



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
and

Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs
Wednesday, March 24, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

By

Nicholas Comerford, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SCR 246/SR 205 – REQUESTING THAT A WORKING GROUP BE CONVENED TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE REVITALIZING ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

Chairs Gabbard and Shimabukuro, Vice Chairs Nishihara and Keohokalole, and members of the Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Hawaiian Affairs:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on SCR 246 / SR 205. We neither support nor oppose the measure because there seems much to be clarified before we can do so.

We support the need to improve agriculture in Hawai'i; the use of a working group to provide recommendations on how to make that happen; and, the use of well-documented farming practices that improve soil health, and that make farming economically viable.

We understand that a working group is being asked to provide recommendations to move forward a specific initiative named “Revitalizing Economy and Agriculture Leadership (REAL)”. However, significant parts of the resolution should first be clarified:

1. The term restorative agriculture is not a term in common use. It is not common in the refereed literature or on the internet. It would be useful to define the meaning of the term. Subsequent comments are based on the assumption that the meaning is in the same vein as regenerative agriculture. Regenerative agriculture is based in the use of best management practices to promote sustainability, including economic viability. We support the promotion of best management practices that focus on developing soil health and that produce an economically viable farm.
2. The resolution states that restorative agriculture increases food production by 100%. We are not familiar with a body of work that supports this statement.

However, we are familiar with research that shows that the use of practices often used in regenerative agriculture – when used appropriately and expertly, can reduce the cost of inputs and increase the economic return to a farming operation. They may also have a positive effect on production.

3. We are not familiar with the initiative described in the resolution entitled: “Revitalizing Economy and Agriculture Leadership (REAL)”. It may be useful to state where this initiative comes from as we cannot find anyone with whom we often deal with in agriculture that has heard of it.

The resolution describes this initiative as requiring “immediate attention, action, and collaboration...”. It describes that it is already under way, and describes 3 phases of activity. By following the timeline outlined in the resolution, phases 1 and 2 would be over by the time the working group’s recommendations were reported to the legislature. Phase three would also be over by the time recommendations could have an effect. It seems reasonable then to clarify how the timeline of activity and the working group recommendations interact.

In summary, we support bringing together a diverse group of experts to evaluate and recommend action for a common problem. We also recognize that the pandemic has seriously cut into the personnel capital of the organizations mentioned, affecting their ability to engage with this resolution. So, while we defer to the organizations as to their ability to participate on such a task force, particularly in light of the numerous agriculture task forces being recommended, we support participating in this one if it is clear that the effort would result in timely recommendations; that we understand what is meant by restorative agriculture; and that we better understand the origin and the meaning of the REAL initiative.

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



JAMES J. NAKATANI
Executive Director

STATE OF HAWAII
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

235 S. Beretania Street, Room 205
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 586-0186 Fax: (808) 586-0189

TESTIMONY OF JAMES J. NAKATANI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT AND
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Wednesday, March 24, 2021
1:00 p.m.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 246
REQUESTING THAT A WORKING GROUP BE CONVENED TO DEVELOP
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE REVITALIZING ECONOMY AND
AGRICULTURE LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE.

Chairpersons Gabbard and Shimabukuro and Members of the Joint Committees:

The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) appreciates the intent of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 246 which requests that a working group be convened to develop recommendations for implementing the revitalizing economy and agriculture leadership initiative.

The ADC, which is administratively attached to the Hawaii Department of Agriculture, is comprised of five (5) employees. Our staff manages agricultural lands and infrastructure on Kauai and Oahu. Our mission is to acquire and manage, in partnership with farmers, ranchers, and aquaculture groups, selected arable lands, water systems and infrastructure for commercial agricultural use, and to direct research into areas that will lead to the development of new crops, markets, and lower production costs.

We recognize that Hawaii's agriculture industry is at a critical juncture and we need a meeting of the minds to develop a roadmap for moving all sectors because each has its own niche and markets. The local food movement has been gaining momentum, which has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe convening a working group will help identify the key challenges and priorities that we must begin to address with a sense of urgency if we are serious about moving agriculture and achieving food and energy security. We have many strengths to build on, but this effort will require courage, leadership, collaboration, and integration. For these reasons, we appreciate the intent of the resolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
AND
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2021

1:00 P.M.

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

SCR 246 / SR 205
REQUESTING THAT A WORKING GROUP BE CONVENED TO DEVELOP
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE REVITALIZING ECONOMY AND
AGRICULTURE LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

Chairpersons Gabbard, Shimabukuro, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SCR 246 and SR 205. This resolution requests that a working group be convened to develop recommendations for implementing the revitalizing economy and agriculture leadership initiative. The Department of Agriculture (“the Department”) has serious concerns with this measure.

