishes the Conservation and Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Pilot Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

Well-managed cattle can contribute to increased soil health, in turn improving water retention and carbon sequestration. This program provides 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. While we appreciate the federal funding program that provide these services, we have found that they are tailored to continental practices and costs. A state run program would be beneficial to Hawaii's producers. We have many who have shovel ready projects, but could utilize funding and technical support to get the job done.

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



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President



Christian Zuckerman
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents

Kelii Gannet
Kohala, Hawaii

East Hawaii

Puna, Hawaii

Ka'u, Hawaii

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawaii

Gina Lind
Hana, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahalawai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Moloka'i

Negus Manna
Lana'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Rachel LaDrig
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports HB1953.**

HB1953 establishes the Conservation and Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Pilot Program to subsidize good land management practices in Hawaii. This program will be instrumental in promoting methods that enhance soil health, improve water management, and support biodiversity, all of which are key to the long-term viability of our agricultural industry. By allocating resources and funding to this program, the state acknowledges the importance of integrating environmental stewardship into agricultural operations, which will benefit not only the farmers but also the broader community through improved environmental health and food security.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



Date of Hearing: 23 March, 2026

To: Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Subject: **HB1953 HD1**, Relating to Agriculture

Aloha,

Hawai'i Food+ Policy is writing in **support of HB1953 HD1**, which seeks to establish a Conservation and Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Pilot Program. This measure is a step toward securing our state's long-term food security, climate resilience, and environmental health, by providing the necessary resources to farmers and land stewards to adopt regenerative and climate-smart practices.

We appreciate that this bill encompasses not only commercial farmers and ranchers but also cooperatives, community-based projects, and 'āina restoration organizations. This ensures that our efforts are culturally grounded and reflective of Hawai'i's agroecosystems. The professional development opportunities through the program are strong assets for farmers. By providing stipends and workshops, this bill ensures that farmers have the knowledge and capacity to implement sustainable practices.

This program seeks to provide funding for infrastructure that is often the primary barrier to adopting regenerative practices. Within the amendments, the bill's proposed appropriation of \$3,000,000 was removed and we want to mention this as this committee deliberates a potentially appropriate amount of funding for the pilot program. This appropriation may set the basis for future amounts allocated under session laws as the program has also been amended to be removed from statutory funding. Throughout the duration of the program however, this pilot may prove to be a valuable investment in the health of our soil and water, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and the overall resilience of our local food system and we seek to ensure an adequate amount of funding is designated for these initial efforts as future appropriations may be adjusted based on efficacy from this pilot.

We urge the committee to explicitly comment on an appropriate appropriation amount for HB1953 HD1 and we support the intention of this bill to empower our local producers and protect our working landscapes for future generations.

Mahalo,

Brandon Kinard & the Food+ Policy Team

#fixourfoodsystem

[1] *Local food production and consumption*. Aloha Challenge. (n.d.).
<https://alohachallenge.hawaii.gov/pages/local-food-production-and-consumption>

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

In 2026, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 1:17:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
laurel brier	Testifying for Kauai Women's Caucus	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Regenerative agriculture is key to addressing our climate crisis with an immediate and positive impact on agricultural workers and consumers



Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: HB1953 HD1

Monday, March 23rd, 2026 3:00 p.m. Conference Room 224

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

HAPA supports HB1953 HD1 which establishes a two-year Conservation and Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Pilot Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. Currently, conservation and agricultural stewards have limited access to technical and financial assistance for investments in conservation infrastructure.

This measure proposes to provide farmers and land stewards with capacity to invest in the infrastructure to adopt practices that support soil health, regenerative agriculture, and climate-smart stewardship. 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 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. HB1953 HD1 provides critical support for farmers and land stewards 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 HB1953 HD1 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 and water as vital resources for a productive food system. HB1953 HD1 is therefore not just important for our local food production agricultural sector but is good for our local environment.

Please support HB1953 HD1 and conservation practices for Hawai'i.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 4:36:55 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee members:

As a long-time and full time organic farm operator, I hereby request that you support this important piece of legislation.

