

ACT 131

H.B. NO. 1992

A Bill for an Act Relating to the Environment.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that allowing composting in agricultural districts will facilitate production of local organic material that farmers can use to improve soil health, increase drought resistance, and reduce the need for supplemental water and fertilizers while also increasing crop yields. The legislature also finds that composting is currently not a permissible activity in agricultural districts, which is a barrier for composting entities who seek to establish operations in the districts from obtaining the necessary permits.

The legislature further finds that increased composting, including composting of food waste, will also divert materials from landfills, which are rapidly reaching capacity and facing the burden of closure and re-siting, a process that will cost each county hundreds of millions of dollars and create community resentment. Increased composting will also move the State closer to achieving the following:

- (1) The Aloha+ Challenge, which is a statewide commitment to realize the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, including the goals of achieving seventy per cent waste reduction before disposal and doubling local food production by 2030;
- (2) The Hawaii 2050 sustainability plan, which also sets a mandate for the State to achieve full sustainability and resilience through increased food production and dramatic waste reduction via recycling and bioconversion strategies; and
- (3) Increasing the generation of local compost to sequester more carbon and mitigate climate change pursuant to the strategy identified by the greenhouse gas sequestration task force permanently established by Act 15, Session Laws of Hawaii 2018, codified as section 225P-4, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

The legislature additionally finds that there is a single general permit for all prospective food waste composters that is designed to handle all potential applicants ranging from small- to large-scale operations. Potential small-scale food waste composters have indicated that the application process is too daunting, deterring them from applying. As a result, the State has lost a valuable opportunity to reduce the amount of waste that enters landfills, create economic benefits for

composters, and increase the supply of local organic soil enhancers for Hawaii's agricultural and horticultural industries.

The legislature finds that the solid and hazardous waste branch of the department of health had intended to develop an additional, simplified application process for its general permit targeting small-scale composters of green waste and food waste to encourage more small-scale composters to apply for permits. The simplified process would have increased the workload on the solid and hazardous waste branch to provide education to prospective applicants, process applications, conduct site inspections, and respond to complaints. However, an environmental health specialist position dedicated to these types of solid waste facilities was eliminated and the responsibilities of that position were absorbed by other positions, leaving the solid and hazardous waste branch unable to expand services to include the simplified general permit application process for small-scale composters.

The purpose of this Act is to:

- (1) Encourage the production of local compost and the diversion of certain materials from the State's waste streams by allowing composting and co-composting operations in agricultural districts, under certain conditions; and
- (2) Establish and appropriate funds for an environmental health specialist IV position in the solid and hazardous waste branch of the department of health.

SECTION 2. Section 205-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

“(d) Agricultural districts shall include:

- (1) Activities or uses as characterized by the cultivation of crops, crops for bioenergy, orchards, forage, and forestry;
- (2) Farming activities or uses related to animal husbandry and game and fish propagation;
- (3) Aquaculture, which means the production of aquatic plant and animal life within ponds and other bodies of water;
- (4) Wind-generated energy production for public, private, and commercial use;
- (5) Biofuel production, as described in section 205-4.5(a)(16), for public, private, and commercial use;
- (6) Solar energy facilities; provided that:
 - (A) This paragraph shall apply only to land with soil classified by the land study bureau's detailed land classification as overall (master) productivity rating class B, C, D, or E; and
 - (B) Solar energy facilities placed within land with soil classified as overall productivity rating class B or C shall not occupy more than ten per cent of the acreage of the parcel, or twenty acres of land, whichever is lesser, unless a special use permit is granted pursuant to section 205-6;
- (7) Bona fide agricultural services and uses that support the agricultural activities of the fee or leasehold owner of the property and accessory to any of the above activities, regardless of whether conducted on the same premises as the agricultural activities to which they are accessory, including farm dwellings as defined in section 205-4.5(a)(4), employee housing, farm buildings, mills, storage facilities, processing facilities, photovoltaic, biogas, and other small-scale renewable energy systems producing energy solely for use in the agricultural activities of the fee or leasehold owner of the property, agricultural-

energy facilities as defined in section 205-4.5(a)(17), vehicle and equipment storage areas, and plantation community subdivisions as defined in section 205-4.5(a)(12);

- (8) Wind machines and wind farms;
- (9) Small-scale meteorological, air quality, noise, and other scientific and environmental data collection and monitoring facilities occupying less than one-half acre of land; provided that these facilities shall not be used as or equipped for use as living quarters or dwellings;
- (10) Agricultural parks;
- (11) Agricultural tourism conducted on a working farm, or a farming operation as defined in section 165-2, for the enjoyment, education, or involvement of visitors; provided that the agricultural tourism activity is accessory and secondary to the principal agricultural use and does not interfere with surrounding farm operations; and provided further that this paragraph shall apply only to a county that has adopted ordinances regulating agricultural tourism under section 205-5;
- (12) Agricultural tourism activities, including overnight accommodations of twenty-one days or less, for any one stay within a county; provided that this paragraph shall apply only to a county that includes at least three islands and has adopted ordinances regulating agricultural tourism activities pursuant to section 205-5; provided further that the agricultural tourism activities coexist with a bona fide agricultural activity. For the purposes of this paragraph, "bona fide agricultural activity" means a farming operation as defined in section 165-2;
- (13) Open area recreational facilities;
- (14) Geothermal resources exploration and geothermal resources development, as defined under section 182-1;
- (15) Agricultural-based commercial operations registered in Hawaii, including:
 - (A) A roadside stand that is not an enclosed structure, owned and operated by a producer for the display and sale of agricultural products grown in Hawaii and value-added products that were produced using agricultural products grown in Hawaii;
 - (B) Retail activities in an enclosed structure owned and operated by a producer for the display and sale of agricultural products grown in Hawaii, value-added products that were produced using agricultural products grown in Hawaii, logo items related to the producer's agricultural operations, and other food items;
 - (C) A retail food establishment owned and operated by a producer and permitted under chapter 11-50, Hawaii administrative rules, that prepares and serves food at retail using products grown in Hawaii and value-added products that were produced using agricultural products grown in Hawaii;
 - (D) A farmers' market, which is an outdoor market limited to producers selling agricultural products grown in Hawaii and value-added products that were produced using agricultural products grown in Hawaii; and
 - (E) A food hub, which is a facility that may contain a commercial kitchen and provides for the storage, processing, distribution, and sale of agricultural products grown in Hawaii and value-added products that were produced using agricultural products grown in Hawaii.

The owner of an agricultural-based commercial operation shall certify, upon request of an officer or agent charged with enforcement of this chapter under section 205-12, that the agricultural products displayed or sold by the operation meet the requirements of this paragraph; ~~and~~

- (16) Hydroelectric facilities as described in section 205-4.5(a)(23)[-]; and
- (17) Composting and co-composting operations; provided that operations that process their own green waste and do not require permits from the department of health shall use the finished composting product only on the operation's own premises to minimize the potential spread of invasive species.

Agricultural districts shall not include golf courses and golf driving ranges, except as provided in section 205-4.5(d). Agricultural districts include areas that are not used for, or that are not suited to, agricultural and ancillary activities by reason of topography, soils, and other related characteristics.”

SECTION 3. Section 205-4.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

“(a) Within the agricultural district, all lands with soil classified by the land study bureau’s detailed land classification as overall (master) productivity rating class A or B and for solar energy facilities, class B or C, shall be restricted to the following permitted uses:

