



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 2407, S.D. 1, RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL LAND.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

DATE: Wednesday, March 4, 2026 **TIME:** 10:31 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 211

TESTIFIER(S): **WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY.**
(For more information, contact Ian Robertson,
Deputy Attorney General, at (808) 586-0618)

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

The purpose of this bill is to authorize the Agribusiness Development Corporation to purchase an agricultural parcel in North Kohala and to authorize issuance of general obligation bonds and make an appropriation for that purpose.

This bill lacks a statement of public purpose. Therefore, the appropriations and authorization of general obligation bonds in this bill may be subject to challenge under article VII, section 4, of the Hawaii Constitution, which provides in relevant part: "No tax shall be levied or appropriation of public money or property made, nor shall the public credit be used, directly or indirectly, **except for a public purpose.**" (Emphasis added). Failure to include a declaration of public purpose is a constitutional deficiency that will likely prevent the expenditure of general obligation bond proceeds proposed by this bill.

To avoid this issue, we respectfully suggest that the Committee amend this bill by adding the following sentence to section 1 to clarify that the bill is for a public purpose:

"It is in the interest of the public for the State to acquire the north Kohala agricultural parcel identified as tax map key: (3) 5-3-7:16."

We respectfully ask the Committee to consider our comments.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



WENDY GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

March 4, 2026
10:31 a.m.

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

SENATE BILL NO. 2407, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 2407, SD1, which authorizes the purchase of land in North Kohala, Hawai'i Island.

We respectfully recommend amending SB 2407, SD1, to include the acquisition of a second parcel to ensure both agricultural production and value-added processing capacity are secured. Specifically, we recommend authorizing the purchase of:

- **TMK (3) 5-3-7:16 | Industrial | 47.86 acres** (for value-added processing and related infrastructure); and
- **TMK (3) 5-3-7:15 | Agricultural | 49.55 acres** (for diversified farming and crop production).

Together, these parcels would be acquired at a total purchase price of \$2,500,000.

This amendment would strengthen the measure by pairing agricultural production land with industrial-zoned property that includes existing power, water, and warehouse buildings — creating an integrated agricultural and processing hub in North Kohala.

I. Advancing State Food Mandates and Institutional Purchasing

Adding the agricultural parcel ensures sufficient land base for diversified farming, while the industrial parcel provides the infrastructure necessary to process, aggregate, and distribute locally grown food.

This integrated approach directly supports Hawai'i's statutory and policy mandates to increase local food production and expand the use of Hawai'i-grown products by public institutions. It enhances the State's ability to:

- Increase the supply of locally produced food for public institutions, including schools and other state facilities.
- Support the Hawai'i Department of Education's school meal programs with reliable, Hawai'i-grown products that meet volume, consistency, and food safety requirements; and
- Align agricultural production with predictable, long-term institutional demand, enabling farmers to plan, invest, and scale with greater certainty.

The existing warehouse structures and utilities on the industrial parcel provide a critical "jump start" on food safety-compliant aggregation, washing, packing, cold storage, and distribution capacity.

II. Strengthening Food Security and System Resilience

Amending the bill to include both parcels allows the State to coordinate farming and processing in a way that strengthens overall food system resilience. This includes:

- Reducing reliance on imported food.
- Maintaining productive agricultural acreage dedicated to diversified farming.
- Ensuring on-island processing capacity that meets institutional and regulatory food safety standards; and
- Preserving long-term agricultural and related uses through public ownership.

By securing both agricultural and industrial-zoned land, the State prevents fragmentation of the food production chain and protects these assets from conversion to non-agricultural purposes.

III. Supporting Economic Diversification and Rural Stability

Investment in both diversified farming and value-added processing supports economic diversification beyond tourism and construction by:

- Creating stable jobs in farming, processing, warehousing, distribution, and related services.
- Supporting small and mid-sized agricultural producers that rely on shared infrastructure.
- Encouraging value-added activities that retain more economic value within Hawai'i.

The combination of nearly 100 acres across agricultural and industrial zoning positions North Kohala as a viable regional agricultural hub.

IV. Agricultural Suitability and Value-Added Potential

The agricultural parcel (TMK (3) 5-3-7:15) is suitable for diversified crop production, including citrus, avocado, coffee, dryland taro, sweet potato, cucumber, melons, zucchini, eggplant, peppers, and tomato.

