

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



WENDY GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
HUI HO'OULU AINA MAHIAI

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

February 19, 2026
9:00 a.m.

Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

HOUSE BILL NO. 2585, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

Chairperson Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **with comments on SB2585, HD1.**

We support the intent of SB2585, HD1, to expand and clarify the role of agricultural tourism as a legitimate component of Hawai'i's agricultural economy. When properly structured, agricultural tourism can provide farmers and ranchers with diversified revenue streams that help stabilize operations, offset infrastructure and compliance costs, educate the public, and create pathways for export-oriented agricultural products.

I. Agricultural Tourism as a Revenue Diversification Tool

Agricultural tourism can serve as an important supplemental income source for agricultural operations. Revenue generated through farm tours, educational experiences, and direct-to-consumer activities can:

- Help offset high infrastructure costs such as irrigation systems, fencing, roads, and processing facilities.

- Support reinvestment into agricultural production; and
- Improve long-term financial sustainability for farmers and ranchers facing volatile input and commodity markets.

For many operations, agricultural tourism is not a replacement for farming, it is a tool that allows farming to continue.

II. Export and Market Development Opportunities

Agricultural tourism also supports Hawai'i's export potential by:

- Introducing visitors to Hawai'i-grown products and local brands.
- Creating demand for value-added agricultural goods; and
- Strengthening linkages between on-farm production, processing, and off-island markets.

These activities help grow Hawai'i's agricultural reputation beyond raw commodities and into branded, value-added exports.

III. Education and Public Awareness

Agricultural tourism plays a key role in educating residents and visitors about:

- Where food comes from.
- The realities of farming and ranching in Hawai'i; and
- The importance of preserving agricultural lands and water systems.

These experiences build public support for agriculture while strengthening the connection between consumers and producers.

IV. Need for Farmer and Rancher Input

We strongly encourage that implementation of SB2585, HD1, include meaningful input from farmers and ranchers. Those operating agricultural enterprises are best positioned to advise on:

- What activities are feasible on working farms.
- What compliance requirements are practical; and

- How agricultural tourism can be integrated without disrupting production.

This bill will be most effective if shaped in partnership with the agricultural community.

V. Clarifying Eligible Agricultural Operations

To avoid confusion and inconsistent interpretation, SB2585, HD1, should clearly define what constitutes an **eligible agricultural operation**. The bill should focus on:

- Operations that are actively engaged in agricultural production; and
- Activities that are accessory and supportive to that production.

Agricultural tourism should be tied to real agricultural activity and not used to justify unrelated development on agricultural lands.

VI. Avoiding Administrative Burdens

It is critical that SB2585, HD1, not create new administrative burdens that adversely affect farmers and ranchers. Requirements should be:

- Clear and predictable.
- Scaled appropriately to farm size and activity; and
- Designed to support, rather than discourage, participation.

Overly complex permitting or reporting requirements risk making agricultural tourism inaccessible to small and mid-scale producers who would benefit the most.

VII. Defining Agricultural Operations

For clarity and consistency, the bill should provide a workable definition of an agricultural operation, such as:

“Agricultural operation” means the cultivation of crops, the raising of livestock or aquaculture species, or the processing of agricultural

products, conducted as an ongoing agricultural activity rather than primarily for recreation or unrelated commercial use.

This ensures that agricultural tourism remains grounded in genuine agricultural activity while allowing flexibility across different types and scales of farms and ranches.

SB2585, HD1, presents an important opportunity to strengthen Hawai'i's agricultural sector by recognizing agricultural tourism as a supportive activity of agriculture. With clear definitions, farmer input, and reasonable implementation, this measure can:

- Help farms diversify revenue.
- Offset infrastructure and operating costs.
- Promote Hawai'i products locally and abroad; and
- Educate the public about agriculture's role in our islands' future.

