

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

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
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FIRST DEPUTY
CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER
AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
Acting Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
WATER & LAND

Tuesday, March 24, 2026
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2800, SENATE DRAFT 1, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

Senate Bill 2800, Senate Draft 1, House Draft 1 proposes to appropriate funds to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department), and the Agribusiness Development Corporation to acquire, repair, and maintain irrigation systems in the State to preserve the systems for public access and the agriculture industry. **The Department strongly supports this measure.**

The Department is grateful for the inclusion of an appropriation to acquire, repair, and maintain irrigation systems in the State. The Department notes that the appropriation is limited to fiscal year 2026-2027 and respectfully requests that the appropriation be extended through fiscal year 2027-2028 to allow the Department to fully expend the funds.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND
March 24, 2026
9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

SENATE BILL NO. 2800, SD1, HD1
RELATING TO IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

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

The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) supports SB2800, SD1, HD1, and respectfully requests that the appropriations recommended by the Senate Water and Land Committee be restored. We also request that the timeline for completing necessary repairs and remediation be extended through FY 2027–2028.

This funding is critical to maintain essential agricultural infrastructure supporting approximately 17,000 acres of production, advancing the State's food security goals, and ensuring public safety and regulatory compliance. The current level of funding for remediation is insufficient to meet immediate needs, including meter replacement, dam safety compliance, engineering assessments, and installation of monitoring systems.

The requested funding will support core operations, including contracted services, security, staffing, engineering evaluations, and required infrastructure

improvements. It will also address urgent remediation needs to ensure long-term system safety and functionality.

Following recent storm events, additional challenges related to stormwater management and runoff have further impacted ADC's irrigation delivery systems. Incorporating these factors into current planning, the estimated need for capital improvements for existing and potential ADC systems is now approximately \$160 million. This figure is preliminary and will be further refined following discussion and potential approval at the ADC Board meeting scheduled for March 31, 2026, which was rescheduled from March 19 due to the recent storms.

Initial costs reflect necessary upfront capital investments; ongoing annual expenses are expected to decrease after these improvements are completed. Without adequate funding, deferred maintenance will lead to higher long-term costs, increased safety risks, and disruptions to agricultural operations.

For these reasons, ADC urges the Committee to restore the appropriations as recommended by the Senate Water and Land Committee, extend the repair timeline through FY 2027–2028, and pass SB2800 as amended.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support of Hawai'i's agricultural community.

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

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026

9:00 AM

CONFERENCE ROOM 411

**SENATE BILL NO. 2800 SENATE DRAFT 1, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO IRRIGATION SYSTEMS**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2800, Senate Draft 1, House Draft 1. This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity ("DAB"), the Department of Land and Natural Resources ("DLNR"), and the Agribusiness Development Corporation ("ADC") to acquire, maintain, and repair irrigation systems in the State to preserve the systems for public access and the agriculture industry. The Department strongly supports this measure provided it does not impact the priorities identified in the Governor's biennium budget.

This measure appropriates general funds for acquisition, maintenance, and repair of irrigation systems in the State. The amounts identified in the Senate Water, Land, Culture and the Arts committee were estimates prior to the recent Kona low storms. DAB has received updated estimates which significantly increase the anticipated needs. The updated total figure is 109M, with 89M needed for fiscal year 2027 and 20M in the next fiscal biennium beginning in fiscal year 2028, This estimate includes spillway improvements to the Wahiawa Dam, and structural, safety, and efficiency improvements to the Molokai, Waimea, Honokaa-Paauilo, Waimanalo, and Kahuku irrigation systems. This bill provides much needed support for irrigation systems to bring them up to current safety standards.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

LARRY JEFTS FARMS, LLC
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SB2800sd1,hd1 Relating to Irrigation Systems
House Water & Land (WAL) Hearing
Tuesday, March 24, 2026 – 9:00 AM

Testimony By: Larry Jeffs
Position: Strong Support

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

I am Larry Jeffs, owner and operator of Larry Jeffs Farms, LLC. We have more than 42 years of Hawaii farm experience on Molokai and Oahu. Our family farms grow about 1 million pounds weekly of import replacement produce. I am a volunteer director, serving as Chair of the West Oahu Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). I have been an officer of the Hawaii Farm Bureau for many years.

Water is the lifeblood of my farms and essential for Hawaii's agriculture. Without reliable access to affordable water, farmers and ranchers cannot grow import replacement foods for the people of Hawaii. The irrigation systems across the state were built between 1876 and 1920 by the plantations and water companies to provide a consistent water source for sugarcane. Plantations repaired and maintained the systems, benefiting surrounding farmers, communities and businesses. Plantation closures (1980-1990) meant these systems, built more than a hundred years ago, are no longer maintained, are leaking and have infrastructure issues, risking water loss and system failure.

"The need for a reliable, inexpensive source of irrigation water is critical in the transition from plantation agriculture to diversified agriculture." (The Office of Planning's Volume III: Assessment of Irrigation Systems in Hawaii, October 2012) Fourteen years later, that statement still holds.

We appreciate the Legislature's past appropriations and DAB and ADC's work on the Wahiawa irrigation network acquisition and repairs. To strengthen this effort, we respectfully request that SB2800sd1,hd1 allocate funds for acquiring, repairing and maintaining irrigation infrastructure across the state, ensuring these systems are resilient and functional. There is an urgency here for acquiring, repairing and maintaining irrigation systems.