When paired with on-site industrial infrastructure, these crops can move efficiently from field to processing to institutional and export markets — reinforcing both food security and farm viability.

Conclusion

We respectfully recommend amending SB 2407, SD1, to include the acquisition of both:

- TMK (3) 5-3-7:16 (Industrial) for value-added agricultural processing; and
- TMK (3) 5-3-7:15 (Agricultural) for diversified farming.

At a total purchase price of \$2,500,000, this amendment would ensure that the State secures not only productive farmland, but also the infrastructure necessary to safely process, aggregate, and distribute Hawai'i-grown products.

By integrating production and processing capacity, the State strengthens its ability to:

- Meet food security and institutional purchasing goals.
- Support school meal programs with Hawai'i-grown food.
- Expand value-added agriculture; and
- Diversify Hawai'i's economy.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge your favorable consideration of SB 2407, SD1, with amendments. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Surety Kohala Corporation

P.O. BOX 249 HAWI, HAWAII 96719 • TELEPHONE: (808) 889-6257 • FAX: (808) 889-5252

March 2, 2026

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)

RE: SB 2407, SD1 Hearing: Relating To Agricultural Land

10:31 AM, Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211

415 South Beretania Street

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Bill Shontell, Executive Vice-President of Surety Kohala Corporation, the owner of the parcels of interest in this proposed bill. I am submitting this testimony in **strong support** of SB 2407, SD1.

North Kohala has struggled economically since the demise of Kohala Sugar in 1975. With the exception of tourism in South Kohala, few opportunities have emerged here to help restore the plantation's many contributions to Kohala's families. SB 2407, SD1, inspired by the struggles of the North Kohala community, will significantly stimulate agribusiness development and create employment opportunities for the families of Kohala.

Leveraging ADC's mission and resources to overcome the significant barriers preventing Kohala's farmers from accessing Kohala's rich soil is a visionary approach to a long standing problem.

Thank You for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Bill Shontell

Ex. Vice President, COO

SURETY KOHALA CORPORATION



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 4, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON SB 2407, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL LAND

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
10:31 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, 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 2407, SD1, which authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds to the Agribusiness Development Corporation to purchase an agricultural parcel in North Kohala for agricultural development and establishes a Hawai'i Island property manager position within ADC.

Access to affordable, long-term agricultural land remains one of the most significant barriers facing farmers and ranchers in Hawai'i. Strategic acquisition of private agricultural lands by the State, through ADC, is an important tool to ensure these lands remain dedicated to agricultural use and are protected from conversion to non-agricultural purposes. State acquisition can also help prevent speculative use of agricultural lands that undermines bona fide farming and ranching.

ADC was created to help transition Hawai'i's agricultural industry following the decline of plantation agriculture and has played a critical role in managing agricultural lands, developing infrastructure, and supporting diversified agriculture statewide. ADC is uniquely positioned to oversee the acquisition, management, and responsible development of agricultural lands in a manner that supports active production and long-term agricultural viability.

SB 2407, SD1 appropriately recognizes that land acquisition alone is not sufficient without the capacity to manage and steward those lands effectively. Establishing a Hawai'i Island property manager position will help ensure that ADC-managed lands are properly

maintained, leased, and developed for productive agricultural use. Dedicated on-the-ground management is essential to supporting farmers, addressing operational challenges, and maximizing the agricultural potential of State-owned lands.

The North Kohala region offers significant potential for agricultural production and rural economic development. Investment in this land, coupled with adequate management capacity, can support small and family-run farming operations, strengthen local food production, and align with the State's broader goals of food security, agricultural sustainability, and rural community resilience.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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

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Maureen Datta
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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 Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means 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 SB2407.**

Authorizing the issuance of general obligation bonds to the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) for purchasing agricultural parcels promotes both the expansion and protection of valuable agricultural lands in Hawaii. The acquisition of these lands will enable the development of vital agricultural projects, fostering innovation and growth in the agricultural sector.

Furthermore, the establishment of a full-time Hawaii Island Property Manager position within the ADC is a strategic move to ensure effective management and oversight of these agricultural assets. With dedicated personnel overseeing property activities, there will be enhanced intra-agency coordination and improved support for local farmers.