For these reasons, we support SB2585, HD1, with the comments noted above. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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Honolulu, HI 96815
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TESTIMONY OF
CAROLINE ANDERSON
Interim President & CEO
Hawai'i Tourism Authority

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Thursday, February 19, 2026
9 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 411

In consideration of
HB 2585 HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

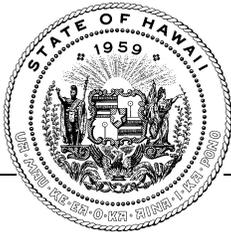
Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) offers comments on HB 2585 HD1, which establishes statewide, uniform standards to promote agricultural tourism activities in Hawai'i, requires registration with county planning departments, and ensures agricultural tourism remains secondary to and coexists with ongoing agricultural activity.

HTA recognizes the importance of supporting Hawai'i's agricultural sector. Agricultural tourism can provide supplemental revenue for farms and ranches while offering visitors educational experiences connected to Hawai'i's working lands and local products. Coordinating the development of new agricultural tourism products is part of HTA's statutory mandate in HRS §201B-3(a)(19).

HB 2585 HD1 also includes important guardrails that help keep agricultural tourism tied to real farming activity. The bill requires agricultural tourism to be accessory and secondary to agriculture, not interfere with surrounding farm operations, and be conducted only on land where productive agricultural use is occurring. HTA supports these safeguards because they help encourage responsible growth and reduce the risk that agricultural tourism becomes a substitute for agriculture.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide these comments on HB 2585 HD1.



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
DIRECTOR

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Thursday, February 19, 2026

9:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 411

in consideration of
HB 2585, HD 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL TOURISM.

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** HB 2585, HD 1, which establishes uniform agricultural tourism activity requirements applicable to all Counties to promote agricultural tourism as a supplemental revenue stream to farm operations.

OPSD strongly supports agricultural tourism as an additional source of revenue for bona fide farming operations, as defined in Hawai'i Revised Statute (HRS) § 165-2 and we support amendments clarifying that agricultural tourism activities that are secondary and accessory to a principal farming operation may be allowed in every County. We also support County adoption of ordinances regulating agricultural tourism activities and a registration process that improves the Counties' ability to review whether these activities are indeed being operated by a bona fide farming operation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

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

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026
9:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 411**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2585, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO FARM EMPLOYEE HOUSING**

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 2585, House Draft 1 that establishes statewide, uniform standards to promote agricultural tourism activities in the State for all counties that have adopted an agricultural tourism ordinance. Requires agricultural tourism activities to be registered by the county planning department. Requires agricultural tourism activities to coexist with an agricultural activity on a farming operation and to be accessory and secondary to the principal farming operation. Establishes a process for the termination of an authorization for agricultural tourism activities upon a determination that the agricultural activity has ceased. Requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to submit a report to the 2027 Legislature on the implementation of Part II of this measure. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) supports this measure with one proposed amendment. We defer to the counties with respect to their adoption of necessary ordinances that will ensure agricultural tourism activities are accessory and secondary to a principal farming operation.

The Department notes that registration of agricultural tourism activities with the county planning department requires both "federal and state tax returns verifying farm income from the principal farming operation" and "verification of enrollment in a county agricultural use dedication program." (page 5, lines 5-8) We are confident these requirements will ensure that registered agricultural tourism operations will be in conformance with the definitions of "principal farming operation" and "productive agricultural use" (page 7, lines 6-17).

Testimony of Sharon Hurd
February 19, 2026
Page 2

With respect to the proposed amendment to Section 205-5(b) (page 27, line 4, to page 28, line 11), the Department would recommend reinstatement of the original statutory language prior to the amendment of Section 205-5(b) caused by Act 250, SLH 2006 (SB2774, SD2, HD1, CD1). However, we would defer to the Land Use Commission and the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to determine if our proposed amendment is merited.

