STATE OF HAWAIʻI
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
DIRECTOR

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaiʻi 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaiʻi 96804

Telephone: (808) 587-2846
Fax: (808) 587-2824
Web: https://planning.hawaii.gov/

Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Thursday, February 26, 2026
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

in consideration of
SB 2006, SD 1
RELATING TO FARM EMPLOYEE HOUSING.

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports S**B 2006, SD 1, which amends HRS Chapter 205 to define "farm employee housing" and authorize it in the State Agricultural District under certain conditions.

OPSD supports more farm employee housing on bona fide farms in the State Agricultural District. Farm employee housing helps bona fide farms retain workers and helps to alleviate the state's housing shortage.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor

SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI A KIA'I MEAOLA
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9560 FAX: (808) 973-9613

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2026
10:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 016

SENATE BILL NO. 2006, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO FARM EMPLOYEE HOUSING

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2006 that clarifies that a "farm dwelling" permitted in an agricultural district includes a single-family farm dwelling with an accessory employee housing structure, subject to certain restrictions. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) offers comments.

The Department notes that this measure makes clear that the "farm dwelling" and the "farm employee housing" are to be accessory to a farm operation.

The term "farm employee housing" (page 8, line 19 to page 10, line 2) is defined mostly in physical terms and does not reinforce its relationship to the farm operation that the farm dwelling is already accessory to.

"Farm employee housing" is to have the following characteristics.

- Consist of one or more "residential dwelling units";
- Be attached or detached from the "primary farm dwelling";
- Be no larger than eight hundred habitable square feet per residential dwelling unit;
- The area occupied by the farm dwelling, "accessory farm employee housing", and associated appurtenances shall not exceed a fixed ratio of agricultural land leased to the fee owner of the farm dwelling;
- No fee owner of the farm dwelling shall cause to condominiumize the "farm employee housing units" from the farm dwelling;
- No portion of the farm dwelling shall be used for agricultural tourism; and

- Agricultural tourism activities may occur on the same parcel as a farm dwelling when those activities are secondary and incidental to a bona fide “agricultural operation” and shall not occur within farm employee housing units and be in compliance with county ordinances governing agricultural tourism activities in Section 205-5.

The measure does not address the situation where the agricultural landowner is also the farm operator and seeks to build a farm dwelling and farm employee housing units.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND PERMITTING
KA ʻOIHANA HOʻOLĀLĀ A ME NĀ PALAPALA ʻAE
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 7TH FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAIʻI 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-8000 • FAX: (808) 768-6041 • WEBSITE: honolulu.gov/dpp

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA

DAWN TAKEUCHI APUNA
DIRECTOR
PO'O

BRYAN GALLAGHER, P.E.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

REGINA MALEPEAI
2ND DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O KUALUA

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND PERMITTING
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

February 26, 2026
Conference Room 016

TO: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair, The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary

RE: COMMENTS ON SENATE BILL NO. 2006, SD 1 RELATING TO FARM EMPLOYEE HOUSING

The Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) **offers comments** on Senate Bill No. 2006, SD 1, which clarifies that a "farm dwelling" permitted in an agricultural district includes a single-family farm dwelling with an accessory employee housing structure, subject to certain restrictions.

While the City is in favor of efforts to support our agricultural industry by allowing flexibility for various forms of housing for farm workers, allowing multi-family dwellings, i.e., an apartment building, without safeguards in place is not in keeping with the desired character and intent of the agricultural district. We note that the amendments to § 205-4.5 appear to be largely consistent with the new farm worker housing use that was added to the City's Land Use Ordinance (LUO) (Revised Ordinances of Honolulu, Chapter 21) under Ordinance 25-2. We also appreciate that the Bill prohibits separating ownership through a condominium property regime, and using the farm dwellings and farm employee housing for agricultural tourism and as transient vacation rentals. We likewise understand that agricultural tourism that is secondary and incidental to a bona fide agricultural operation supports the feasibility of farming by providing necessary supplemental income.

Specifically, the LUO states that farm worker housing may be composed of multiple single-unit, two-unit, or multi-unit dwellings; one employee and the employee's family or up to three unrelated employees may share one dwelling unit; each dwelling unit must not exceed 800 square feet of floor area; and no more than eight dwelling units are allowed in any multi-unit dwelling. The latter is the main difference with the proposed Bill – the LUO provision establishes a maximum number of units per structure

at eight, rather than placing a maximum ratio of square feet of agricultural-related structures per acre of agricultural land. We also note that this ratio is undetermined in the proposed Bill, and may not be the most appropriate measure since it does not align with the City's zoning regulations. Furthermore, it may be helpful to know that the DPP requires a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to ensure bona fide farm worker housing in agricultural districts. During the review of the CUP, the Director of the DPP evaluates the submitted agricultural plans and the amount of labor necessary to farm the land to ensure the plans justify the number of dwelling units proposed. When the associated farm is no longer in active production or no longer employing farm workers, no workers may be housed on the zoning lot, pursuant to the LUO, § 21-5.40-4(e).

In summary, we recommend that amendments to Chapter 205 be broad enough to allow consistency with each county's zoning code, without creating conflicting language that will complicate the exiting regulatory structure. Respectfully, the State should provide deference to the counties' localized experience and expertise to ensure that the farm worker housing is justified and appropriate.

We respectfully offer these serious comments on Senate Bill No. 2006, SD 1, and request your committee give them the appropriate consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We are available to work with the Legislature on this issue as appropriate.

