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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that new farmers face  
2 tremendous obstacles in starting a farm. For example, many new  
3 farmers face high infrastructure costs to provide water, sewer,  
4 and electrical services to the land. Farmers who lease land  
5 encounter difficulties in terminating leases when housing is  
6 situated on the leased land, while farmers who purchase private  
7 land face the prospect that lessees will demand lease to fee  
8 conversion.

9           Not surprisingly, even with the increasing interest in  
10 farming, the number of new farmers nationwide has declined by  
11 twenty per cent over the past five years. Further, the average  
12 age of a Hawaii farmer is higher than the national average, and  
13 that gap is increasing.

14           The legislature finds that the State, as owner of thousands  
15 of acres of agricultural land, can play a major role in  
16 addressing the barriers faced by prospective farmers by creating  
17 state-owned small farming communities. Agricultural areas with



1 two to five acre lots, each with a clustered off-grid housing  
2 unit, leased to the farmer, can address many of the challenges  
3 faced by prospective farmers, while also addressing potential  
4 infrastructure, eviction, and inefficiency problems for the  
5 landowner.

6 The purpose of this Act is to encourage farming in the  
7 State by establishing a five-year energy independent farming  
8 community pilot project to provide support to persons who want  
9 to be farmers.

10 SECTION 2. (a) The University of Hawaii, college of  
11 tropical agriculture and human resources, agribusiness incubator  
12 program shall establish a five-year energy independent farming  
13 community pilot project.

14 (b) The energy independent farming community pilot project  
15 shall:

- 16 (1) Be owned by the State;
- 17 (2) Be managed by a manager, who shall be appointed by the  
18 dean of the University of Hawaii, college of tropical  
19 agriculture and human resources;
- 20 (3) Contain land, housing, and shared facilities;



- 1           (4) Lease land and homes to tenants who shall use the land  
2           for agricultural purposes;
- 3           (5) Utilize state funds or bonds to fund the initial land  
4           improvements, including construction of roads,  
5           buildings, and wells;
- 6           (6) Charge lease rents in amounts designed to finance the  
7           capital costs, maintenance, and management of the  
8           energy independent farming community pilot project;  
9           and
- 10          (7) Shall be energy and water independent, including using  
11          photovoltaic panels, atmospheric water generators,  
12          solar water heaters, septic waste water systems, well  
13          water, and any other technological developments  
14          related to energy and water independence.
- 15          (c) The energy independent farming community pilot project  
16 may configure the land to allow for housing and shared  
17 facilities to be located in the center of the community with  
18 each house adjacent to the tenant's respective farm.
- 19          (d) The University of Hawaii may adopt rules pursuant to  
20 chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, for the purposes of this  
21 Act.



1           SECTION 3. The University of Hawaii shall submit interim  
2 reports to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to  
3 the convening of the regular sessions of 2017, 2018, 2019, and  
4 2020, and a final report to the legislature no later than twenty  
5 days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2021. The  
6 reports shall contain information on the progress made toward  
7 implementing the energy independent farming community pilot  
8 project, the estimated amount of bonds required to finance the  
9 project and infrastructure, status of the pilot project,  
10 accomplishments of the pilot project, and proposed legislation,  
11 if any. The final report shall also include a recommendation on  
12 whether the pilot project should be made permanent.

13           SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
14 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$                    or so much  
15 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 to fund  
16 one full-time equivalent manager position (1.0 FTE) for the  
17 energy independent farming community pilot project.

18           The sum appropriated shall be expended by the University of  
19 Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

20           SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general  
21 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$                    or so much



1 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 for the  
2 planning of an energy independent farming community pilot  
3 project.

4 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the University of  
5 Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

6 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2525, and  
7 shall be repealed on June 30, 2021.



**Report Title:**

Energy Independent Farming Community; Pilot Project;  
Agriculture; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes, within CTAHR's agribusiness incubator program, a five-year energy independent farming community pilot project. Appropriates funds. (HB2676 HD2)

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

