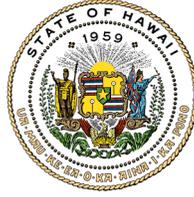


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

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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FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE  
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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
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 Senate Committees on  
WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS  
AND  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Wednesday, February 11, 2026  
1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224**

**In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 1178  
RELATING TO CARBON SEQUESTRATION INCENTIVES**

Senate Bill 1178 codifies and makes permanent the Hawai'i Carbon Smart Land Management Assistance Program under the Department of Land and Natural Resources. **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.

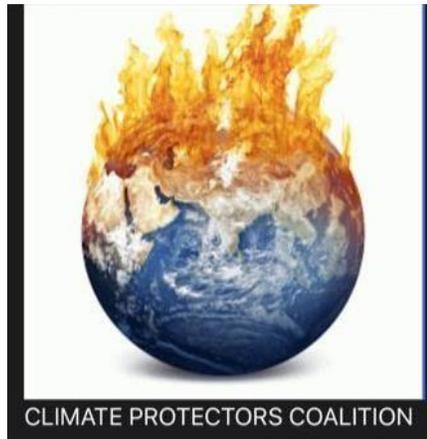
Since 2022, the Commission has supported The Climate Smart Land Manager Assistance Pilot Program which provided incentives to land managers to implement climate smart practices on their lands. This bill would continue this work to support local farmers, ranchers, and foresters while protecting the longevity of productive soils by 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, requesting over four million dollars in funding, demonstrating that land managers are hungry for additional support in these areas.

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. 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.



To: The Honorable Chairs Senators Chris Lee and Mike Gabbard, the Honorable Vice Chairs Lorraine Inouye and Herbert M. “Tim” Richards III, and Members of the Water, Land, Culture and the Arts and Agriculture and Environment Committees.

From: Climate Protectors Hawai‘i (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: Hearing SB1178 RELATING TO CARBON SEQUESTRATION INCENTIVES.

Hearing: Wednesday February 11, 2026, 1:00 p.m., room 224

Aloha Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Inouye and Richards, and Members of the Water, Land, Culture and the Arts and Agriculture and Environment Committees!

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The mission of the Climate Protectors Hawai‘i is to educate and engage the local community in climate change action.

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**The Climate Protectors Hawai‘i STRONGLY SUPPORTS SB1178!**

This bill would permanently establish within the department of land and natural resources (DLNR) the Hawaii carbon smart land management assistance program to incentivize carbon sequestration activities participants and provide funding (\$2 million). It would incentivize carbon sequestration activities through incentive contracts that provide compensation for eligible practices by program participants. The current carbon smart land management assistance program pilot program ended on June 30, 2025. It engendered a high degree of interest and engagement from local Hawaiian farmers, farmer networks, ranchers, foresters,

agroecologists, grassroots and local non-profit organizations, community groups, schools, private land managers, ecologists, and businesses.

The carbon smart land management assistance program should continue, as it will lead to:

- more sustainable land management practices,
- an overall increase in carbon sequestered through a localized understanding of carbon sequestration practices and opportunities,
- support for local regenerative agriculture and food systems, and
- a strengthening of the climate resilience, climate mitigation, adaptation, and social-ecological-economic benefits proffered by indigenous land management practices and applied traditional ecological knowledge.

To reach its legal target of sequestering more atmospheric carbon than it emits as soon as practicable but no later than 2045, Hawaii needs not only to reduce carbon emissions, but also to greatly increase its carbon sequestration. This bill is one step toward achieving that target.

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo!

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)



FEBRUARY 11, 2026

## SENATE BILL 1178

CURRENT REFERRAL: WLA/AEN

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Kris Coffield,  
*President*

David Negaard,  
*Director*

Mireille Ellsworth,  
*Director*

Justin Salisbury,  
*Director*

Eileen Roco,  
*Director*

Beatrice DeRego,  
*Director*

Corey Rosenlee,  
*Director*

Amy Zhao,  
*Policy and Partnerships  
Strategist*

### POSITION: SUPPORT

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Imua Alliance supports SB 1178, relating to carbon sequestration incentives, which codifies and makes permanent the Hawai'i Carbon Smart Land Management Assistance Program under the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai'i-based organization dedicated to ending all forms of exploitation, including the interconnected emergencies of climate change and sexual violence. According to research conducted by Michael B. Gerrard from Columbia Law School, modern-day slavery tends to increase after natural disasters or conflicts where large numbers of people are displaced from their homes. In the decades to come, says Gerrard, climate change will very likely lead to a significant increase in the number of people who are displaced and, thus vulnerable, to gender abuse.

