

JAN 24 2013

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO RURAL AREAS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The 2010 Census results determined that Oahu no
2 longer contains any areas that federally qualify as rural. This
3 endangers Kahuku medical center's designation as a critical
4 access hospital and disqualifies all communities on Oahu from
5 participating in federal rural programs. Since 2010, rural
6 communities in Hawaii have qualified for \$1,890,000 in federal
7 grants from the Health Resources and Services Administration's
8 Office of Rural Health Policy alone, with about half going to
9 Oahu. With the release of the latest census figures,
10 communities on Oahu no longer qualify for these and other
11 federal programs.

12 While the federal definitions of rural will keep some
13 communities from participating in federal programs, there are
14 several federal programs that recognize state definitions of
15 rural. The State of New Jersey, which has no areas within its
16 state that meet any of the federal definitions of rural, still
17 maintains a State Office of Rural Health and has eight areas
18 that qualify as rural for federal programs due to the enactment



1 by the state of a definition for rural. New Jersey maintains
2 that if a county's population density is below eight hundred
3 people per square mile, the area is considered rural. Several
4 states have rural definitions in order to protect and maintain
5 services to remote communities within their state.

6 The purpose of this Act is to establish a definition of
7 rural that would protect existing programs in remote areas of
8 the State, such as the critical access hospital program in
9 Kahuku, and expand opportunities for other communities that are
10 perceived as rural within the State but no longer meet federal
11 definitions to qualify as such.

12 SECTION 2. Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by adding a
13 new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read as
14 follows:

15 "CHAPTER

16 DESIGNATION OF RURAL AREAS FOR FEDERAL PROGRAMS

17 § -1 Rural areas and federal programs. (a) The term
18 "rural" under this section shall be strictly used to determine
19 if an area qualifies for a federal program that requires that an
20 area be defined or designated as rural under state or federal
21 law. This section does not connote any land use functions for
22 the area so designated or in any way affect the use or



1 definition of rural districts established pursuant to section
2 205-2.

3 (b) An area that qualifies as rural pursuant to a federal
4 definition shall be considered rural by the State for purposes
5 of this section only.

6 (c) If an area does not qualify as rural pursuant to a
7 federal definition, the area may use the following definitions
8 for determining its rural status for the purposes of a federal
9 program that accepts state definitions:

10 (1) Any island with a population density of fewer than
11 five hundred people per square mile shall be
12 considered rural; and

13 (2) If an island's population density exceeds five hundred
14 people per square mile, an area within the island
15 shall be considered rural if it is within a zip code
16 tabulation area with a population density below eight
17 hundred people per square mile as determined by the
18 population of the last official census and using the
19 entire zip code tabulation area as determined by the
20 United States Census Bureau."

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1 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

Man He

Goh Sun



S.B. NO. 1339

Report Title:

Rural Areas; Federal Programs

Description:

Creates a state definition for a rural area for purposes of federal programs only so that certain areas that would not otherwise be considered rural pursuant to a federal definition will be eligible for federal funds designated for rural areas.

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