Combining financial investment in land acquisition with strategic management is a comprehensive and necessary approach to agricultural development.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:27:59 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth Robinson	Testifying for Kohala Community Land Trust/Kohala Community Plan	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Members of the Committee,

Kohala Community Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) corporation that has as one of its purposes: Combat Community Deterioration and Contribute to the Well-being, Vitality, and Economic Resilience of the Community. The Corporation shall promote the rehabilitation and maintenance of North Kohala commercial structures in order to provide economic opportunities for residents and shall make land and facilities available for projects and activities that improve the quality of life in North Kohala.

We **STRONGLY SUPPORT** acquisition of this parcel and the adjacent TMK in Halaula, North Kohala by the Agribusiness Development Corporation. These parcels are the only properties in Kohala that have the zoning and infrastructure desperately needed for the future of sustaining and increasing local food production in Kohala, providing jobs and reducing food insecurity for our community, island, and State.

This acquisition is consistent with our 2008 North Kohala Community Development Plan as recently updated by the community-driven Kohala Community Plan effort and is supported by agricultural producers in Kohala.

We also support the creation of a Hawai‘i Island Property Manager position within ADC.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support.

Beth Robinson

Hawi, Hawai‘i

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:44:32 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aubrie Christensen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of SB2407 to provide funds for the ADC to purchase the Halaua Industrial Parcel for agricultural value-added infrastructure and for associated farming and education related activities.

This parcel provides a rare opportunity to advance local and regional food security in alignment with strategic priorities of the community.

Thank you for your consideration.

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:45:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erika Kuhr	Testifying for Hawai'i Institute of Pacific Agriculture	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee, On behalf of HIP Agriculture, we respectfully submit testimony in strong support of SB2407 relating to the Agribusiness Development Corporation's (ADC) purchase of the Halaula Industrial Parcel. HIP Agriculture is a Hawai'i Island-based nonprofit organization that produces food for our community, provides hands-on training and technical assistance to local farmers, and is actively supporting efforts to increase production of key crops aligned with the State's farm-to-school initiative. We were proud to be part of the early farm-to-school pilot efforts and remain deeply committed to strengthening this movement across our island. Through our work growing food and collaborating with Kohala complex, we have seen firsthand both the demand for local products and the practical challenges that limit expansion. Having also worked directly in school cafeterias, we understand that in order for local food to be utilized at scale, it must be properly washed, cut, portioned, and pre-processed. Cafeteria staff are often operating under tight labor and time constraints and simply cannot take on whole-product processing. For farm-to-school programs to succeed, farmers need access to facilities that support aggregation, cold storage, light processing, and value-added activities. The acquisition of the Halaula Industrial Parcel presents a critical opportunity to develop infrastructure that bridges the gap between farm production and institutional procurement. Strategic investment in agricultural value-added infrastructure will: 1. Increase the volume of locally grown food entering our schools and community 2. Provide reliable markets for farmers 3. Strengthen food security on Hawai'i Island 4. Create workforce development opportunities in agriculture and food systems We strongly urge the Committee to support SB2407 and to prioritize the parcel's use for agricultural value-added activities that directly strengthen farm-to-school supply chains. Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to Hawai'i's agricultural future and the well-being of our keiki. Sincerely, Hawaii Institute of Pacific Agriculture Hawai'i Island

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:59:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jesse Rubendall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Jesse Rubendall, write on behalf of myself and my family (2 other household members) in deep support of SB2407. I believe this funding for Hawaii's Agribusiness Development Corporation, provided to acquire the property here in North Kohala, has the potential for a significant impact on our island community. Creating an agricultural park and access to farm land with processing facilities would directly contribute to increasing local food security, as well as providing essential infrastructure for farmers and producers to increase local food production.

Of course, this would also contribute economically by creating more work opportunity, future jobs, and educational opportunity by working with various local schools here in Kohala, Waimea etc.

These are exactly the types of projects I would love to see our state support and fund, in order to create a more resilient, locally-focused economy and society. Improving our local food security, infrastructure and sovereignty is a brilliant step in the right direction for a stronger future here in Kohala!

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration, and I know you will make the right decision to improve our island community.

Jesse L Rubendall
Farmer, Father, and Local Food Systems Advocate

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 4:21:54 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Writing in strong support of this important bill to purchase a crucial piece of land for agricultural related activities in Hawaii County. Farm to Table is important, as well as local food hubs.
Mahalo.