The Carbon Smart program produces measurable local climate benefits. In its pilot phase, the program awarded about \$1 million in grants to 10 grantees statewide, from Hawai'i Island to Moloka'i and O'ahu, enabling land managers to implement regenerative practices such as soil health improvements, rotational grazing, and carbon sequestration projects. These practices not only enhance carbon storage, they improve ecosystem resilience and increase 'āina-based climate change preparedness.

This proposal rightly points out that expanding the Carbon Smart program will lead to an increase in carbon sequestered through localized deployment of regenerative practices, while also supporting sustainable agriculture and indigenous land management methods that hold long-term benefits for social-ecological systems.

Similar "climate smart" programs demonstrate strong outcomes elsewhere. For example, under California's suite of Climate Smart Agriculture programs—including soil health incentives and sustainable

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grazing practices—technical assistance has supported over 420 successful projects that are expected to reduce more than 355,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent emissions and save more than 8.3 billion gallons of water. These impacts show that thoughtfully designed incentive programs can deliver real greenhouse gas reductions and co-benefits for resource conservation.

Moreover, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities initiative has invested over \$3 billion nationwide to support producers in voluntarily adopting carbon-reducing practices, with projects anticipated to engage tens of thousands of farms and sequester millions of metric tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent across agriculture and forestry systems. This strong federal support underscores the scalability and viability of programmatic investments like Hawai'i's Carbon Smart incentive.

Local research affirms the measurable benefits of this initiative. Work being done by the University of Hawai'i's Climate-Smart Agriculture project shows how practices like compost application, cover cropping, and regenerative soil amendments improve soil health, while enhancing carbon storage and greenhouse gas reduction over time, supporting long-term sequestration and resilience on Hawai'i farms and ranches.

Making this program permanent will enable longer planning horizons for land managers, grow local expertise in soil and ecosystem carbon measurement, attract matching investment from federal and private sources, and help Hawai'i meet its statutory climate goals. By embedding the Carbon Smart program in state law, we will expand participation among small and underserved producers, and broaden our climate strategy to include on-the-ground carbon sequestration practices that are complementary to energy mitigation efforts.

With aloha,

*Kris Coffield*

President, Imua Alliance



**Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.**

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Senator Chris Lee, Chair

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

**SB1178**

RELATING TO CARBON SEQUESTRATION

Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 1:00 PM

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Inouye & Richards, and Members of the Committees,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB1178** which codifies and makes permanent the Hawaii Carbon Smart Land Management Assistance Program under the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

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.

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 complete 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





**Hawai'i Forest Association**  
 7192 Kalaniana'ole Hwy  
 Suite A-143A, #249  
 Honolulu, HI 96825  
 Phone: 808/933/9411  
 Email: hfia@hawaiiiforest.org

**Date:** 02/09/26

**TO:** WLA Chair Lee and Vice Chair Inouye, AEN Chair Gabbard and Vice Chair Richards, WLA Committee members Chang, Lamosao, DeCorte and AEN Committee members DeCoite, Rhoads, Awa

**FROM:** Hawaii Forest Association (HFA)

**SUBJECT:** Testimony in Support of SB1178 Relating to Carbon Sequestration Incentives

Dear Chair Lee, Chair Gabbard and WLA/AEN Committee members,

On behalf of the Directors and members of the Hawaii Forest Association (HFA), please support SB1178 Relating to Carbon Sequestration Incentives.

As an organization made up of individuals, small businesses and corporations throughout the state of Hawaii, with an array of professional expertise, twenty percent of our membership consists of landowners, land managers, conservationists, field laborers, restoration technicians or others in “green” professions. These members regularly participate in restoration/conservation, and carbon sequestration efforts on their properties or as a part of their employment. Compensation for these efforts helps HFA members and other Hawaii residents continue in their carbon sequestration efforts, and incentivizes others to engage in similar, import carbon sequestering land use activities.

For these reasons, please support SB1178.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Irene Sprecher, President

Hawaii Forest Association

*HFA's mission is to promote healthy and productive forests and a sustainable forest industry through management, education, planning, information exchange, and advocacy.*

**HFA Board of Directors**

Officers: President Irene Sprecher, Vice President Taylor Coons, Secretary Nicholas Koch  
 Directors: Jeremy Campbell, Doug Gordon, Michael Sowards, Aileen Yeh, Aaron Hammer, Tawn Speetjens

HFA's members include woodworkers, landowners, sawmillers, foresters, educators, researchers, arborists, students and more.	50% of HFA members are business owners, employing nearly 150 people across the State.	HFA actively manages five restoration and/or native plant demonstration sites between Hawai'i island and Oahu.
HFA members and their employees reside and work in 64 of the 76 Hawaii House and Senate districts.	HFA members reside across the Hawaiian islands, with a majority of members on Hawai'i island and Oahu, as well as members located in the continental US, Canada and Guam.	HFA, with its sister organization, the Hawaii Forest Institute, engages in regular outreach and education.

**SB-1178**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 5:22:42 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/11/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT