

ACT 187

H.B. NO. 778

A Bill for an Act Relating to Integrated Land Use.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that multiple climate and sustainability statutory targets have been enacted in the State, including developing at least 22,500 affordable rental housing units, doubling food production, increasing food exports, requiring the department of education and university of Hawaii to become net-zero in energy use, requiring that all of the electricity generated in Hawaii comes from renewable sources, sequestering more atmospheric carbon and greenhouse gases, requiring all state and county facilities to use reclaimed water, and requiring the mandatory upgrade of all cesspools.

The legislature recognizes that, with the recent expansion of the office of planning and sustainable development through Act 45, Session Laws of Hawaii 2020, and Acts 152 and 153, Session Laws of Hawaii 2021, the office of planning and sustainable development functionally serves as the State's centralized coordinating agency to lead efforts in climate adaptive and sustainable land use policies.

The legislature further finds that the State would benefit from a land use plan that integrates various climate and sustainability goals and studies, especially on the use of agricultural lands. An integrated land use study would help to address recent events and public opposition to affordable housing projects and renewable energy projects on agricultural land.

The purpose of this Act is to require the office of planning and sustainable development to conduct an integrated land use study that incorporates the various climate and sustainability goals and studies to serve as a guide for planning and decision making on the use of agricultural lands.

SECTION 2. (a) The office of planning and sustainable development shall conduct an integrated land use study for agricultural districts as classified under section 205-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

(b) The purpose of the integrated land use study shall be to:

- (1) Develop land use data that can be used for planning and decision making for the competing uses of lands within agricultural districts; and
- (2) Determine the land use feasibility and needs of lands within agricultural districts to meet the State's climate, sustainability, and housing statutory targets.

(c) The integrated land use study shall incorporate the recommendations of:

- (1) The Hawaii 2050 sustainability plan pursuant to section 226-65, Hawaii Revised Statutes;
- (2) The state land use review of districts;
- (3) The Hawaii sea level rise vulnerability and adaptation report pursuant to section 225P-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes; and
- (4) The State's climate, sustainability, and housing statutory targets, as needed.

(d) The integrated land use study shall also consider the Hawaii state plan update phase one and the soil classification study required pursuant to Act 189, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022.

(e) The integrated land use study shall include recommendations for each county.

(f) In conducting the integrated land use study, the office of planning and sustainable development shall:

- (1) Develop data-based estimates on the amount of land required to meet the competing uses of lands within the agricultural districts by compiling and analyzing existing data from various government entities, including the department of agriculture; department of transportation; department of land and natural resources; department of business, economic development, and tourism; Hawaii state energy office; Hawaii housing finance and development corporation; public utilities commission; and the counties. Secondary input shall be sought from the university of Hawaii, utility companies, nonprofit agricultural organizations, the agricultural community, and other organizations or entities deemed appropriate by the office;
- (2) Clearly define and prioritize the protection of productive agricultural lands to prevent further encroachment from non-agricultural developments, including developing measures to ensure agricultural lands designated for agriculture production are not compromised for short-term development needs;
- (3) Include direct input from the agricultural community to ensure the study reflects the realities and needs of farmers and ranchers;
- (4) Conduct outreach to ensure county and community input and acceptance; and
- (5) Once the initial compilation of data is completed, analyze the available acreage in each county along with the potential impacts for the proposed changes.

SECTION 3. The office of planning and sustainable development shall submit an interim report to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2026 on the progress of developing data-

based estimates and the progress of the integrated land use study and a final report to the legislature and the land use commission no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2027.

SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$400,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) planner position, exempt from chapter 76, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and for computers, office supplies, travel, and other expenses to conduct the integrated land use study.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the office of planning and sustainable development for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

(Approved June 6, 2025.)