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

HB2585 AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

DAB CLARIFICATION OF WRITTEN TESTIMONY (TOP OF 2ND PAGE)

With respect to the proposed amendment to Section 205-5(b) (page 27, line 4, to page 28, line 11), the Department would recommend reinstatement of the original statutory language prior to the amendment of Section 205-5(b) caused by Act 250, SLH 2006 (HB2145, HD2, SD1, CD1) **Apologies, I referenced the wrong bill in testimony (~~SB2774, SD2, HD1, CD1~~).**

It appears that the HB2585's proposed amendments (page 27, line 4, to page 28, line 11) deletes more existing language than it should, specifically on page 27, lines 6-11, and the sentence ending with "defined by each county by zoning ordinance". The proposed deleted language is important guidance to the counties for uses within the Agricultural District.

However, we would defer to the Land Use Commission and the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to determine if our proposed amendment is merited.

Earl Yamamoto
DAB
808 973-9466
earl.j.yamamoto@hawaii.gov

Report Title:

Agriculture; Tourism

Description:

Adds agricultural tourism to agricultural districts. Specifies requirements to qualify for agricultural tourism. Requires counties to regulate agricultural tourism in specified matters. (HB2145 CD1)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TWENTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2006

STATE OF HAWAII

H.B. NO. 2145

H.D. 2

S.D. 1

C.D. 1

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL TOURISM.

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

SECTION 1. Section 205-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

"(d) Agricultural districts shall include [~~activities~~]:

(1) Activities or uses as characterized by the cultivation of crops, orchards, forage, and forestry; [~~farming~~]

(2) Farming activities or uses related to animal husbandry, [~~aquaculture,~~] and game and fish propagation; [~~aquaculture,~~]

(3) Aquaculture, which means the production of aquatic plant and animal life [~~for food and fiber~~] within ponds and other bodies of water; [~~wind~~]

(4) Wind generated energy production for public, private, and commercial use; [~~bona~~]

(5) Bona fide agricultural services and uses that support the agricultural activities of the fee or leasehold owner of the property and accessory to any of the above

activities, whether or not conducted on the same premises as the agricultural activities to which they are accessory, including but not limited to farm dwellings as defined in section 205-4.5(a)(4), employee housing, farm buildings, mills, storage facilities, processing facilities, vehicle and equipment storage areas, and roadside stands for the sale of products grown on the premises; [wind]

(6) Wind machines and wind farms; [small-scale]

(7) Small-scale meteorological, air quality, noise, and other scientific and environmental data collection and monitoring facilities occupying less than one-half acre of land[7]; provided that these facilities shall not be used as or equipped for use as living quarters or dwellings; [agricultural parks; and open]

(8) Agricultural parks;

(9) Agricultural tourism conducted on a working farm, or a farming operation as defined in section 165-2, for the enjoyment, education, or involvement of visitors; provided that the agricultural tourism activity is accessory and secondary to the principal agricultural use and does not interfere with surrounding farm operations; and provided further that this paragraph shall apply only to a county that has adopted ordinances regulating agricultural tourism under section 205-5; and

(10) Open area recreational facilities.

[For the purposes of this chapter,] Agricultural districts shall not include golf courses and golf driving ranges [are prohibited in agricultural districts], except as provided in section 205-4.5(d). [These] Agricultural districts [may] include areas [which] that are not used for, or [which] that are not suited to, agricultural and ancillary activities by reason of topography, soils, and other related characteristics."

SECTION 2. Section 205-4.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

"(a) Within the agricultural district, all lands with soil classified by the land study bureau's detailed land classification as overall (master) productivity rating class A or B shall be restricted to the following permitted uses:

- (1) Cultivation of crops, including but not limited to flowers, vegetables, foliage, fruits, forage, and timber;
- (2) Game and fish propagation;
- (3) Raising of livestock, including but not limited to poultry, bees, fish, or other animal or aquatic life that are propagated for economic or personal use;

(4) Farm dwellings, employee housing, farm buildings, or ~~[activity]~~ activities or uses related to farming and animal husbandry. ~~[Farm dwelling]~~ "Farm dwelling" as used in this paragraph means a single-family dwelling located on and used in connection with a farm, including clusters of single-family farm dwellings permitted within agricultural parks developed by the State, or where agricultural activity provides income to the family occupying the dwelling;

