
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A KONA
AREA AGRICULTURAL WORKING GROUP TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURE,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND HOUSING.

1 WHEREAS, a thriving and sustainable agriculture industry
2 serves as a critical component of Hawaii County's rural
3 lifestyle, character, and economy by producing food, fiber,
4 energy, and ornamentals for local consumption and export; and
5

6 WHEREAS, Hawaii island agriculture will continue to be a
7 stabilizing foundation of the local economy for the foreseeable
8 future; and
9

10 WHEREAS, agriculture exports to outer island and the North
11 American and Asia continents provide a critical infusion of
12 money originating off-island; and
13

14 WHEREAS, the agriculture industry on the island of Hawaii
15 would greatly benefit from the availability of services that are
16 not currently being provided, such as improving the food
17 security by encouraging the consumption of locally produced
18 agricultural goods, developing county provided services to the
19 agriculture producers or processors at economically viable
20 rates, and other programs to encourage and more fully develop
21 this important industry on Hawaii island; and
22

23 WHEREAS, the Kona area provides a plethora of singular
24 ventures that can improve the agriculture, economic development,
25 and housing opportunities by working together with state and
26 county agencies; and
27

28 WHEREAS, the construction of the Keahole Agricultural Park
29 was intended to strengthen diversified agriculture through a
30 plan that consolidates and concentrates agricultural activities
31 in a centralized location for the purpose of improving
32 production and distribution; and



1
2 WHEREAS, the one hundred seventy-nine acre Keahole
3 Agricultural Park is in consonance with state policy and
4 complements the existing rural environment, provides employment,
5 and stimulates the agricultural economy in the area; and
6

7 WHEREAS, due to constraints in water availability, the
8 agricultural park has been implemented in phases and one
9 hundred-plus acres of state-owned land immediately mauka of the
10 agricultural park remain undeveloped and unproductive; and
11

12 WHEREAS, the close proximity of the Palamanui Campus of
13 Hawaii Community College to the Keahole Agriculture Park offers
14 opportunities for courses in landscape agriculture and
15 engineering; and
16

17 WHEREAS, energy and ocean-related research, education, and
18 commercial aquaculture is centered at the Natural Energy of
19 Hawaii Authority (NELHA) on three hundred twenty-two acres at
20 Keahole Point and NELHA provides an opportunity to expand
21 production of fresh aquaculture food products, promote marketing
22 of locally grown aquaculture products, provide stable cash flow
23 for aquaculture farmers, and create a varied and large market
24 for local aquaculture; and
25

26 WHEREAS, currently, the County of Hawaii hauls its west
27 side green waste to Hilo for processing. Instead, these
28 nutrient rich waste products can be mixed with West Hawaii's
29 abundant green waste to produce a nitrogen-rich and valuable
30 compost for agricultural park farmers, who struggle to operate
31 on volcanic lands; and
32

33 WHEREAS, for the last decade, the Kealakehe Wastewater
34 Treatment Plant treats and disposes of sewage collected from the
35 North Kona Sewerage system, which extends across the greater
36 Kailua-Kona region. Current flows, rich in nitrogen and
37 phosphorus, to the plant are approximately 1.8 million gallons
38 per day migrating through groundwater and delivered directly
39 above Honokohau Harbor and through the adjacent porous
40 shorelines, thereby resulting in West Hawaii's coastal waters
41 being rated as impaired by the Department of Health. Treating
42 and reusing the water to irrigate the Keahole Agricultural Park,



1 NELHA, and resorts and homes in between the two locations can
2 reduce the demand for freshwater which will help relieve high
3 demand on high elevation wells and reduce irrigation costs; and
4

5 WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation's Keahole Airport
6 has its own wastewater treatment plant that produces an excess
7 of recycled water to irrigate its airport facilities and may
8 also be usable to irrigate neighboring state facilities,
9 including the Keahole Agricultural Park; and
10

11 WHEREAS, a 2015 report by the Department of Business,
12 Economic Development, and Tourism titled "Measuring Housing
13 Demand in Hawaii, 2015-2025" projected that Hawaii County's
14 population will grow by twenty-nine per cent by 2025, creating a
15 forecasted demand for 18,610 additional housing units, which is
16 approximately thirty per cent of the total projected demand of
17 64,700 housing units needed across the state; and
18

19 WHEREAS, the County of Hawaii lacks a comprehensive plan
20 that defines strategies and target deadlines to create more
21 housing over the short- and long-term, as well as the kind of
22 housing that is needed and its location, how to fund critical
23 infrastructure, ways to foster public-private partnerships,
24 recommendations to leverage state and federal policy tools and
25 funding streams, and policy changes to reduce barriers and
26 obstacles to address the island's housing crisis with a clearly
27 defined purpose, vision, and values; and
28

