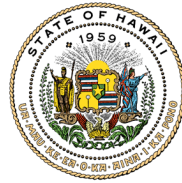


**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026  
10:00 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 411**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2405, SENATE DRAFT 1, HOUSE DRAFT 2  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2405, Senate Draft 1, House Draft 2 that establishes an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to address the shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the State. Interim and final reports are due to the 2028 and 2029 Legislatures, respectively. There is an appropriation for data collection, report preparation, and hiring consultants. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) offers comments.

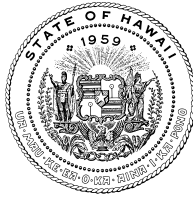
Should this measure be passed, the Department along with co-chair Agribusiness Development Corporation will seek informed, reasonable, and realistic solution paths to mitigate the challenges of agricultural workforce housing.

The appropriation to the Department for FY26-27 is for gathering the data and preparing the required reports, including any consultation fees, and related expenses. This measure does not specify that members of the Working Group are to serve without compensation nor be reimbursed for travel in performance of their duties. The duties of the Working Group appear to warrant the hiring of an exempt program specialist to assist the co-chairs as well as provide for other contractual services, as necessary. The Department is unable to provide an estimate of the appropriation amount that would be sufficient for the two years the Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group will be in existence.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR



**DEAN MINAKAMI**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## **STATE OF HAWAII**

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

### **HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

FAX: (808) 587-0600

Statement of

### **DEAN MINAKAMI**

Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation

Before the

### **HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

April 07, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Room 411

In consideration of

### **SENATE BILL 2405, SENATE DRAFT 1, HOUSE DRAFT 2 RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING.**

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and members of the Committee.

HHFDC **supports** SB2405, SD1, HD2, which establishes an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group to address the shortage of agricultural workforce housing in the State.

This measure addresses one of the most persistent barriers facing Hawaii's agricultural sector: the critical shortage of stable, affordable housing for agricultural workers. Across all islands, agricultural producers consistently report that the lack of workforce housing directly limits their ability to recruit and retain workers, scale production, and sustain long-term operations. In many rural communities, farm workers face long commutes, overcrowded living conditions, or are priced out of nearby housing entirely. These constraints weaken the State's food security goals, undermine rural economic stability, and hinder the growth of local agriculture.

This bill takes a strategic, collaborative approach by convening key state agencies, agricultural organizations, and subject-matter experts. This cross-sector structure is essential to resolving the legal, zoning, financial, and land-use challenges that have historically impeded the development of agricultural workforce housing.

We are fully committed to actively participating in the Working Group and supporting the Legislature's intent to identify practicable, scalable solutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2405 SD1 HD2**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka Wai a me ka ‘Āina  
(House Committee on Water and Land)

Ke Kapikala o Hawai‘i  
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

‘Apelila 7, 2026

10:00 AM

Lumi 411

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Aloha e Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS SB2405 SD1 HD2**, which establishes an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group to examine the need for and any barriers to the construction of agricultural workforce housing in the State.

Agriculture is foundational to Hawai‘i’s economic resilience, food security, and cultural perpetuation. For Native Hawaiians, ‘āina-based livelihoods are inseparable from identity, health, and ‘ike kūpuna. In fact, one of the pathways to Native Hawaiian economic well being that OHA has committed to advance is finding new markets for Native Hawaiian products, including farming products, that can provide families with a livable wage.<sup>1</sup> However, the viability of agriculture in Hawai‘i is constrained by the lack of training programs, start up costs and barriers to entry for new farmers, not least of which is the cost of farmable land. All these barriers are exacerbated by the high cost of housing which makes it difficult for new farmers to invest the time needed before a start up farm becomes profitable.

Accordingly, OHA supports the working group’s comprehensive scope, beginning with the identification and assessment of the “agricultural workforce” in each county. The identity (long-time resident, temporary resident), age, and other social

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<sup>1</sup> See OHA Strategic Plan available at: <https://www.oha.org/about/mana-to-maui-ola/>

demographic factors will help determine the type of housing needed (e.g., rental, rent to own, affordable purchase, etc.) and guide answers to other questions. As the working group gathers data, surveys farm operators, and assesses housing demand, OHA strongly recommends that all data collected and reported be disaggregated with specific identification of Native Hawaiian agricultural operators and workforce participants where feasible and appropriate. Disaggregated data will identify disparities in access and ensure that Native Hawaiian farmers and agricultural workers are equitably benefiting from any future programs.