Many thanks,

Colehour Bondera

KANALANI OHANA FARM

Honaunau, HI 96726



PO Box 4, Kunia, Hawaii, 96759 || 808-622-9026 || www.agstewardshiphawaii.org

March 23, 2026

Aloha e Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Agriculture and Environment Committee,

Re: Testimony in Strong Support for HB1953 HD1 Relating to Agriculture

Please accept this letter in support of HB1953 HD1 Relating to Agriculture, which creates a Conservation and Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Pilot Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, provides funding for the program, requires a report to the Legislature, and sunsets the program on June 30, 2028.

Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the viability and sustainability of Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers through technical assistance, resource coordination, business education, and policy support. We have **25 years of experience** supporting conservation agriculture and stewardship on Hawai'i's working lands.

HB1953 establishes an **Agriculture and Conservation Stewardship Pilot Program** to provide coordinated training, technical assistance, cost-share, and small-scale infrastructure support for farmers, ranchers, and land stewards across Hawai'i. The bill responds to long-standing gaps in conservation agriculture support, particularly for Hawai'i's small, diversified farms and culturally grounded 'āina-based stewardship practices that are not well served by existing federal programs.

Hawai'i's agricultural producers face increasing pressures from climate change, soil degradation, water constraints, and rising input costs, amongst others. **We are seeing these play out in real time with the impacts of the Kona low. Soil erosion, invasive species, waterway impairments and other climate-related issues have been critical factors in this storm's devastation. Programs like this and others proposed this session can give farmers and ranchers the chance to rebuild and fortify their operations.**

Mahalo for your leadership and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amanda Shaw'.

Dr. Amanda Shaw, PhD, Statewide Food Systems Coordinator
Email: amanda@agstewardshiphawaii.org,
Tel: 808 429 5310



CLIMATE FUTURE FORUM

To: Senator Gabbard, Chair
Senator Richards, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on AEN

Hearing: 03/23/2026, 3:00pm

From: Climate Future Forum

Re: **STRONG SUPPORT for HB1953 HD1**

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

The Hawai'i Climate Future Forum is a youth-led organization that helps young people engage directly in climate policy. We research legislation, track bills, submit testimony, and organize community spaces where students can learn how to participate in the legislative process. I am Vivienne Hill, a student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I am testifying on behalf of the Hawai'i Climate Future Forum's Regenerative Food Systems working group in **strong support of HB 1953 HD1**.

HB 1953 creates a two-year Conservation and Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Pilot Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. It would provide training stipends, cost-share assistance, and funding for conservation infrastructure so farmers and community-based groups can implement practices that improve soil health and management infrastructure. Hawai'i's agriculture is mostly made up of small, diversified farms, not mainland operations. A lot of farmers struggle to access conservation programs that were built around large-scale farming systems that look very different from ours. This pilot program helps support the communities growing food here.

As young people who will inherit this food system, we have a real stake in whether our local farms survive. Our future depends on whether the people growing food now have the tools to keep doing

this integral work. This bill reflects Hawai'i's responsibility to protect our 'āina and strengthen local agriculture.

We respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB 1953 so that farmers have the support needed to build climate resiliency and strong food systems across the state - for the present, and the generations to come.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Vivienne Hill
Student | Youth Policy Leader, Regenerative Food Systems
Hawai'i Climate Future Forum

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 11:28:22 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dennis O'Shea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Common sense (and our survival) dictates that we should support this bill and you should pass it.

Mahalo

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 11:34:46 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Annie Liu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha AEN committee,

I write in strong support of the Conservation and Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Pilot Program. This program is an investment in our farmers and agricultural land, and will provide long-term benefits in sustainably produced food for Hawai'i's communities. There is a strong interest in adopting regenerative practices, and farmers need the support to fund additional infrastructure and labor that sustainable agricultural practices require.

Mahalo for the consideration,

Annie

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 11:41:21 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support HB1953 HD1. Ensuring the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s environments is crucial to restorative ‘āina work and maintenance of spaces from mauka to makai. As invasive species are introduced, extractive cultivation practices are implemented, and challenges in protecting our public environmental spaces arise, we need to look towards solutions.

