
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR CONDUCT A PERFORMANCE AUDIT
OF THE TEN AGRICULTURAL PARKS OPERATED BY THE AGRICULTURAL
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE.

1 WHEREAS, agricultural parks are areas set aside
2 specifically for agricultural activities to encourage
3 continuation or initiation of agricultural operations; and
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5 WHEREAS, the Governor announced in 2016 that he was
6 committed to doubling Hawaii's food production by 2020; and
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8 WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture, through its
9 Agricultural Resource Management Division, operates ten
10 agricultural parks on the island of Hawaii, Oahu, Kauai, and
11 Molokai; and
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13 WHEREAS, the agricultural parks contain a total of two
14 hundred twenty-seven plots that provide access to irrigation and
15 other infrastructure designed to support small family farms; and
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17 WHEREAS, the State's Agricultural Park Program is intended
18 to make land available to small farmers at reasonable cost with
19 long-term leases; and
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21 WHEREAS, a February 2021 article in the *Honolulu Civil*
22 *Beat*, entitled "Hawaii Farmers Need Land. State Efforts to Help
23 Aren't Working", noted that the State's Agricultural Park
24 Program has allowed small, family farms to flourish, but the
25 application process is burdensome and the most effective way to
26 get a plot is to take over an existing lease, which may shut out
27 small farmers with thinner profit margins; and
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29 WHEREAS, the article also noted that some agricultural
30 parks are popular, while others have undesirable plots that sit



1 empty for so many years that the Department of Agriculture stops
2 advertising their availability; and

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4 WHEREAS, these issues, among others, have raised questions
5 among small farmers about whether the Agricultural Park Program
6 is still serving its original purpose and have prompted calls
7 for the Department of Agriculture to make changes; and

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9 WHEREAS, the Agribusiness Development Corporation was
10 created in 1994 to develop an aggressive and dynamic program to
11 fill the void created by the closure of sugar and pineapple
12 plantations; and

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14 WHEREAS, a legal action has been filed against the
15 Department of Agriculture regarding its management practices for
16 a certain agricultural park and is currently pending; and

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18 WHEREAS, in January 2021, the Office of the Auditor
19 released Report No. 21-01, entitled "Audit of the Agribusiness
20 Development Corporation", which found that the agency was
21 deficient in several key areas; and

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23 WHEREAS, a broader issue is whether the Department of
24 Agriculture is adequately managing its farm lands to help Hawaii
25 grow more of its own food; now, therefore,

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27 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
28 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
29 of 2022, that the Office of the Auditor is requested to conduct
30 a performance audit of the ten agricultural parks operated by
31 the Agricultural Resource Management Division of the Department
32 of Agriculture; and

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34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of the Auditor is
35 requested to submit a report of its performance audit, including
36 any findings, recommendations, and proposed legislation, to the
37 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the Regular
38 Session of 2023; and

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40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
41 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
42 Agriculture and Auditor.



H.R. NO. 70

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OFFERED BY:

John M. McQuinn

MAR 10 2022