OHA appreciates amendments that include our agency in the working group membership. OHA has long advocated for policies that expand opportunities for Native Hawaiian farmers, ranchers, and food producers. Through grantmaking, loans, and advocacy, OHA has supported initiatives that increase access to land, water, and funds for Native Hawaiian agricultural practitioners<sup>2</sup>. OHA has experience in housing policy, land use issues, and community-based development; direct relationships with Native Hawaiian farmers; and a statutory and constitutional mandate to advocate for the betterment of the conditions of Native Hawaiians. OHA's participation in the working group ensures that agricultural workforce housing strategies are responsive to the needs of Native Hawaiian agricultural workers.

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **PASS SB2405 SD1 HD2**.

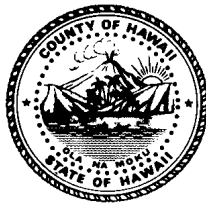
Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

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<sup>2</sup> OHA maintains a longstanding Mahi'ai Business Loan farm loan program (up to \$100,000, excluding construction). To expand impact, OHA's Board of Trustees approved approximately \$1 million for FY2026-2027 to support new initiatives focused on financial relief, workforce development, and agricultural business growth. The Mahi'ai Micro Fund, providing up to \$5,000 per farmer for operational costs, and the Kūlana 'Āina Program builds a statewide pipeline for farmers and food entrepreneurs through training, mentorship, and business development.

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.  
*Mayor*

William V. Brilhante, Jr.  
*Managing Director*



Benson Medina  
*Director*

Dennis Lin  
*Deputy Director*

## County of Hawai'i

### DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

25 Aupuni Street, Room 1301 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-4252

(808) 961-8366 • Fax (808) 935-1205

E-mail: chresdev@co.hawaii.hi.us

April 6, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

TUESDAY, April 7, 2026

10:00 AM

CONFERENCE ROOM 411

TESTIMONY ON SB 2405 SD1 HD2  
Relating to Agricultural Workforce Housing

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

I am Benson Medina, Director of the Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai'i. One of the agricultural objectives of this department is to support collaboration, innovation, resource development, and programmatic sustainability throughout the food system to reduce food waste, improve producer viability and resilience, develop workforce development pathways, or increase access to locally produced food among low-income residents.

The County of Hawai'i provides written testimony in **SUPPORT of SB2405 SD1 HD2** to establish an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to address the shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the State.

Creating sufficient and timely farmworker and low-income housing on Hawai'i Island is likely to entail careful examination and streamlining of the planning, permitting, and building process. For farmworkers, safe, affordable housing close to the workplace reduces travel time, increases safety, and contributes to overall wellbeing. Poor or overcrowded housing can lead to health and safety concerns, and housing insecurity is associated with a higher risk of chronic health conditions and lower access to primary and preventative healthcare (Martin et al. 2019; Gu et al. 2023). In 2023, the Department produced a report, prepared by The Kohala Center, "Opportunities to Increase Farmworker Housing on Hawai'i Island," outlining stakeholder recommendations that a working group around agricultural workforce housing could further develop.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of SB2405 SD1 HD2**.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "B Medina".

Benson Medina  
Director

April 7, 2026

TO: Chair Hashem and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land  
RE: SB 2405 SD1 HD2, Relating to Agricultural Workforce Housing

Dear Chair Hashem and Committee Members,

Housing Hawai'i's Future is a nonprofit dedicated to creating opportunities for Hawai'i's next generation by ending the workforce housing shortage.

**We support Senate Bill 2405 SD1 HD2, with amendments.** This bill would establish an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group to address the shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the State.

Hawai'i's housing shortage has direct and compounding impacts on the agricultural sector, particularly through the lack of attainable and proximate worker housing in rural communities. Farms across the state report persistent difficulty recruiting and retaining agricultural workers. This is often not because of a lack of jobs, but because workers cannot find housing within a reasonable distance or price point.