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 6:32:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keli'i Gannet	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Agriculture in hawaii, especially in kohala, needs all the help it can get. Access to land and utilities is so hard for anyone that isn't a retired millionaire. Let the ADC cook.

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 6:57:45 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donna Maltz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Strong Support of SB2407

Regarding TMK (3) 5-3-7:16 – Halaula Industrial Parcel Acquisition

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

I write in wholehearted support of SB2407, which provides funding for the State’s Agribusiness Development Corporation to purchase the Halaula Industrial Parcel in North Kohala for agricultural value-added infrastructure and farm-to-school expansion.

Let me be clear: this parcel is not just another piece of land. TMK (3) 5-3-7:16 is a strategic, ready-made solution to a long-standing infrastructure gap on Hawai‘i Island.

What Makes This Parcel So Special?

1. It Solves a Critical Infrastructure Problem

For years, North Kohala farmers have been forced to ship raw agricultural products out of the district—sometimes off-island—for processing. This is inefficient, costly, and undermines our local food resilience.

This Heavy Industrial–zoned parcel is uniquely suited to correct that imbalance. It already includes:

- Existing warehouse structures

- On-site well water
- Heavy utility access (power and water capacity appropriate for processing)
- Zoning that supports agricultural industrial use

In other words, the foundation is already in place. We are not starting from scratch—we are activating existing capacity.

2. It Expands a Proven Food Hub Model

The Kohala Food Hub currently distributes for more than 150 Hawai'i Island producers. It has outgrown its space. Without mid-stream infrastructure—processing, aggregation, storage, and distribution capacity—we limit the growth of our farmers and the accessibility of local food.

This parcel provides the physical infrastructure needed to scale regionally across the island. It strengthens the entire supply chain—from farm to school to family table.

Economic and Community Impact

Food Security

The acquisition of this parcel is an investment in regional self-sufficiency for North Kohala and Hawai'i Island. Processing food locally reduces dependence on imported goods and external systems that are increasingly fragile.

Food security is not theoretical—it is practical infrastructure. This parcel provides exactly that.

Job Creation & Economic Diversification

This is not only about farming. It is about:

- Skilled positions in food science and safety
- Logistics and distribution management
- Manufacturing and value-added production
- Youth workforce development through farm-to-school integration

It diversifies the local economy in a sustainable, land-based way that keeps value circulating within our community.

Alignment with AGVision Priority Areas

This acquisition directly supports the State’s agricultural priorities:

Production

- Value-added processing
- Food economics and scaling
- Processing to safety and quality standards

Food Access

- Increased access to fresh, affordable local food
- Strengthened farm-to-school programming

Land

- Strategic land use aligned with zoning
- Keeping industrial agricultural land in local agricultural use
- Supporting long-term land access and affordability.

A Strategic, Time-Sensitive Opportunity

Heavy Industrial parcels with existing infrastructure in rural districts are rare. Losing this opportunity would mean losing years—if not decades—of progress toward agricultural resilience.

SB2407 is not simply a land purchase.

It is a decisive step toward food security, economic stability, and agricultural self-determination for Hawai‘i Island.

I respectfully urge you to pass SB2407 and secure TMK (3) 5-3-7:16 for the long-term benefit of our farmers, our keiki, and our community.

Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to Hawai‘i’s agricultural future.

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:22:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!!!

Mahalo!

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:01:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Endreson	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I hope a great deal of research has gone into this site selection.

1. Many of the lots in this area have tested positive for asbestos, heavy metals and other contaminants.
2. The proximity of the site to the school is a concern with regard to pesticide and herbicide use as well as dust inundating the school given the strong winds in Kohala.

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:35:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
annalene williams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2407

Aloha Chairs DeCoite and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Wakai and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Annalene Williams, and I **strongly support SB2407**, which will enable the Agribusiness Development Corporation to acquire the only industrial-zoned parcel in North Kohala and establish a Hawaii Island Property Management role.

Acquiring this industrial parcel in North Kohala is an investment in the future of sustainable agricultural growth in the area. It is an underused asset that could serve as a dedicated agricultural zone to connect farmers, producers, processors, and manufacturers, streamlining North Kohala's agricultural supply chain and helping us achieve our goal of producing 50% of the food we consume.