Farmers and land stewards could benefit from a regular program which provides the financial backing and technical assistance to better address the litany of challenges they encounter in day-to-day work. Workshops and stipends are an effective mechanism to offer support in exchange for these individuals agreeing to attend and complete training and workshops.

Cost-sharing programs are also an effective strategy as farmers and land stewards work to implement conservation practices proven to improve the environment with such practices including cover cropping, soil amendments, erosion control, nutrient management, composting, and other beneficial practices.

The pilot program will help those entrusted with caring for our ‘āina resources develop plans, participate in training, receive funds, and improve the infrastructure we have to improve conservation practices and safeguard those environmental, social, and cultural spaces we value as a community.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Shay Chan Hodges, Haiku, Maui

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 11:34:46 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
fred hofer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Why Is This Important? Sample Testimony:

Please support HB1953 HD1. Ensuring the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s environments is crucial to restorative ‘āina work and maintenance of spaces from mauka to makai. As invasive species are introduced, extractive cultivation practices are implemented, and challenges in protecting our public environmental spaces arise, we need to look towards solutions.

Farmers and land stewards could benefit from a regular program which provides the financial backing and technical assistance to better address the litany of challenges they encounter in day-to-day work. Workshops and stipends are an effective mechanism to offer support in exchange for these individuals agreeing to attend and complete training and workshops.

Cost-sharing programs are also an effective strategy as farmers and land stewards work to implement conservation practices proven to improve the environment with such practices including cover cropping, soil amendments, erosion control, nutrient management, composting, and other beneficial practices.

The pilot program will help those entrusted with caring for our 'āina resources develop plans, participate in training, receive funds, and improve the infrastructure we have to improve conservation practices and safeguard those environmental, social, and cultural spaces we value as a community.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Fred Hofer

Hilo 96720

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 12:17:47 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Nihipali	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1953 HD1. Ensuring the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s environments is crucial to restorative ‘āina work and maintenance of spaces from mauka to makai. As invasive species are introduced, extractive cultivation practices are implemented, and challenges in protecting our public environmental spaces arise, we need to look towards solutions.

Farmers and land stewards could benefit from a regular program which provides the financial backing and technical assistance to better address the litany of challenges they encounter in day-to-day work. Workshops and stipends are an effective mechanism to offer support in exchange for these individuals agreeing to attend and complete training and workshops.

Cost-sharing programs are also an effective strategy as farmers and land stewards work to implement conservation practices proven to improve the environment with such practices including cover cropping, soil amendments, erosion control, nutrient management, composting, and other beneficial practices.

The pilot program will help those entrusted with caring for our ‘āina resources develop plans, participate in training, receive funds, and improve the infrastructure we have to improve conservation practices and safeguard those environmental, social, and cultural spaces we value as a community.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 12:06:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha! If these last storms show us anything it is that we urgently need support funding a more regenerative and resilient food system for Hawaii. Lets support food sovereignty on our island and restore watershed health. I am on ag land and could use small grants to provide more food for community ! Farmers and land stewards could benefit from a regular program which provides the financial backing and technical assistance to better address the litany of challenges they encounter in day-to-day work. Workshops and stipends are an effective mechanism to offer support in exchange for these individuals agreeing to attend and complete training and workshops. THANK YOU! MAHALO NUI

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 1:17:55 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support this bill, ensuring the health and safety of Hawaii's environments is crucial to restorative 'aina work and maintenance of spaces from mauka to makai. I have a friend who has an organic farm in Waialua, so I am somewhat aware.

Thank you.

Elizabeth Nelson

Kaneohe

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 12:55:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support HB1953 HD1. Ensuring the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s environments is crucial to restorative ‘āina work and maintenance of spaces from mauka to makai. As invasive species are introduced, extractive cultivation practices are implemented, and challenges in protecting our public environmental spaces arise, we need to look towards solutions.

Farmers and land stewards could benefit from a regular program which provides the financial backing and technical assistance to better address the litany of challenges they encounter in day-to-day work. Workshops and stipends are an effective mechanism to offer support in exchange for these individuals agreeing to attend and complete training and workshops.