The establishment of an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group represents a positive step toward addressing this issue. By convening a diverse set of stakeholders from agriculture and government, the bill sets in motion a coordinated effort to identify specific agricultural housing needs and tools to meet those needs.

**Please advance SB2405 SD1 HD2.**

Thank you,



Lee Wang  
Executive Director  
Housing Hawai'i's Future  
[lee@hawaiisfuture.org](mailto:lee@hawaiisfuture.org)



Perry Arrasmith  
Director of Policy  
Housing Hawai'i's Future  
[perry@hawaiisfuture.org](mailto:perry@hawaiisfuture.org)



April 6, 2026

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

Subject: **SB2405 SD1 HD2**, Relating to Agricultural Workforce Housing

Aloha,

I am writing in **support of SB2405 SD1 HD2** which appropriates funds to establish an agricultural workforce housing working group. This group would work to address the shortages and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the state. We support the latest amendments to the measure including adding the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to the working group, and authorizing the Dept of Agriculture and Biosecurity to provide administrative support for the working group.

A cross-sector collaborative working group can create opportunities for agricultural workforce housing that are aligned with the best interests of communities, farmworkers, landowners, and the larger agricultural system in Hawai'i. Affordable and accessible housing for farmworkers is foundational in increasing Hawai'i's capacity for locally sourced food. Lack of adequate housing is one of the biggest burdens faced by farmers, which forces them to commute long distances or choose a different career path altogether. The formation of this working group can help ease this burden by bringing together key stakeholders to explore strategies like land use and zoning reform and financial incentives. Addressing this issue is critical for improving the career viability of farmers and their ability to provide long-term contributions to Hawai'i's agriculture economy.

**I urge this committee to pass SB2405 SD1 HD2** as amended to establish an agricultural workforce housing working group. Hawai'i's food system is at a critical point and faces challenges at many levels in reaching food security goals. A working group that aims to create living spaces that suit farm owners, communities, and farmworkers is an essential next step.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Mahalo,  
Sydney Haas & the Food+ Policy Team  
#fixourfoodsystem

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**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.



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

April 7, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2405, SD1, HD2**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING

Conference Room 411 & Videoconference  
10:00 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 SB 2405, SD1, HD2**, which establishes an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to address the shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the State.

Workforce housing remains a significant challenge affecting farm viability, labor retention, and the ability of agricultural operations to expand. Farmers across Hawai'i consistently identify access to appropriate and affordable workforce housing as a limiting factor in recruiting and retaining employees. Despite prior efforts to study this issue, housing constraints continue to impact agricultural productivity statewide.

SB 2405, SD1, HD2 provides a collaborative and practical forum to bring together state agencies, counties, agricultural organizations, and housing stakeholders to better understand agricultural workforce housing needs and identify potential solutions. HFB appreciates that the working group includes agricultural representation and emphasizes coordination among agencies responsible for land use, housing, and agricultural development.

HFB believes it is important that any recommendations focus on housing that directly supports bona fide agricultural operations, respects county land-use authority, and avoids unintended impacts on surrounding agricultural activities. Solutions should be flexible, county-specific, and responsive to the diverse needs of Hawai'i's agricultural workforce.

HFB looks forward to participating in the working group and continuing to work with the Legislature and state agencies to identify practical, workable strategies that support agricultural workforce housing while strengthening Hawai'i's agricultural industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-2405-HD-2**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 7:15:15 AM

Testimony for WAL on 4/7/2026 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Colehour Bondera    | Kanalani Ohana Farm | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members:

As a farmer and a long-time member of the south Kona farming community, it has become obvious to me that we must have consistency and support regarding worker housing around Hawaii.

This legislation works in that direction and therefore your support is requested.

Thank you in advance and thank you for recognizing this priority need for Hawaii agriculture to flourish.

Yours,

Colehour Bondera

KANALANI OHANA FARM

colemel2@gmail.com

Honaunau, HI 96704

**Testimony to the House Committee on Water & Land  
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
Representative Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair**

**Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at 10:00AM  
Conference Room 411 & Videoconference**

**RE: SB2405 SD1 HD2 Relating to Agricultural Workforce Housing**

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

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports Senate Bill 2405 Senate Draft 1 House Draft 2 (SB2405 SD1 HD2), which establishes an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to address the shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the State. Requires reports to the Legislature.

