

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

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

10:56 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 211

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

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports the intent** of SB 3233, SD 1, which promotes the 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.

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at 10:56AM
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference**

RE: SB3233 SD1 Relating to Agricultural Workforce Housing

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, 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 SD1 (SB3233 SD1), which would incorporate voluntary agricultural workforce housing as a scored public benefit within existing state evaluation and decision-making processes for agricultural leases, licenses, development programs, and procurement.

SB3233 SD1 aligns directly with the 21st Century Agriculture policy pillar of the Chamber's 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii, which 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; and it allows industry to better attract and retain labor. 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 SD1. 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.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



WENDY GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
HUI HO'OU LU AINA MAHIAI

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

February 25, 2026
10:56 a.m.

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

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

Chairperson Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, 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.

SB-3233-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 6:42:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:56:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry,

Comment 3233 SB RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING.

4 PHYSICAL PERMANENT STRUCTURES, NO TOOL SHREDS, NO COMMUNITY SHARING FACILITY LIKE OLD PLANTATION TIMES, DOCUMENTED WORKERS.

SB-3233-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 7:07:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:56:00 AM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!!



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February 25, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON SB 3233, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
10:56 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 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.

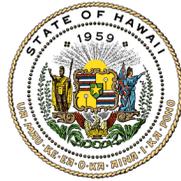
As the measure moves forward, HFB respectfully encourages consideration of implementation flexibility, particularly for smaller or diversified farms that may not have the scale or capital capacity to provide housing for at least twenty percent of their workforce. Careful calibration of how scoring preferences 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.

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 WAYS AND MEANS

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2026
10:56 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 211**

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

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki 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

Testimony of Sharon Hurd

February 25, 2026

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“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.



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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 offers comments on SB3233.**

SB3233 addresses the labor housing crisis but requires safeguards to prevent public land subsidy consolidation by well-capitalized entities at the expense of smallholders.

The proposed scoring preferences favor entities with existing capital to develop infrastructure, effectively forcing farmers to become housing developers and locking out small-scale producers from accessing state leases.

This legislation risks reproducing flawed agricultural park bidding models where land access is determined by financial liquidity rather than agricultural merit or food production potential.

Shifting the housing burden to private developers without unit-allocation limits allows large operations to monopolize state land subsidized workforce housing, creating a barrier for the next generation of farmers who cannot compete with corporate scale.

While the bill establishes a floor for agricultural worker units, it does not establish a ceiling per operation. To address this, consider amending SECTION 2. (b) Scoring rubrics and guidelines include:

- (1) Preference for projects that provide housing for workers from multiple independent farm operations; and
- (2) Formal partnerships that secure housing for a portion of the agricultural workforce associated with the project; and
- (3) A cap ensuring that no single agricultural operation or affiliated entity shall be allocated more than fifty per cent of the total units within a state-funded or state-incentivized agricultural workforce housing project.

Economic viability for Hawaii's food system depends on housing people and supporting a robust and diverse industry. Slanting subsidy in land and housing towards capitalized operations risks limiting smallholder access. Amending SB3233 can protect and ensure state land serves a broad base of farmers.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