(5) Public institutions and buildings that are necessary for agricultural practices;

(6) Public and private open area types of recreational uses, including day camps, picnic grounds, parks, and riding stables, but not including dragstrips, airports, drive-in theaters, golf courses, golf driving ranges, country clubs, and overnight camps;

(7) Public, private, and quasi-public utility lines and roadways, transformer stations, communications equipment buildings, solid waste transfer stations, major water storage tanks, and appurtenant small buildings such as booster pumping stations, but not including offices or yards for equipment, material, vehicle storage, repair or maintenance, or treatment plants, or corporation yards, or other like structures;

(8) Retention, restoration, rehabilitation, or improvement of buildings or sites of historic or scenic interest;

(9) Roadside stands for the sale of agricultural products grown on the premises;

(10) Buildings and uses, including but not limited to mills, storage, and processing facilities, maintenance facilities, and vehicle and equipment storage areas that are normally considered directly accessory to the abovementioned uses and are permitted under section 205-2(d);

(11) Agricultural parks; ~~[or]~~

(12) Agricultural tourism conducted on a working farm, or a farming operation as defined in section 165-2, for the enjoyment, education, or involvement of visitors; provided that the agricultural tourism activity is accessory and secondary to the principal agricultural use and does not interfere with surrounding farm operations; and provided further that this paragraph shall apply only to a county that has adopted ordinances regulating agricultural tourism under section 205-5; or

~~[-(12)-]~~ (13) Wind energy facilities, including the appurtenances associated with the production and

transmission of wind generated energy; provided that such facilities and appurtenances are compatible with agriculture uses and cause minimal adverse impact on agricultural land."

SECTION 3. Section 205-5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

"(b) Within agricultural districts, uses compatible to the activities described in section 205-2 as determined by the commission shall be permitted; provided that accessory agricultural uses and services described in sections 205-2 and 205-4.5 may be further defined by each county by zoning ordinance. Each county shall adopt ordinances setting forth procedures and requirements, including provisions for enforcement, penalties, and administrative oversight, for the review and permitting of agricultural tourism uses and activities as an accessory use on a working farm, or farming operation as defined in section 165-2; provided that agricultural tourism activities shall not be permissible in the absence of a bona fide farming operation. Ordinances shall include but not be limited to:

(1) Requirements for access to a farm, including road width, road surface, and parking;

(2) Requirements and restrictions for accessory facilities connected with the farming operation, including gift shops and restaurants; provided that overnight accommodations shall not be permitted;

(3) Activities that may be offered by the farming operation for visitors;

(4) Days and hours of operation; and

(5) Automatic termination of the accessory use upon the cessation of the farming operation.

Each county may require an environmental assessment under chapter 343 as a condition to any agricultural tourism use and activity. Other uses may be allowed by special permits issued pursuant to this chapter. The minimum lot size in agricultural districts shall be determined by each county by zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, or other lawful means; provided that the minimum lot size for any agricultural use shall not be less than one acre, except as provided herein. If the county finds that unreasonable economic hardship to the owner or lessee of land cannot otherwise be prevented or where land utilization is improved, the county may allow lot sizes of less than the minimum lot size as specified by law for lots created by a consolidation of existing lots within an agricultural district and the resubdivision thereof; provided that the consolidation and resubdivision do not result in an increase in the number of lots over the number existing prior to consolidation; and provided further that in no event shall a lot, which is equal to or exceeds the minimum lot size of one acre be less than that minimum after the consolidation and resubdivision action. The county may also allow lot sizes of less than the minimum lot size as specified by law for lots created or used for public, private, and quasi-public utility

purposes, and for lots resulting from the subdivision of abandoned roadways and railroad easements."

