



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

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

8:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325

in consideration of
SB 3233, SD 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING.

Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports the intent** of SB 3233, SD 1, which promotes agricultural workforce housing by requiring state agencies that administer agricultural leases, licenses, development programs, or procurement involving agricultural products to award additional points or preference to agricultural projects that provide workforce housing.

OPSD supports more farm employee housing on bona fide farms in the State Agricultural District. Farm employee housing helps bona fide farms retain workers and helps to alleviate the state's housing shortage. However, OPSD defers to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, the Agribusiness Development Corporation, and any other state agency that administers agricultural leases, licenses, development programs, or procurement involving agricultural products to determine whether the bill might have any unintended consequences.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026
9:30 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**SENATE BILL NO. 3233, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING**

Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 3233, Senate Draft 1. This bill requires State agencies, including the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and Agribusiness Development Corporation, that administer agricultural leases, licenses, development programs, or procurement involving agricultural products to award points or preferences to agricultural projects incorporating agricultural workforce housing. It also requires a report to the Legislature. The Department respectfully provides comments.

The Department supports efforts to increase the availability of agricultural workforce housing in the State. The most common situation the Department encounters with regard to agricultural housing is when an existing lessee requests permission to construct a farm dwelling on an agricultural park lot or on a non-agricultural park land parcel to house the lessee's immediate and extended family who assist with farm operations, and sometimes a small number of farm employees as well. The Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity has authority to approve such dwellings under applicable program rules.

The Department notes that Senate Bill 3233, Senate Draft 1, appears to be intended for largescale agricultural projects that include, or could include, an agricultural workforce housing component. The only project of this type, the Department undertakes is the development of agricultural parks. The Department has no objection to awarding points or preferences to developers or master lessees who incorporate agricultural workforce housing into new agricultural park projects. Based on the Department's experience, however, not every lessee of a lot in an agricultural park or a non-agricultural park land parcel will want to construct a farm dwelling as part of its operations. The Department therefore respectfully requests that the definition of

“agricultural project” at page 5, lines 12 through 20 of the measure be amended to exclude the typical family-run farm business:

"Agricultural project" means any agricultural, aquacultural, or agroforestry project that includes subdivision and capital improvements to the land and is applying for or participating in a:

- (1) State agricultural land lease or license;
- (2) State-supported agricultural development program; or
- (3) State procurement, in accordance with sections 103D-302 and 103D-303, Hawaii Revised Statutes, grant, or institutional purchasing contract that includes agricultural production.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify 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 HOSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
March 18, 2026
9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

SENATE BILL NO. 3233, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING

Chairperson Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

We are writing to express our support for **Senate Bill 3233, SD1**, and its provisions to expand agricultural worker housing, particularly through the awarding of additional points or preference to projects that directly advance food security, strengthen rural communities, and help meet state housing mandates.

To ensure transparency, fairness, and accountability, any procurement conducted under this program should follow the Hawai'i Public Procurement Code (HRS Chapter 103D). By adhering to established procurement procedures, the selection of housing projects can be conducted in a competitive, objective, and equitable manner while maintaining compliance with state law.

To implement the additional points or preference effectively, we recommend the use of a scoring rubric that prioritizes projects according to the following criteria:

1. Agricultural Worker Housing Component (up to 30 points)

- Projects that provide dedicated housing units for agricultural workers receive higher scores.
- Consideration for long-term affordability, number of units, and regional workforce needs.

2. Food Security Impact (up to 25 points)

- Projects that support stability and continuity in the local food supply, including proximity to working farms or agricultural operations.
- Support for housing enables retention of critical farm labor.

3. Community and Rural Development (up to 20 points)

- Projects that strengthen rural communities, improve access to services, and support local economic development.
- Measures to reduce overcrowding and commuting burdens for agricultural workers.

4. Compliance with Housing Mandates (up to 15 points)

- Projects aligned with state and county housing plans, regional housing needs assessments, and workforce housing objectives.

