May 5, 2015

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi, 
President 
and Members of the Senate 
Twenty-Eighth State Legislature 
State Capitol, Room 409 
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Joseph M. Souki, 
Speaker and Members of the 
House of Representatives 
Twenty-Eighth State Legislature 
State Capitol, Room 431 
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Souki, and Members of the Legislature:

This is to inform you that on May 5, 2015, the following bill was signed into law:

SB434 SD2 HD1 RELATED TO AGRICULTURE 
ACT 031 (15)

Sincerely,

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor, State of Hawai'i
BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawai'i's traditional farming systems, such as loko i'a (fishponds), māla (cultivated gardens), and lo'i (irrigated patches), were important agricultural technologies that once sustained a thriving and robust island community. The legislature further finds that these traditional Hawaiian farming systems still play a critical role in Hawai'i and should be encouraged to promote greater self-sufficiency, crop diversity, and food security. Moreover, traditional Hawaiian crops like kalo, ‘uala (sweet potato), limu (various seaweeds), ‘awa, hō‘i‘o (large native fern), and ‘ōlena (turmeric) that were cultivated using these traditional Hawaiian farming techniques continue to be important agricultural products for food, medicine, and cultural practices today.

Prioritizing traditional agricultural techniques such as traditional Hawaiian farming is increasingly viewed as good policy. The United Nations Commission on Trade and Development urges nation states to support the development of sustainable
small-scale farms and traditional farming systems to achieve food security, particularly in light of climate change. Supporting traditional farming is also consistent with the recommendations of the taro security and purity task force's 2010 legislative report E ola hou ke kalo; ho'i hou ka 'āina lē'ia: The taro lives; abundance returns to the land. The report emphasizes the need to invest in traditional farming and crops to perpetuate culture, and to support disaster preparedness and food security in our islands.

The legislature finds that article XI, section 3, of the Constitution of the State of Hawai'i requires the legislature to provide standards and criteria to increase Hawai'i's agricultural self-sufficiency.

The purpose of this Act is to update the State's agricultural planning statute to add the growth and development of traditional Hawaiian farming systems and traditional Hawaiian crops, as well as the growth and development of small-scale farms, as agricultural objectives of the State.

SECTION 2. Section 226-7, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:
"(b) To achieve the agriculture objectives, it shall be the policy of this State to:

(1) Establish a clear direction for Hawaii's agriculture through stakeholder commitment and advocacy.

(2) Encourage agriculture by making the best use of natural resources.

(3) Provide the governor and the legislature with information and options needed for prudent decision-making for the development of agriculture.

(4) Establish strong relationships between the agricultural and visitor industries for mutual marketing benefits.

(5) Foster increased public awareness and understanding of the contributions and benefits of agriculture as a major sector of Hawaii's economy.

(6) Seek the enactment and retention of federal and state legislation that benefits Hawaii's agricultural industries.

(7) Strengthen diversified agriculture by developing an effective promotion, marketing, and distribution
system between Hawaii's food producers and consumers in the State, nation, and world.

(8) Support research and development activities that strengthen economic productivity in agriculture, stimulate greater efficiency, and enhance the development of new products and agricultural by-products.

(9) Enhance agricultural growth by providing public incentives and encouraging private initiatives.

(10) Assure the availability of agriculturally suitable lands with adequate water to accommodate present and future needs.

(11) Increase the attractiveness and opportunities for an agricultural education and livelihood.

(12) In addition to the State's priority on food, expand Hawaii's agricultural base by promoting growth and development of flowers, tropical fruits and plants, livestock, feed grains, forestry, food crops, aquaculture, and other potential enterprises.

(13) Promote economically competitive activities that increase Hawaii's agricultural self-sufficiency,
including the increased purchase and use of Hawaii-grown food and food products by residents, businesses, and governmental bodies as defined under section 103D-104.

(14) Promote and assist in the establishment of sound financial programs for diversified agriculture.

(15) Institute and support programs and activities to assist the entry of displaced agricultural workers into alternative agricultural or other employment.

(16) Facilitate the transition of agricultural lands in economically nonfeasible agricultural production to economically viable agricultural uses.

(17) Perpetuate, promote, and increase use of traditional Hawaiian farming systems, such as the use of loko i'a, māla, and irrigated lo'i, and growth of traditional Hawaiian crops, such as kalo, 'uala, and 'ulu.

(18) Increase and develop small-scale farms."

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.