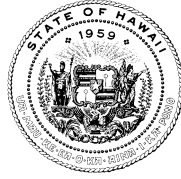
The Department appreciates the intent of this measure, however, questions its ability to participate and perform as expected due to the proposed loss of positions and funding currently being debated in the Legislature.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII

JOSH GREEN
LT. GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII



WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
CHAIRMAN
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

TYLER I. GOMES
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRMAN

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS**

P. O. BOX 1879
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM J. AILA, JR, CHAIRMAN
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT &
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
HEARING ON MARCH 24, 2021 AT 1:00PM VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**SCR 246/SR 205 REQUESTING THAT A WORKING GROUP BE CONVENED TO
DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE REVITALIZING
ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE**

March 24, 2021

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Chair Shimabukuro, and members of the Committees:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) submits comments on these resolutions requesting that a working group be convened to develop recommendations for implementing the revitalizing economy and agriculture leadership initiative. DHHL appreciates the motivation behind these resolutions and sees an opportunity to work collaboratively to develop recommendations regarding implementation of the Revitalizing Economy and Agriculture Leadership initiative, but notes that the Department's mission is to develop and deliver land to native Hawaiians. As such, DHHL's land and resources in this effort will be for its beneficiaries.

For Maui, Hawaii, Kauai, and Molokai, the waiting list for an agricultural lot is longer than a residential lot. Given this strong apparent demand for agricultural lots and DHHL's extensive agricultural land inventory on the neighbor island, DHHL has gone through consultation with our beneficiaries and conducted public hearing with the community to amend our rules to include a new type of award of leasehold. The Subsistence Ag award will allow DHHL to award a lease up to 3 acres in size to address those on the Agricultural Waiting List. These leases will not be required to have as extensive infrastructure improvements that would be expected with a residential lease award. With lower infrastructure requirements, DHHL will be able to award more lots with less cost.

Projects have commenced on Hawaii Island, Kauai, Molokai and Oahu to provide Subsistence Ag lots.

- In Honomu, on Hawaii Island, the master planning has commenced and engineering for the initial phase of lots is under design. In Panaewa, DHHL is subdividing a 10 acre ag lot into smaller subsistence ag lots.

- On Kauai, lands in Hanapepe will utilize CIP funding to master plan lots, including Subsistence Ag lots, and seek to engineer necessary infrastructure including water, drainage and roads.
- On Molokai, the CIP funding will allow subdivision of larger Ag lots into smaller Subsistence Ag lots and will also allow for extending much needed infrastructure to more lots.
- On Oahu, CIP funding has allowed for the design of Subsistence Ag lots in Waimanalo. The engineers for the water, electrical, drainage and roadways has commenced.

Any initiatives that support implementation of Subsistence Ag in these areas would help not only DHHL's beneficiaries, but the agricultural economy.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



Kamehameha Schools®

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

Date: March 24, 2021
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Where: Via Videoconference

TESTIMONY

By Marissa Harman
Director of Asset Management

RE: SCR 246 / SR 205 – Requesting that a working group be convened to develop recommendations for implementing the Revitalizing Economy and Agriculture Leadership initiative.

E nā Luna Ho‘omalū Gabbard a me Shimabukuro, nā Hope Luna Ho‘omalū Nishihara a me Keohokalole, a me nā Lālā o kēia mau Kōmike, aloha!

Kamehameha Schools **SUPPORTS SCR 246 / SR 205**. We believe that our educational mission is best achieved in a society that supports and enables the success of our learners. One significant component of such a society is a sustainable, local food system. For this reason, we have heavily invested in agriculture on our lands across Hawai‘i to contribute to the State’s Aloha+ Challenge goal of doubling local food production by 2030.

We believe that this working group can play a pivotal role in uplifting our local food system. Kamehameha Schools is willing to participate as a member of the working group.

Accordingly, we kindly request you **PASS SCR 246 / SR 205**.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is an organization striving to advance a thriving Lāhui where all Native Hawaiians are successful, grounded in traditional values, and leading in the local and global communities. We believe that community success is individual success, Hawaiian culture-based education leads to academic success and local leadership drives global leadership. Mahalo nui!

SCR-246

Submitted on: 3/19/2021 8:59:48 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/24/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Forest Frizzell	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Committee,

I stand in full support of this bill. We need to find alternative economies and job creation in Hawaii. Agriculture and energy are perfect to fill the void of a service-based economy.

Mahalo,

Forest Frizzell