- (1) Cultivation of crops, including crops for bioenergy, flowers, vegetables, foliage, fruits, forage, and timber;
- (2) Game and fish propagation;
- (3) Raising of livestock, including poultry, bees, fish, or other animal or aquatic life that are propagated for economic or personal use;
- (4) Farm dwellings, employee housing, farm buildings, or activities or uses related to farming and animal husbandry. “Farm dwelling”, as used in this paragraph, means a single-family dwelling located on and accessory to a farm, including clusters of single-family farm dwellings permitted within agricultural parks developed by the State, or where agricultural activity provides income to the family occupying the dwelling;
- (5) Public institutions and buildings that are necessary for agricultural practices;
- (6) Public and private open area types of recreational uses, including day camps, picnic grounds, parks, and riding stables, but not including dragstrips, airports, drive-in theaters, golf courses, golf driving ranges, country clubs, and overnight camps;
- (7) Public, private, and quasi-public utility lines and roadways, transformer stations, communications equipment buildings, solid waste transfer stations, major water storage tanks, and appurtenant small buildings such as booster pumping stations, but not including offices or yards for equipment, material, vehicle storage, repair or maintenance, treatment plants, corporation yards, or other similar structures;
- (8) Retention, restoration, rehabilitation, or improvement of buildings or sites of historic or scenic interest;
- (9) Agricultural-based commercial operations as described in section 205-2(d)(15);
- (10) Buildings and uses, including mills, storage, and processing facilities, maintenance facilities, photovoltaic, biogas, and other small-scale renewable energy systems producing energy solely for use in

the agricultural activities of the fee or leasehold owner of the property, and vehicle and equipment storage areas that are normally considered directly accessory to the above-mentioned uses and are permitted under section 205-2(d);

- (11) Agricultural parks;
- (12) Plantation community subdivisions, which as used in this chapter means an established subdivision or cluster of employee housing, community buildings, and agricultural support buildings on land currently or formerly owned, leased, or operated by a sugar or pineapple plantation; provided that the existing structures may be used or rehabilitated for use, and new employee housing and agricultural support buildings may be allowed on land within the subdivision as follows:
 - (A) The employee housing is occupied by employees or former employees of the plantation who have a property interest in the land;
 - (B) The employee housing units not owned by their occupants shall be rented or leased at affordable rates for agricultural workers; or
 - (C) The agricultural support buildings shall be rented or leased to agricultural business operators or agricultural support services;
- (13) Agricultural tourism conducted on a working farm, or a farming operation as defined in section 165-2, for the enjoyment, education, or involvement of visitors; provided that the agricultural tourism activity is accessory and secondary to the principal agricultural use and does not interfere with surrounding farm operations; and provided further that this paragraph shall apply only to a county that has adopted ordinances regulating agricultural tourism under section 205-5;
- (14) Agricultural tourism activities, including overnight accommodations of twenty-one days or less, for any one stay within a county; provided that this paragraph shall apply only to a county that includes at least three islands and has adopted ordinances regulating agricultural tourism activities pursuant to section 205-5; provided further that the agricultural tourism activities coexist with a bona fide agricultural activity. For the purposes of this paragraph, "bona fide agricultural activity" means a farming operation as defined in section 165-2;
- (15) Wind energy facilities, including the appurtenances associated with the production and transmission of wind generated energy; provided that the wind energy facilities and appurtenances are compatible with agriculture uses and cause minimal adverse impact on agricultural land;
- (16) Biofuel processing facilities, including the appurtenances associated with the production and refining of biofuels that is normally considered directly accessory and secondary to the growing of the energy feedstock; provided that biofuel processing facilities and appurtenances do not adversely impact agricultural land and other agricultural uses in the vicinity.

For the purposes of this paragraph:

"Appurtenances" means operational infrastructure of the appropriate type and scale for economic commercial storage and dis-

tribution, and other similar handling of feedstock, fuels, and other products of biofuel processing facilities.

“Biofuel processing facility” means a facility that produces liquid or gaseous fuels from organic sources such as biomass crops, agricultural residues, and oil crops, including palm, canola, soybean, and waste cooking oils; grease; food wastes; and animal residues and wastes that can be used to generate energy;

- (17) Agricultural-energy facilities, including appurtenances necessary for an agricultural-energy enterprise; provided that the primary activity of the agricultural-energy enterprise is agricultural activity. To be considered the primary activity of an agricultural-energy enterprise, the total acreage devoted to agricultural activity shall be not less than ninety per cent of the total acreage of the agricultural-energy enterprise. The agricultural-energy facility shall be limited to lands owned, leased, licensed, or operated by the entity conducting the agricultural activity.

As used in this paragraph:

“Agricultural activity” means any activity described in paragraphs (1) to (3) of this subsection.

“Agricultural-energy enterprise” means an enterprise that integrally incorporates an agricultural activity with an agricultural-energy facility.