29 WHEREAS, the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands owns six
30 hundred acres in the Keahole Agricultural Park area. Four
31 hundred vacant acres are zoned for residential development. One
32 hundred acres are zoned for agricultural development and one
33 hundred acres are zoned for commercial development. Development
34 in this area can contribute to creating a significant number of
35 homes for Hawaiians on Hawaii island; and
36

37 WHEREAS, the Hawaii Opportunity Zones Program provides
38 incentives for investors to re-invest realized capital gains
39 into Opportunity Funds in exchange for temporary tax deferral
40 and other benefits. The Opportunity Funds are then used to
41 provide investment capital in certain economically distressed
42 communities called Opportunity Zones. The Kona area is home to



H.C.R. NO. 33

1 Opportunity Zone 215.4 and 216.1. The Opportunity Zone
2 designation makes them extremely attractive to private investors
3 so these opportunities do not necessarily require state funding
4 to be realized due to the presence of federal infrastructure
5 development financing; now, therefore,

6
7 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
8 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
9 of 2021, the Senate concurring, that the Department of
10 Agriculture is urged to form an inter-governmental Kona Area
11 agricultural working group to help navigate opportunities of
12 agriculture, affordable housing, and economic development
13 consisting of members of relevant county departments and
14 agencies to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for the
15 Kona area; and

16
17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
18 to develop a framework to:

- 19
20 (1) Improve communication to increase efficiency and
21 strengthen partnerships between Hawaii County, the
22 agriculture industry, landowners, and the Hawaii
23 island community;
- 24
25 (2) Increase profitability of Hawaii Island's agricultural
26 businesses through cost reduction strategies and
27 greater market share for local products;
- 28
29 (3) Increase the availability and quality of agricultural
30 education on Hawaii island;
- 31
32 (4) Secure affordable land with long-term tenure for
33 farming and ranching and allow for the production of
34 residential units on Hawaiian home lands;
- 35
36 (5) Provide adequate and affordable agricultural water for
37 farmers, livestock producers, and food processors;
- 38
39 (6) Reduce the cost of energy and fuel for agricultural
40 producers;
- 41



H.C.R. NO. 33

- 1 (7) Maximize transportation infrastructure resources and
2 minimize transporting green waste within the Kona
3 area;
- 4
- 5 (8) Promote environmental conservation and minimize
6 discharges of wastewater;
- 7
- 8 (9) Facilitate practical, applied research that will
9 assist farmers in crop and livestock production using
10 sustainable techniques and establish Hawaii island as
11 a center for tropical agricultural research; and
12
- 13 (10) Promote investment opportunities in areas in the
14 federal Opportunity Zone designation and maximize on
15 realizing federal infrastructure development; and
16

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group's membership
18 consist of the following members:

- 19
- 20 (1) One member of the Senate, to be appointed by the
21 President of the Senate;
- 22
- 23 (2) One member of the House of Representatives, to be
24 appointed by the Speaker of the House of
25 Representatives;
- 26
- 27 (3) One representative of the Department of Agriculture;
- 28
- 29 (4) One representative of the Department of Business,
30 Economic Development, and Tourism;
- 31
- 32 (5) One representative of the Department of Hawaiian Home
33 Lands;
- 34
- 35 (6) One representative of the Department of Health;
- 36
- 37 (7) One representative of the Department of
38 Transportation;
- 39
- 40 (8) One representative of the University of Hawaii System
41 (Hawaii Community College);
42



H.C.R. NO. 33

- 1 (9) One representative of the Office of the Mayor of the
- 2 County of Hawaii;
- 3
- 4 (10) One representative of the Hawaii County Department of
- 5 Environmental Management; and
- 6
- 7 (11) One representative of the County of Hawaii Department
- 8 of Water Supply.
- 9

10 The Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture shall serve as

11 the chair of the task force; and

12

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group, with the

14 administrative assistance of the Department of Agriculture, is

15 requested to submit a report of its findings and

16 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the

17 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of

18 the Regular Session of 2022; and

19

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this

21 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the

22 Board of Agriculture; Director of Business, Economic

23 Development, and Tourism; Director of Health, Chairperson of

24 Hawaiian Homes Commission; Director of Transportation; President

25 of the University of Hawaii System; Mayor of the County of

26 Hawaii; Director of the Department of Environmental Management;

27 and Manager of the Department of Water Supply for the County of

28 Hawaii.

29

30

31

OFFERED BY: *Maria E. Luu*

FEB - 3 2021