SECTION 4. Section 343-5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

"(a) Except as otherwise provided, an environmental assessment shall be required for actions that:

(1) Propose the use of state or county lands or the use of state or county funds, other than funds to be used for feasibility or planning studies for possible future programs or projects that the agency has not approved, adopted, or funded, or funds to be used for the acquisition of unimproved real property; provided that the agency shall consider environmental factors and available alternatives in its feasibility or planning studies; provided further that an environmental assessment for proposed uses under section 205-2(d)(9) or 205-4.5(a)(12) shall only be required pursuant to section 205-5(b);

(2) Propose any use within any land classified as a conservation district by the state land use commission under chapter 205;

(3) Propose any use within a shoreline area as defined in section 205A-41;

(4) Propose any use within any historic site as designated in the National Register or Hawaii Register, as provided for in the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Public Law 89-665, or chapter 6E;

(5) Propose any use within the Waikiki area of Oahu, the boundaries of which are delineated in the land use ordinance as amended, establishing the "Waikiki Special District";

(6) Propose any amendments to existing county general plans where the amendment would result in designations other than agriculture, conservation, or preservation, except actions proposing any new county general plan or amendments to any existing county general plan initiated by a county;

(7) Propose any reclassification of any land classified as a conservation district by the state land use commission under chapter 205;

(8) Propose the construction of new or the expansion or modification of existing helicopter facilities within the State, that by way of their activities, may affect:

(A) Any land classified as a conservation district by the state land use commission under chapter

205;

(B) A shoreline area as defined in section 205A-41; or

(C) Any historic site as designated in the National Register or Hawaii Register, as provided for in the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Public Law 89-665, or chapter 6E; or until the statewide historic places inventory is completed, any historic site that is found by a field reconnaissance of the area affected by the helicopter facility and is under consideration for placement on the National Register or the Hawaii Register of Historic Places; and

(9) Propose any:

(A) Wastewater treatment unit, except an individual wastewater system or a wastewater treatment unit serving fewer than fifty single-family dwellings or the equivalent;

(B) Waste-to-energy facility;

(C) Landfill;

(D) Oil refinery; or

(E) Power-generating facility."

SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

HB-2585-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:33:35 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/19/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Bateman	Heavenly Hawaiian Farms	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and Committee Members

Heavenly Hawaiian Farms, Holualoa, is a 38 acre Kona coffee farm and **strongly supports** HB 2585 HD1.

The bill provides a simple, cost effective, method for all farmers in Hawaii to register agricultural tourism activities with their county planning. departments This is a huge improvement over the cumbersome, expensive, time consuming and confusing site plan approval model currently in place. It will encourage many more farmers to identify thier planned ag-tourism activities by participating in a much less intimtating registration process It also provides farmers a much simpler process for registering any amendments or changes to existing plans. This is truly "win-win" legistation.

We **strongly support** HB2585 and recommend your votes to approve it and pass it out of committee.

Mahalo nui,

David Bateman, Executive Chairman

Heavenly Hawaiiia Farms



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 19, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

TESTIMONY ON HB 2585, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

Conference Room 411 & Videoconference
9:00 AM

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Morikawa, 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 the intent of HB 2585, HD1, which establishes uniform statewide standards to promote agricultural tourism in the state. This bill sets clear requirements for agricultural tourism that apply to counties that have adopted an agricultural tourism ordinance. It also requires agricultural tourism activities to be registered with the county planning commission and ensures that they remain secondary to active agricultural operations, terminating upon cessation of farming activity, except under certain circumstances.

Agritourism can play an important role in supporting the economic viability of farms and ranches while educating residents and visitors about agriculture in Hawai'i. We appreciate the Legislature's effort to bring greater clarity and consistency to agritourism standards, particularly in response to differing county approaches and enforcement challenges.

We support the principle that agricultural tourism activities must remain accessory and secondary to a bona fide agricultural operation. Agriculture should always be the primary use of agricultural lands, and agritourism should complement, not replace, active farming or ranching. Maintaining this distinction is essential to protecting agricultural lands and preventing misuse of agritourism as a substitute for non-agricultural commercial or residential development.