Industrial areas are essential for consolidating activities and resources to increase agricultural productivity.

This parcel has existing utility and water access, as well as warehouses that could be converted into USDA-certified value-added processing centers.

Acquiring this industrial parcel to address infrastructure gaps aligns with some of the priority issues and hurdles identified by community participants during our Agvision events, related to food economics, food access, and production.

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:22:27 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matt Endreson	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Realtors have told us not to buy some of these lots because of Arsenic in the soil and other contaminants.

And fumes from this industrial project, dust, noise pesticides and herbicides will endanger and disrupt classes and the school kids only feet away.

Testimony in Strong Support of SB2407

Relating to TMK (3) 5-3-7:16 – Halaula Industrial Parcel

Submitted by: Joël Barraquiel Tan

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support SB2407.

This bill funds the purchase of the Halaula Industrial Parcel in North Kohala for agricultural value-added infrastructure and farm-to-school activities. This is a practical and timely investment in food security.

Local farmers currently send raw products out of the district for processing. That adds cost and risk. We lack mid-stream infrastructure such as washing, packing, cold storage, and aggregation. The Halaula parcel is heavy industrial zoned, with existing warehouses and utility access. It is well suited for this purpose.

The Kohala Food Hub, which distributes for more than 150 Hawai'i Island producers, has outgrown its current capacity. This site would allow responsible expansion and regional scaling.

At Kahua Pa'a Mua, we train interns in crop production, animal husbandry, equipment, and processing. Each cohort completes 240 hours of hands-on instruction. These young people are building real skills. But workforce training must connect to real infrastructure and jobs. SB2407 helps create that pathway.

The need is clear. Forty percent of Hawai'i households are struggling to meet basic needs. Strengthening local processing and distribution improves food access and keeps value in our communities.

There is also an opportunity to secure the adjacent 40 acres with an existing plantation well, strengthening long-term water and agricultural viability for the region.

SB2407 aligns with AGVision priorities around value-added production, food access, and keeping land in agriculture. It supports economic diversification and builds resilience for Hawai'i Island.

I respectfully urge your support.

Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 7:54:18 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

North Kohala resident in support of. Thank you.

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:01:33 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joe Carvalho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support sb2407 to help our ag farmers be able to process, store and ship their products.
Born and raised in Kohala and and living close to the parcel, I fully support the bill.
Aloha.

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:42:15 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathleen Matsuda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 3, 2026

Aloha,

I support Bill SB2407 to purchase the Halaula Industrial parcel for agriculture. My name is Kathleen Matsuda and I was born and raised here in North Kohala.

We are very secluded here and there is 2 ways in and out to North Kohala and for some families 1 way. It is very important for us to be food sustainable in case of emergencies and hazards.

Having this parcel will increase production of food and create jobs for our town. We want to be independent, and be able to sustain our lifestyle here.

It is also important to keep the land for our Kohala local community, and not be bought out by outsiders.

Mahalo,

Kathleen Matsuda

Director of Kohala Resilience Hub & Outreach

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:42:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Matsuda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Ted Matsuda and I'm testifying in support of SB2407.

I have been in the agricultural sector for over 50 years. I support SB2407 to fund purchasing of this only industrial zoned parcel in North Kohala for the use of processing agricultural products and value-added products. This purchase will enhance the area farmers and community members to process their goods and will serve as a economic boost for the community.

Mahalo,

Ted Matsuda

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:00:09 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susie Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a resident of Kohala, Hi and strongly support SB 2407. Kohala has a stated goal of increasing food security and the ability to use this parcel (the only heavy industrial zoned parcel in North Kohala) for creating infrastructure that supports agriculture is critical for this goal.

With gratefulde,

Susie Davis

Kapaau, Hi.



Date of Hearing: 4 March, 2026

To: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Subject: **SB2407**, Relating to Agricultural Land

Aloha,

Hawai'i Food+ Policy is submitting comments and agrees with the comment made by the Department of the Attorney General (DAG) in requesting that the bill explicitly clarify that the purpose shall be for *public purpose* if public credit is going to be used in the transaction outlined in this bill. As this bill enters deliberations by the Senate Committee on Ways and Means we also want to amplify the comments regarding the appropriation of \$1,000,000 of general obligation bonds. While both appropriations – the \$1,000,000 appropriation and the \$200,000 appropriation for a full-time position – have been struck from the draft language, we ask that the comments from the DAG be considered and responded to as seen fit by the committee.