5. Innovation and Sustainability (up to 10 points)

- Projects incorporating sustainable building practices, energy efficiency, or innovative approaches to workforce housing.

By establishing a clear rubric, SB 3233, SD1, ensures that additional scoring or preference is applied consistently and objectively, directing resources to projects that deliver the greatest benefit for agricultural workers, rural communities, and Hawai'i's food system.

We strongly support SB 3233, SD1, and encourage the adoption of a procurement process that aligns with the Hawai'i Public Procurement Code, coupled with a transparent scoring rubric to prioritize agricultural worker housing projects. This approach ensures both compliance and meaningful impact for our state's agricultural workforce and rural communities.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to strengthening Hawai'i's communities, workforce, and food security.



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March 18, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON SB 3233, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice-Chair Kusch, 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 3233, SD1, which requires state agencies, including the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and Agribusiness Development Corporation, that administer agricultural leases, licenses, development programs, or procurement involving agricultural products to award points or preferences to agricultural projects incorporating agricultural workforce housing.

Access to affordable workforce housing remains one of the most significant barriers to agricultural viability in Hawai'i, particularly on neighbor islands and in rural communities. For many agricultural operations, the ability to provide housing for employees directly affects recruitment, retention, and long-term farm sustainability.

SB 3233, SD1 takes an incentive-based approach by providing scoring preferences within state agricultural programs for projects that incorporate workforce housing. HFB appreciates that the measure does not create a mandate but instead encourages voluntary integration of housing into agricultural development planning.

As the measure moves forward, HFB respectfully encourages consideration of implementation flexibility, particularly for smaller or diversified farms that may not have the scale or capital capacity to provide housing for at least twenty percent of their workforce. Careful calibration of how scoring preferences are weighted will help ensure that the bill strengthens agricultural workforce stability without unintentionally disadvantaging smaller operations.

HFB appreciates the Legislature's recognition that agricultural workforce housing is directly tied to food production and rural economic stability, and we look forward to continued collaboration on practical solutions that support Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce

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Testimony to the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Representative Cory M. Chun, Chair
Representative Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 9:30 AM

RE: SB3233 SD1 Relating to Agricultural Workforce Housing - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce, which represents more than 350 businesses and individual members primarily on the east side of Hawai'i Island, I am writing in **support of Senate Bill 3233 SD1 (SB3233 SD1)**. This measure requires state agencies administering agricultural leases, licenses, development programs, or procurement involving agricultural products to award additional points or preferences to projects that voluntarily provide on-site or nearby workforce housing or formal housing partnerships for agricultural workers.

Hawai'i's agricultural and rural communities continue to face persistent challenges. Research from the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO) shows that, after adjusting for local living costs, income and productivity growth in Hawai'i have trailed the national average for decades, limiting reinvestment and economic opportunity, particularly on the neighbor islands. Supporting agriculture is critical not only for economic resilience, but also for strengthening local food production and preserving rural communities.

Labor shortages remain a major barrier for farms statewide. On Hawai'i Island and across the islands, the limited availability and high cost of housing makes it difficult for agricultural employers to attract and retain workers. Providing stable, nearby housing helps ensure farm operations can continue reliably while giving workers the security needed to remain in their jobs and communities.

SB3233 SD1 aligns with the Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i's 2030 Blueprint for Hawai'i's 21st Century Agriculture policy pillar, which promotes strengthening local production and supporting farmers through practical, evidence-based solutions. By encouraging projects that incorporate workforce housing, the measure helps farms retain skilled workers, improve productivity, and promote long-term stability in rural communities.

For these reasons, the Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce respectfully asks you to **PASS Senate Bill 3233 SD1**. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla Kuo
Executive Officer
Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce

March 12, 2026

To: Chair Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair Matthias Kusch, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB3233 SD1 – Relating to Agricultural Workforce Housing

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

My name is Carlin McFadden, writing on behalf of Hawai'i Food+ Policy in strong support of **SB3233 SD1**, which encourages the integration of agricultural workforce housing into agricultural development by directing state agencies, including the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and the Agribusiness Development Corporation, to provide preferences for projects that incorporate housing for agricultural workers.