“Agricultural-energy facility” means a facility that generates, stores, or distributes renewable energy as defined in section 269-91 or renewable fuel including electrical or thermal energy or liquid or gaseous fuels from products of agricultural activities from agricultural lands located in the State.

“Appurtenances” means operational infrastructure of the appropriate type and scale for the economic commercial generation, storage, distribution, and other similar handling of energy, including equipment, feedstock, fuels, and other products of agricultural-energy facilities;

- (18) Construction and operation of wireless communication antennas, including small wireless facilities; provided that, for the purposes of this paragraph, “wireless communication antenna” means communications equipment that is either freestanding or placed upon or attached to an already existing structure and that transmits and receives electromagnetic radio signals used in the provision of all types of wireless communications services; provided further that “small wireless facilities” shall have the same meaning as in section 206N-2; provided further that nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to permit the construction of any new structure that is not deemed a permitted use under this subsection;
- (19) Agricultural education programs conducted on a farming operation as defined in section 165-2, for the education and participation of the general public; provided that the agricultural education programs are accessory and secondary to the principal agricultural use of the parcels or lots on which the agricultural education programs are to occur and do not interfere with surrounding farm operations. For the purposes of this paragraph, “agricultural education programs” means activities or events designed to promote knowledge and understanding of agricultural activities and practices conducted on a farming operation as defined in section 165-2;

- (20) Solar energy facilities that do not occupy more than ten per cent of the acreage of the parcel, or twenty acres of land, whichever is lesser or for which a special use permit is granted pursuant to section 205-6; provided that this use shall not be permitted on lands with soil classified by the land study bureau's detailed land classification as overall (master) productivity rating class A;
- (21) Solar energy facilities on lands with soil classified by the land study bureau's detailed land classification as overall (master) productivity rating B or C for which a special use permit is granted pursuant to section 205-6; provided that:
 - (A) The area occupied by the solar energy facilities is also made available for compatible agricultural activities at a lease rate that is at least fifty per cent below the fair market rent for comparable properties;
 - (B) Proof of financial security to decommission the facility is provided to the satisfaction of the appropriate county planning commission prior to date of commencement of commercial generation; and
 - (C) Solar energy facilities shall be decommissioned at the owner's expense according to the following requirements:
 - (i) Removal of all equipment related to the solar energy facility within twelve months of the conclusion of operation or useful life; and
 - (ii) Restoration of the disturbed earth to substantially the same physical condition as existed prior to the development of the solar energy facility.

For the purposes of this paragraph, "agricultural activities" means the activities described in paragraphs (1) to (3);

- (22) Geothermal resources exploration and geothermal resources development, as defined under section 182-1; ~~or~~
- (23) Hydroelectric facilities, including the appurtenances associated with the production and transmission of hydroelectric energy, subject to section 205-2; provided that the hydroelectric facilities and their appurtenances:
 - (A) Shall consist of a small hydropower facility as defined by the United States Department of Energy, including:
 - (i) Impoundment facilities using a dam to store water in a reservoir;
 - (ii) A diversion or run-of-river facility that channels a portion of a river through a canal or channel; and
 - (iii) Pumped storage facilities that store energy by pumping water uphill to a reservoir at higher elevation from a reservoir at a lower elevation to be released to turn a turbine to generate electricity;
 - (B) Comply with the state water code, chapter 174C;
 - (C) Shall, if over five hundred kilowatts in hydroelectric generating capacity, have the approval of the commission on water resource management, including a new instream flow standard established for any new hydroelectric facility; and
 - (D) Do not impact or impede the use of agricultural land or the availability of surface or ground water for all uses on all parcels that are served by the ground water sources or streams for which hydroelectric facilities are considered~~[-]; or~~

- (24) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, composting and co-composting operations; provided that operations that process their own green waste and do not require permits from the department of health shall use the finished composting product only on the operation's own premises to minimize the potential spread of invasive species."

SECTION 4. There is established one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) permanent environmental health specialist IV position in the solid and hazardous waste branch of the department of health.

SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$55,200 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) permanent environmental health specialist IV position for the solid and hazardous waste branch of the department of health.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of health for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 6. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

(Approved June 27, 2022.)