A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the development of hydroelectric energy-generating facilities in Hawaii is vital to the energy security and energy independence of the State. Increased use of renewable energy resources will achieve broad societal benefits, including resistance to oil price increases, environmental sustainability, economic development, and job creation.

The legislature also finds that some of the sites that are targeted for the development of hydroelectric energy-generating facilities in Hawaii are located on agricultural lands. Although various types of renewable energy facilities may be constructed on agricultural lands, hydroelectric facilities currently are not included as a permissible use.

The legislature further finds that Hawaii's agricultural land is a fundamentally important and diminishing resource that is pivotal to the State's initiatives in food security. Therefore, the location, construction, and operation of
renewable energy facilities must be considered in a manner that promotes both food and energy security.

The purpose of this Act is to authorize construction of hydroelectric facilities on agricultural lands; provided that the hydroelectric facilities:

1. Have a hydroelectric generating capacity of not more than five hundred kilowatts;
2. Comply with the state water code, chapter 174C, Hawaii Revised Statutes;
3. Are accessory to agricultural activities on agricultural land for agricultural use only; and
4. Do not adversely impact or impede the use of agricultural land or the availability of surface or ground water for irrigation use on parcels that are served by the ground water sources or streams for which hydroelectric facilities are considered.

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
1 cent of the acreage of the parcel, or twenty
2 acres of land, whichever is lesser, unless a
3 special use permit is granted pursuant to section
4 205-6;
5 (7) Bona fide agricultural services and uses that support
6 the agricultural activities of the fee or leasehold
7 owner of the property and accessory to any of the
8 above activities, regardless of whether conducted on
9 the same premises as the agricultural activities to
10 which they are accessory, including farm dwellings as
11 defined in section 205-4.5(a)(4), employee housing,
12 farm buildings, mills, storage facilities, processing
13 facilities, photovoltaic, biogas, and other small-
14 scale renewable energy systems producing energy solely
15 for use in the agricultural activities of the fee or
16 leasehold owner of the property, agricultural-energy
17 facilities as defined in section 205-4.5(a)(17),
18 hydroelectric facilities in accordance with section
19 205-4.5(a)(23), vehicle and equipment storage areas,
20 and plantation community subdivisions as defined in
21 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; and (15) Agricultural-based commercial operations, 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; and

(C) A retail food establishment owned and operated by
a producer and permitted under title 11, chapter
12 of the rules of the department of health 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.

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.

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 used in connection with 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 distribution, 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; 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 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 section, "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 unless the solar energy facilities are:

(A) Located on a paved or unpaved road in existence as of December 31, 2013, and the parcel of land upon which the paved or unpaved road is located has a valid county agriculture tax dedication status or a valid agricultural conservation easement;

(B) Placed in a manner that still allows vehicular traffic to use the road; and

(C) Granted a special use permit by the commission pursuant to section 205-6;

(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); [es]
(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) Have a hydroelectric generating capacity of not
more than five hundred kilowatts;

(B) Comply with the state water code, chapter 174C;

(C) Are accessory to agricultural activities on
agricultural land for agricultural use only; and

(D) Do not adversely 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."

SECTION 4. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.
SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2015; provided that the amendments made to section 205-4.5(a), Hawaii Revised Statutes, by section 3 of this Act shall not be repealed when that section is reenacted on June 30, 2019, pursuant to section 3(1) of Act 52, Session Laws of Hawaii 2014.
Report Title:
Agricultural Land; Permissible Use; Hydroelectric Facilities

Description:
Includes hydroelectric facilities that generate up to 500 kilowatts of electricity as a permissible use on agricultural lands if the hydroelectric facilities are accessory to agricultural activities for agricultural use only and if certain other conditions are met. (HB1273 CD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.