HFB has consistently opposed short-term vacation rental activity on agricultural lands, particularly stays of twenty days or less that function as transient accommodations rather than agricultural experiences. At the same time, we recognize that legitimate agritourism

may, in limited circumstances, include overnight components that are directly tied to agricultural education, immersion, or hands-on farm experiences. The key distinction has always been that lodging must remain clearly subordinate to, and supportive of, active agricultural production.

As HB 2585, HD1 moves forward, we encourage careful consideration of how statewide standards are implemented to avoid unintended impacts on bona fide agricultural operations. Registration and documentation requirements should be administered in a manner that provides clarity and accountability without creating unnecessary administrative burdens, particularly for small and family-run farms.

We also emphasize the importance of flexibility in agriculture. Farming is inherently subject to weather events, pests, disease, and market disruptions. Temporary interruptions in production should not automatically disqualify an operation from engaging in agritourism activities that are otherwise consistent with the intent of the law.

HFB appreciates the opportunity to continue working with the Legislature, counties, and stakeholders to ensure that agritourism policies support farmers and ranchers, protect agricultural lands, and provide clear, enforceable, and reasonable standards.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure

Feb. 19, 2026, 9 a.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 411 and Videoconference

To: House Committee on Water and Land
Rep. Mark Hashem, Chair
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii
Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

Re: COMMENTS ON HB2585 HD1 — RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

Aloha chair, vice chair and other committee members,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii offers **comments on** — and **amendments to** — [HB2585 HD1](#), which would reform statewide rules for agricultural tourism in the state's agriculture district.

Specifically, this bill would require that agricultural tourism be permitted as an accessory use to a farming operation in counties that have adopted ordinances that regulate agricultural tourism.

In these counties, agricultural tourism operations would have to register with the county planning department and provide information such as what visitor activities will be offered and documentation that the property is enrolled in the county's agricultural property tax dedication program.

The bill would also add food trucks to the definition of an "agricultural-based commercial operation" and delete overnight accommodations of 21 days or less as a permitted use in counties with at least three islands.

Agricultural tourism activities can support the state's goal of having more local food production by offering farmers and ranchers the opportunity to diversify their sources of income.

A 2023 report from the Swette Center for Sustainable Food Systems at Arizona State University noted that agritourism "is a way to capitalize on the state's robust tourism sector while providing producers with

additional income to complement their baseline agricultural activities. ... Such activities include farm tours, value-added product sales, event hosting, farm-to-table experiences, volunteer opportunities, and others.”¹

However, Grassroot urges the committee to amend this legislation to protect the existing property rights of Hawaii farmers and ranchers.

Hawaii Revised Statutes 205-2(12) and 205-4.5(14) allow overnight accommodations of 21 days or less in counties with at least three islands that have adopted ordinances governing agricultural tourism.²

Many farmers and ranchers throughout Maui County rely on this language to run short-term rentals and bed and breakfasts to help supplement income from their farming operations.

At the same time, some counties might be hesitant to legalize agricultural tourism activities because they do not want to encourage additional short-term rental units.

Thus, the committee should keep 205-2(12) and 205-4.5(14) and add the following underlined language to those sections:

“Agricultural tourism activities, including overnight accommodations of twenty-one days or less, for any one stay within a county; provided that this paragraph shall apply only to a county that includes at least three islands and has adopted ordinances prior to the effective date of this law regulating agricultural tourism activities pursuant to section 205-5; provided further that the agricultural tourism activities coexist with a bona fide agricultural activity.”

Adding this amendment would strike the right balance between protecting property rights and allowing farmers and ranchers to participate in tourism — the state’s largest economic engine.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

¹ John Gifford, Abigail Martone-Richards and Jason Pena et al., “[Hawai’i Agritourism: Examining how Agritourism can be Responsibly Implemented to Support Small Farmers and Ecological and Cultural Preservation in the Hawaiian Islands](#),” April 2023, p. 11.