Hawai'i's agricultural sector continues to face a persistent workforce challenge, and housing is one of the most significant barriers to maintaining and expanding that workforce. Farmers and ranchers across the islands consistently identify the lack of affordable and accessible housing for workers as a major constraint on their ability to recruit and retain employees. Without housing solutions that are aligned with agricultural operations, many farms struggle to maintain stable labor capacity, which in turn affects productivity and long-term viability.

SB3233 SD1 addresses this challenge in a pragmatic way by creating incentives within existing state agricultural systems. Rather than imposing mandates, the measure encourages agricultural projects that incorporate workforce housing by awarding preference points in state agricultural leases, development programs, and procurement processes involving agricultural products. This approach allows agencies to prioritize projects that strengthen both agricultural production and the stability of the workforce needed to sustain it.

The amendments reflected in SD1 clarify the role of relevant state agencies and emphasize the use of preference-based mechanisms that encourage integrated planning between agricultural operations and workforce housing solutions. This is a constructive approach that supports farmers while also recognizing the realities of Hawai'i's high cost of living and limited rural housing availability.

Hawai'i Food+ Policy supports efforts that strengthen the long-term resilience of our local food system. Agricultural workforce housing is a foundational component of that resilience. When workers cannot afford to live near agricultural operations, farms face higher turnover, transportation barriers, and operational instability. By encouraging projects that integrate housing with agricultural production, SB3233 helps create conditions where both farmers and agricultural workers can remain rooted in the communities they support.

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.



**HAWAI'I
FOOD+
POLICY**

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This measure also reflects a broader understanding that food system resilience depends not only on land and infrastructure, but on people. Supporting the workers who grow and produce food is essential to ensuring Hawai'i can expand local food production and strengthen food security.

For these reasons, Hawai'i Food+ Policy strongly supports **SB3233 SD1** and respectfully urges the Committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Carlin McFadden | Hawai'i Food+ Policy | #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.

**Testimony to the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Representative Cory M. Chun, Chair
Representative Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 9:30AM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference**

RE: SB3233 SD1 Relating to Agricultural Workforce Housing

Aloha e Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, 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 3233 Senate Draft 1 (SB3233 SD1), which requires state agencies, including the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and Agribusiness Development Corporation, that administer agricultural leases, licenses, development programs, or procurement involving agricultural products to award points or preferences to agricultural projects incorporating agricultural workforce housing. Requires a report to the Legislature.

SB3233 SD1 aligns directly with the 21st Century Agriculture policy pillar of the Chamber's 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii. This pillar calls for sensible, market-aligned policies that strengthen the viability, competitiveness, and resilience of Hawaii's agricultural sector. The Blueprint at large focuses on innovative solutions that support fair industry growth. Giving preference to farms that offer workforce housing allows the legislature to incentivize the development of this infrastructure: at no cost to the state, with no mandate required, and at no cost to the farmer.

The agriculture industry continues to face labor shortages and struggles to attract a younger labor force. Incentivizing the construction of workforce housing, and rewarding existing workforce housing, strengthens the agriculture labor proposition. Agricultural workforce housing generates broad public benefits, including reducing commute times, traffic, and strain on public infrastructure. These effects improve food security, support rural economies, and a build more resilient agricultural workforce.

The Chamber additionally supports the amendments made by the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment and the Senate Committee on Government Operations. These amendments promote equity and fairness within this legislation by maintaining accordance with the Hawaii Public Procurement Code. Such amendments help to maintain economic competition amongst Hawaii's farms, regardless of scale.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask to pass Senate Bill 3233 Senate Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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.

SB-3233-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 6:38:11 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!! MAHALO!