We also want to reassert our previous comments. Section 2 authorizes the director of finance to issue general obligation bonds in the specified sums in fiscal year 2026-2027. Section 3 describes who shall be authorized to expend the appropriated amounts. Section 5 outlines the appropriation from the general revenues for the establishment of one full time-equivalent (1.0 FTE) position. The comment/question we have is if we have outlined the approved types of business and operations that the land purchased under this fee-simple pursuit may be leased to and the intended lease-terms to be established on these lands purchased. This relates to the DAG comment with respect to explicitly denoting that the purposes of this purchase be for public purpose.

The possibilities of the land are mentioned but, are there policy guidelines to ensure that the purchased land will be utilized to “stimulate economic growth, support community initiatives, and revitalize the rural economy in north Kohala”? Will the cultivation that occurs on this land be exclusively, predominately, or primarily used to 1) increase local food production; 2) increase space and production area for cultural practitioners and practices; and 3) for the active practice of food cultivation and holistic stewardship practices in favour of accessory industry uses such as commodity crop research for seed/commodity exportation and/or biochemical research related to food production which are still legally permissible on agricultural lands?

We appreciate having the space to pose these questions and hope to see these questions addressed directly or through other conversations as they occur in committee deliberations.

Mahalo,

Brandon Kinard & the Food+ Policy Team

#fixourfoodsystem

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.

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:44:39 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sadie Garcia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Sadie Garcia and I support bill SB2407 for our Kohala Community

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:05:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rascha Marie Haulikelani Jelks	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Hawai'i State Legislature,

My name is Rascha Marie Haulikelani Jelks and I am a resident of Hawi, in support of Bill 2407. North Kohala is an innovative agricultural community with the potential to be self-sufficient, as well as provide a model of resiliency for the rest of the state, and even the planet, and the funds for the purchase of the Halaula Industrial Parcel could secure our future of food sovereignty.

Born and raised in Kohala, I have proof that this place creates strong people, plants, roots, and activism. The funds and manager position for the industrial parcel in question are crucial to support the recovering economic cycle here in Kohala, and agricultural production on the Big Island. Our soils in Kohala are fertile and we have more topsoil than any other part of the island, making it ideal for farming. Fresh food products can not make it to market without the ability to clean and process them at a nearby facility, a service which Kohala Food Hub has been providing.

Our community's needs have now outgrown that facility. They have proven their efficiency, hard working, and organization to market and distribute tons of food for Hawai'i island each year. Growing and processing our food locally reduces the need for imports, and the more we can produce in our own town, the more affordable it will become for our Kohala families, the kupuna, keiki and kama'aina that love and protect this special place.

Thank you for reading my testimony, and have a great day.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Rascha Jelks

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:37:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David B. Fuertes	Testifying for Fuertes Ohana Ranch	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator Dela Cruz and WAM committe members,

My name is David Basilio Fuertes and I support Bill SB2407.

I reside in North Kohala with a BS degree in Agriculture from the University of Hawaii at Hilo. I enjoy applying what I have learned to be more self sustainable and support the well being of my community.

I have mentored students from various ages and programs about agriculture and livesotk production. During these years of experience I have seen interest, engagement and vision from these students. Their application is strong and focused; however, the follow through with production is limited due to land availability and the absence of proper processing their end products for marketing.

With the proper infrastructures and land opportunity to grow in North Kohala many young agricultralist will be able to bring fresh products to build a self reliant healthy culture for generations to come.

Mahalo for your time and support, Dave B. Fuertes

LATE

SB-2407-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 5:09:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Lankford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha WAM Committee members,

I am a resident of North Kohala. I also participate in the Kohala Food HUB CSA program. I am fully in favor of SB 2407 as North Kohala could use support to meet their local food production goals into the future.

North Kohala had a goal of growing 50% of our food by 2020. It didn't happen, but we keep plugging away. Having state support for food security and creating jobs will be a big help. Please pass SB2407. The children of Hawai'i deserve a chance to stay here in the future and not just be part of the high school to hospitality pipeline.

Mahalo for your time and attention to the needs of my community,

Rachel Lankford