² [205-2 Districting and classification of lands](#), and [205-4.5 Permissible uses within the agricultural districts](#)., Hawaii Revised Statutes, accessed Jan. 29, 2026.

February 18, 2026

To: Chair Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair Dee Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land

Subject: Strong Support for HB2585 HD1, Relating to Agricultural Tourism

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

My name is Carlin Rose McFadden. I am writing in strong support of HB2585 HD1, which establishes uniform statewide standards for agricultural tourism activities in counties that have adopted agricultural tourism ordinances, and requires registration through county planning departments.

I understand the HD1 amendments clarify that agricultural tourism must remain accessory and secondary to a principal farming operation, must occur only where productive agricultural use is occurring, and may be terminated if agricultural activity has ceased, with limited exceptions for temporary disruptions.

This bill supports local agriculture by giving farmers clearer, more consistent rules across counties, while protecting agricultural lands by ensuring tourism activities do not replace farming or interfere with on farm operations. It also supports rural economies by enabling responsible diversification and strengthening connections between residents, visitors, and Hawai'i grown products.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB2585 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Carlin Rose McFadden
Lead Advocate, Food and Policy Team

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-2585-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:25:59 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/19/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands & Ohana Unity Party	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

****Testimony in STRONG Support of HB2585 HD1****

****Relating to Agricultural Tourism****

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in ****STRONG SUPPORT**** of ****HB2585 HD1****.

This bill establishes ****statewide, uniform standards**** for agricultural tourism (agritourism) activities across Hawai‘i, applying to counties that have adopted agritourism ordinances under HRS §205-5. It creates consistency in permitting, requires registration with county planning departments, ensures activities remain ****accessory and secondary**** to principal farming operations, and provides a clear process for termination if true agricultural production ceases.

Why This Matters for Our Lāhui and Communities Hawai‘i's agriculture faces immense pressures: high costs, invasive species, land conversion threats, climate challenges, and inconsistent county rules that stifle farm viability. Agritourism offers critical supplemental revenue for ranches, small farms, and cultural producers—allowing farmers to diversify without abandoning productive use of ‘āina. It promotes regenerative tourism (as noted in the bill's findings, aligning with Hawaii Tourism Authority goals), educates visitors on local food systems, fosters partnerships between farmers and businesses, and supports food security by keeping land in active agriculture. Key safeguards in HD1 ensure protection:

- Activities must ****coexist**** with ongoing commercial farming (crops, livestock, aquaculture, etc.) and not interfere with operations.

- Limited to land with ****productive agricultural use**** (taxed as ag, current on taxes). - Strict registration requirements (e.g., proof of farm income via tax returns, enrollment in ag dedication programs) prevent abuse.

- Termination process after 60 days of ceased production (with exemptions for temporary issues like weather, pests, or market disruptions), including notice and appeal rights.

- Applies only in counties with ordinances, respecting local control while eliminating patchwork inconsistencies. This bill builds on prior efforts to protect agricultural districts (e.g., amendments to HRS §§205-2, 205-4.5, 205-5) and requires a Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity report on implementation—adding accountability.

For Native Hawaiian beneficiaries and rural communities like Waianae, agritourism can empower small-scale cultural farming, lo‘i restoration, and traditional practices by generating income to sustain operations amid economic hardships.

It aligns with sovereignty goals: keeping ‘āina productive, reducing reliance on imports, and sharing Hawaiian stewardship with respectful visitors. The Legislature has advanced similar measures before—let's pass HB2585 HD1 to give our farmers the tools to thrive. Reject weakening amendments that could dilute safeguards or delay uniformity.

Mahalo nui for your kuleana in supporting Hawai‘i's agricultural future. Respectfully submitted,

Pikachu Shelby “Pikachu” Billionaire HRM Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands H.I. Ohana Unity Party, Chairman