Without the shared focus of DAB, ADC and DLNR and fiscal resources for water management, the food security that everyone wants is a 'good-to-have' concept—a concept without realistic outcomes of food production at a reasonable cost and affordable prices for our community.

Your continued support of Hawaii agriculture is appreciated. Supporting SB2800sd1,hd1 will help ensure the acquisition, repair and management of irrigation systems, strengthening our food security. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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March 24, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

TESTIMONY ON SB 2800, SD1, HD1
RELATING TO IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

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 SB 2800, SD1, HD1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, the Department of Land and Natural Resources, and the Agribusiness Development Corporation to acquire, repair, and maintain irrigation systems throughout the State.

Reliable irrigation infrastructure is foundational to agricultural viability in Hawai'i. Farmers and ranchers depend on consistent and affordable access to water for crop production, livestock operations, and long-term farm planning. Without secure irrigation systems, agricultural production declines, costs increase, and the State's food security goals become more difficult to achieve.

Since the transition from plantation agriculture, many of Hawai'i's irrigation systems have suffered from aging infrastructure, deferred maintenance, and damage from extreme weather events. Leaks, sediment buildup, structural deterioration, and inadequate storage capacity reduce system efficiency and increase water loss. These challenges place additional financial burdens on farmers who already operate in a high-cost production environment.

Investments in irrigation infrastructure help to:

- Reduce water loss and improve system efficiency.
- Strengthen drought resilience and water reliability.
- Support new and expanding agricultural operations.
- Lower long-term operating costs for farmers and ranchers.

Reducing the cost of production is critical to reducing the cost of food. Ensuring that irrigation systems are functional, efficient, and properly maintained is one of the most direct ways the State can support agricultural productivity and economic stability in rural communities across all islands.

SB 2800, SD1, HD1 represents a critical investment in Hawai'i's agricultural infrastructure and long-term food security.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this measure



March 24, 2026

Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Representative Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Water and Land

Strong Support of HB 2800, SD1, HD1, RELATING TO IRRIGATION SYSTEMS (Appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Department of Land and Natural Resources, and Agribusiness Development Corporation to acquire, repair, and maintain irrigation systems in the State. Effective 7/1/3000. [HD1])

**Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 411, and VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE.**

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawai'i (LURF) is a private research and trade association founded in 1979, whose members include major Hawai'i landowners, developers, utility companies, and land use professionals. LURF's mission is to research, educate, and advocate for reasonable, rational, and equitable land use planning, laws, and regulations that encourage well-planned and sustainable economic growth, agriculture, housing, renewable energy, commercial and industrial uses, and tourism, while safeguarding Hawai'i's significant natural, environmental, historic, and cultural resources, public health, and safety.

LURF is in **strong support of SB 2800, SD1, HD1**, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Department of Land and Natural Resources, and Agribusiness Development Corporation, to acquire, repair, and maintain irrigation systems in the State.

LURF's Position: Well-functioning irrigation systems are vital to Hawaii's agricultural industry to ensure that the State's agricultural crops receive a reliable and consistent supply of water to support and maintain productivity. LURF understands that farmers throughout Hawaii are affected by increasingly often-occurring extended drought and other extreme weather events which emphasize the need for diligent maintenance and repair of these irrigation systems.

In order to ensure that these local farmers may continue to receive a dependable supply of water for crops, funding is necessary to improve, repair and maintain the State's irrigation systems.

Local farmers and ranchers who rely on irrigation systems to service their agricultural lands consider such resources critical to conduct their agricultural operations and to sustain their businesses. These agricultural stakeholders believe measures such as SB 1086 will greatly assist by providing funding and support necessary to make improvements to irrigation systems for the long-term betterment of the State's agricultural industry, and are relying on legislation such as this to help them work toward the expansion of diversified agriculture, promote the agricultural self-sufficiency of the State, and protect water as a valuable and significant resource.

Based on the reasons stated above, LURF is in **strong support of SB 2800, SD1, HD1**, and respectfully requests your favorable consideration of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony relating to this proposed measure.

Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President



Christian Zuckerman
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents

Kelii Gannet
Kohala, Hawaii

East Hawaii

Puna, Hawaii

Ka'u, Hawaii

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawaii

Gina Lind
Hana, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahalawai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Molokai

Negus Manna
Lana'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Rachel LaDrig
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kauai

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Water & Land Committee,

The Hawaii 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 SB2800.**

SB2800 recognizes the essential role that reliable irrigation systems play in supporting Hawaii's agriculture sector. The allocation of funds to the Department of Agriculture, Biosecurity, the Department of Land and Natural Resources, and the Agribusiness Development Corporation will enable the acquisition, repair, and maintenance of vital irrigation infrastructure across the state. This investment not only strengthens our agricultural resilience but also ensures that our farmers have consistent access to the water resources necessary for sustainable crop production. By addressing the infrastructure needs, this bill ultimately supports local food security and the economic wellbeing of our rural communities.

Beyond boosting agricultural productivity, the maintenance and enhancement of irrigation systems under SB2800 will also contribute to Hawaii's broader environmental stewardship goals. A well-maintained irrigation system reduces water waste and helps conserve this precious resource. These efforts align with the state's commitment to preserving its unique ecosystems while bolstering the agricultural community that is vital to the local economy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawaii Farmers Union