Cost-sharing programs are also an effective strategy as farmers and land stewards work to implement conservation practices proven to improve the environment with such practices including cover cropping, soil amendments, erosion control, nutrient management, composting, and other beneficial practices.

The pilot program will help those entrusted with caring for our ‘āina resources develop plans, participate in training, receive funds, and improve the infrastructure we have to improve conservation practices and safeguard those environmental, social, and cultural spaces we value as a community.

Mahalo for your consideration!
Troy Schacht, Kapaa

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I support HB1953 HD1. Farmers and land stewards could benefit from a regular program which provides the financial backing and technical assistance to better address the litany of challenges they encounter in day-to-day work. Workshops and stipends are an effective mechanism to offer support in exchange for these individuals agreeing to attend and complete training and workshops.

Cost-sharing programs are also an effective strategy as farmers and land stewards work to implement conservation practices proven to improve the environment with such practices including cover cropping, soil amendments, erosion control, nutrient management, composting, and other beneficial practices.

The pilot program will help those entrusted with caring for our 'āina resources develop plans, participate in training, receive funds, and improve the infrastructure we must improve conservation practices and safeguard those environmental, social, and cultural spaces we value as a community.

Please pass this bill. Mahalo for your consideration!

Helen Cox, Kalaheo

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 1:47:59 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judith White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please help protect our agricultural economy.

Judith White, Kapaa

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 2:50:26 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Breon Michel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1953 HD1. Ensuring the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s environments is crucial to restorative ‘āina work and maintenance of spaces from mauka to makai. As invasive species are introduced, extractive cultivation practices are implemented, and challenges in protecting our public environmental spaces arise, we need to look towards solutions.

Farmers and land stewards could benefit from a regular program which provides the financial backing and technical assistance to better address the litany of challenges they encounter in day-to-day work. Workshops and stipends are an effective mechanism to offer support in exchange for these individuals agreeing to attend and complete training and workshops.

Cost-sharing programs are also an effective strategy as farmers and land stewards work to implement conservation practices proven to improve the environment with such practices including cover cropping, soil amendments, erosion control, nutrient management, composting, and other beneficial practices.

The pilot program will help those entrusted with caring for our ‘āina resources develop plans, participate in training, receive funds, and improve the infrastructure we have to improve conservation practices and safeguard those environmental, social, and cultural spaces we value as a community.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Breon Michel, Kula, HI

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 4:22:04 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support HB1953 HD1. Ensuring the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s environments is crucial to restorative ‘āina work and maintenance of spaces from mauka to makai. As invasive species are introduced, extractive cultivation practices are implemented, and challenges in protecting our public environmental spaces arise, we need to look towards solutions.

Farmers and land stewards could benefit from a regular program which provides the financial backing and technical assistance to better address the litany of challenges they encounter in day-to-day work. Workshops and stipends are an effective mechanism to offer support in exchange for these individuals agreeing to attend and complete training and workshops.

Cost-sharing programs are also an effective strategy as farmers and land stewards work to implement conservation practices proven to improve the environment with such practices including cover cropping, soil amendments, erosion control, nutrient management, composting, and other beneficial practices.

The pilot program will help those entrusted with caring for our ‘āina resources develop plans, participate in training, receive funds, and improve the infrastructure we have to improve conservation practices and safeguard those environmental, social, and cultural spaces we value as a community.

Mahalo for your consideration!

kimdonghyeon



Restore the Commons

Monday, March 23, 2026, 3:00 pm

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

HOUSE BILLS 1953, 2246, 2548, & 2549 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Position: Support

Me ke Aloha, Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

These four bills raise some confusion over which agencies should be handling such matters. It is not clear where primary responsibility or capacity lie. With programs being spread between agencies, clarity fades and funds compete. Confidence cannot be sacrificed to confusion.

To be clear, the bills provide essential solutions to long-pressing and oft-neglected issues, and their purposes are much needed by a deserving public faced with more problems than solutions. It is the hope here that funding will be thoughtful but generous, in the desire to make real progress and to avoid conflict. These are high priority matters for the general public and should be treated with the earnestness they require.