SB2405 SD1 HD2 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Agriculture. The state's agricultural sector is critical to long term economic diversification and food systems security. This legislation addresses persistent agricultural workforce challenges that include access to safe, affordable, and proximate housing. By addressing these challenges, state can strengthen the agricultural labor value proposition by creating meaningful impact on this workforce's quality of life and cost of living.

Affordable and accessible housing for the agricultural workforce is essential to sustaining and growing Hawaii's agricultural economy. Without adequate housing, employers struggle to recruit and retain workers, thereby limiting production capacity and weakening the viability of the agriculture sector. The working group proposed in this legislation is composed of the stakeholders needed for effective collaboration around zoning, county-level considerations, and financial incentives. The construction of housing by any stakeholder is a significant investment. The Chamber believes this working group will be most effective in devising sensible incentives that can encourage this investment.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass Senate Bill 2405 Senate Draft 1 House Draft 2. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



### Officers

Kaipo Kekona  
State President

Christian Zuckerman  
Vice-President

Maureen Datta  
Secretary

Reba Lopez  
Treasurer

### Chapter Presidents

Kelii Gannet  
Kohala, Hawai'i

East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Ka'u, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta  
Kona, Hawai'i

Gina Lind  
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer  
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros  
Mauna Kahālāwai,  
Maui

Kaipo Kekona  
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy  
Moloka'i

Negus Manna  
Lāna'i

India Clark  
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman  
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Rachel LaDrig  
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Water & Land 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 strongly supports SB2405.**

Hawaii's agricultural workforce cannot grow without housing, and housing solutions cannot be designed without the kind of cross-agency coordination this bill establishes. SB2405 HD2 brings the right stakeholders to the table, including state agencies, county officials, and the agricultural organizations closest to the problem. The additions in HD2 strengthen the bill by requiring the working group to gather data directly from farm operators and to consider revisions to zoning, building, and land use policies that could support innovative housing models. These are practical improvements that move the working group from a study body toward an action-oriented process.

We encourage the working group to center its analysis on the housing needs of workers employed by small and mid-scale farm operations. According to the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture, 95% of Hawaii's farms gross less than \$250,000 annually, and most lack the capital to develop workforce housing independently. The working group's recommendations on tax incentives, public-private partnerships, and adaptive reuse of government properties should be designed to reach operations at this scale, not only those large enough to build housing on their own. We also encourage the working group to establish a clear implementation timeline in its interim and final reports, identifying which recommendations require legislative action and which can be accomplished through administrative rulemaking, so that findings translate directly into policy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union



# MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND  
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 411  
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026 AT 10:00 A.M.**

To The Honorable Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
The Honorable Representative Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Water & Land

## **SUPPORT SB2405 SD1 HD2 RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING**

Affordable housing has been a top priority of the Maui Chamber of Commerce for years, given the current housing crisis. We support SB2405 SD1 HD2 because it proposes the creation of a dedicated working group within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to tackle the unique challenges faced by agricultural workers in securing safe and affordable housing.

While Maui County has been making progress with legislation geared toward allowing more agricultural worker housing, the establishment of a statewide Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group is a positive step toward identifying and overcoming regulatory, financial, and land use barriers that have long hindered the development of this critical housing segment. By bringing together stakeholders from relevant agencies and sectors, the working group can help ensure that policy recommendations are informed by on-the-ground realities and best practices. We believe that a coordinated, cross-sector approach is essential to developing actionable solutions that will expedite the delivery of housing for agricultural workers, who are vital to the state's food security and rural economies.

We respectfully recommend that the working group's scope explicitly include consideration of innovative housing models, such as modular homes, tiny homes, and container homes, and that it examine opportunities to streamline permitting and zoning processes at the state and county levels.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our support of SB2405 SD1 HD2. We ask that you move this bill forward.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap  
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

**SB-2405-HD-2**

Submitted on: 4/5/2026 7:38:27 PM

Testimony for WAL on 4/7/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!! MAHALO!