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 OEQC Executive Secretary; House legislative staffer; and intern at DoH and DPED. former Chair of O'ahu Democratic Party Region 5 ('Aiea-Pearl City);

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 8:03:08 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support HB1953 HD1. Ensuring the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s environments is crucial to restorative ‘āina work and maintenance of spaces from mauka to makai. As invasive species are introduced, extractive cultivation practices are implemented, and challenges in protecting our public environmental spaces arise, we need to look towards solutions.

Farmers and land stewards could benefit from a regular program which provides the financial backing and technical assistance to better address the litany of challenges they encounter in day-to-day work. Workshops and stipends are an effective mechanism to offer support in exchange for these individuals agreeing to attend and complete training and workshops.

Cost-sharing programs are also an effective strategy as farmers and land stewards work to implement conservation practices proven to improve the environment with such practices including cover cropping, soil amendments, erosion control, nutrient management, composting, and other beneficial practices.

The pilot program will help those entrusted with caring for our ‘āina resources develop plans, participate in training, receive funds, and improve the infrastructure we have to improve conservation practices and safeguard those environmental, social, and cultural spaces we value as a community.

Mahalo for your consideration!

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 8:08:46 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members.

Please support HB1953 HD1. Ensuring the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s environments is crucial to restorative ‘āina work and maintenance of spaces from mauka to makai. As invasive species are introduced, extractive cultivation practices are implemented, and challenges in protecting our public environmental spaces arise, we need to look towards solutions.

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Mahalo for your consideration!

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 6:54:53 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:15:33 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I urge you to support HB1953 HD1. Ensuring the health and safety of Hawai'i's environments is crucial to restorative 'āina work and maintenance of spaces from mauka to makai. As invasive species are introduced, extractive cultivation practices are implemented, and challenges in protecting our public environmental spaces arise, we need to look towards solutions.

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Thank you

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 11:03:06 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 10:49:10 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support HB1953 HD1. Ensuring the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s environments is crucial to restorative ‘āina work and maintenance of spaces from mauka to makai. As invasive species are introduced, extractive cultivation practices are implemented, and challenges in protecting our public environmental spaces arise, we need to look towards solutions.

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Mahalo for your consideration!

Andrew Isoda
Lahaina, Mau‘i

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 1:01:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine L. Andrews, J.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo nui for your support of this measure.

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 2:06:16 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of HB1953 because I believe it is important for us as an island home to invest in biosecurity. Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 6:17:22 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Honorable Members,

I am writing to ask that you support HB1953 HD1 which establishes a two year Conservation & Agriculture Environmental Stewardshio Pilot Program within the Department of Agriculture & Biodiversity.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, Hi.

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 11:16:17 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1953 HD1.

Gregory Misakian

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:31:42 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support HB1953 HD1. Ensuring the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s environments is crucial to restorative ‘āina work and maintenance of spaces from mauka to makai. As invasive species are introduced, extractive cultivation practices are implemented, and challenges in protecting our public environmental spaces arise, we need to look towards solutions.

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Mahalo for your consideration!

Leo Nahe, Nu‘uanu

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 11:25:15 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Environment,

My name is Jackie Keefe, and I am **in strong support of HB1953 HD1**, which establishes a two-year Conservation and Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Pilot Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

Ensuring the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s environments is crucial to restorative ‘āina work and maintenance of spaces from mauka to makai. As invasive species are introduced, extractive cultivation practices are implemented, and challenges in protecting our public environmental spaces arise, we need to look towards solutions.

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Please support HB 1953 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 11:56:39 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support HB1953 HD1. Ensuring the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s environments is crucial to restorative ‘āina work and maintenance of spaces from mauka to makai. As invasive species are introduced, extractive cultivation practices are implemented, and challenges in protecting our public environmental spaces arise, we need to look towards solutions.

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Mahalo for your consideration!

HB-1953-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:22:15 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/23/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

support.

Mahalo,

Ann V Saffery

Honolulu, HI