Very truly yours,



Dawn Takeuchi Apuna
Director

P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 26, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

TESTIMONY ON SB 2006, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 016 & Videoconference
10:00 AM

Aloha Chairs Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawaiʻi Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawaiʻi's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawaiʻi Farm Bureau offers comments on SB 2006, SD1, which clarifies that a "farm dwelling" permitted in an agricultural district includes a single-family farm dwelling with an accessory employee housing structure, subject to certain restrictions.

HFB has long supported farm dwellings and accessory employee housing as essential components of viable agricultural operations, particularly to address workforce housing needs in rural communities. On-site housing allows farmers and ranchers to live near their operations, respond to livestock and crop needs, support agricultural workers, deter agricultural crimes, and maintain productive farms, particularly in rural areas where housing options are limited. Farm dwellings and farm worker housing play an important role in sustaining local agricultural production and supporting Hawai'i's agricultural workforce.

At the same time, HFB remains concerned about the misuse of agricultural lands for residential purposes that are not tied to bona fide agricultural activity. "Gentleman farms" and dwellings that function primarily as residential units undermine the intent of the Agricultural District, inflate land values, reduce access to land for working farmers, and create conflicts that ultimately harm legitimate agricultural operations. We support appropriate enforcement to address non-bona fide agricultural use and protect the integrity of agricultural lands.

HFB appreciates the clarifications made to improve statutory consistency and provide clearer definitions related to farm dwellings and farm employee housing. As the

Legislature considers changes, HFB urges continued attention to ensuring that implementation does not unintentionally make it more difficult for bona fide farmers and ranchers to establish or maintain farm dwellings and agricultural worker housing.

We also appreciate the clarification that agricultural tourism activities may continue on the same parcel when those activities are secondary and incidental to a bona fide agricultural operation and comply with applicable county ordinances. Agricultural tourism can provide important supplemental income for working farms and should coexist with legitimate agricultural activity, consistent with the intent of the Agricultural District.

We respectfully note the importance of maintaining the traditional division of responsibilities between the State and the counties. Chapter 205 establishes permissible land uses at the State level, while counties have long been responsible for zoning, building standards, and regulating the size, placement, and design of dwellings through their zoning and permitting processes. Any changes to State law should focus on land-use purposes and agricultural activities, while preserving county authority over zoning and housing standards.

Finally, HFB emphasizes the importance of consistency and clarity in enforcement. Clear, workable standards that distinguish bona fide agricultural operations from non-agricultural use are essential to preventing abuse while ensuring that legitimate farmers are not unfairly burdened.

HFB appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on SB 2006, SD1, and looks forward to continued collaboration to support farm dwellings and agricultural workforce housing while protecting Hawai‘i’s agricultural lands for real, productive agriculture.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Housing Hawai‘i’s Future
PO Box 3043
Honolulu, HI 96802-3043

February 26, 2026

TO: Chair Rhoads and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary
RE: SB 2006 HD1, Relating to Farm Employee Housing

Dear Chair Rhoads and Committee Members,

Housing Hawai‘i’s Future is a nonprofit dedicated to creating opportunities for Hawai‘i’s next generation by ending the workforce housing shortage.

We support SB 2006 SD1. Subject to certain restrictions, this measure clarifies that a farm dwelling in agricultural districts may include an accessory employee housing structure. This clarification addresses an important intersection between agricultural productivity and the urgent need for workforce housing in rural areas.

Allowing accessory employee housing within agricultural districts supports both the agricultural sector and the broader community by enabling farm operators to provide on-site accommodations for their employees. This can alleviate workforce shortages, reduce commuting barriers, and support the economic vitality of Hawai‘i’s farms.

Furthermore, this measure will reduce regulatory uncertainty for farmers and landowners, supporting responsible development without undermining the integrity of agricultural districts.

We are grateful for your careful consideration of Senate Bill 2006 SD1.

Thank you,





Lee Wang
Executive Director
Housing Hawai‘i’s Future
lee@hawaiisfuture.org

Perry Arrasmith
Director of Policy
Housing Hawai‘i’s Future
perry@hawaiisfuture.org

Officers
Kaipo Kekona
State President

Christian Zuckerman
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents
Kelii Gannet
Kohala, Hawai'i

East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Ka'ū, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawai'i

Gina Lind
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahālāwai, Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Moloka'i

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Rachel LaDrig
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

HFUU
Hawai'i Farmers Union United
Kaua'i · O'ahu · Moloka'i · Maui · Hawai'i

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports SB2006.**

Producers in Hawaii face a critical labor shortage exacerbated by the state's high cost of living; this measure allows farmers to provide safe, legal, and affordable on-site housing, which is essential for attracting and retaining a reliable workforce. On-site housing not only alleviates commuting burdens but also makes farm employment a more attractive option for residents, promoting a stable and dedicated agricultural workforce.

By formalizing accessory employee housing as a recognized component of a "farm dwelling," the bill reduces regulatory and permitting hurdles that can prevent farmers from expanding their operations. The inclusion of accessory structures ensures that housing remains secondary to agricultural production, protecting the integrity of agricultural lands while providing the infrastructure necessary to meet the State's food production goals.

Through explicitly prohibiting the use of these units for agricultural tourism and preventing parcelling via Condominium Property Regime (CPR), SB2006 ensures that agricultural land remains for farming rather than being subdivided for luxury "gentleman estates" or short-term rentals. Overall, this measure offers a balanced approach that addresses the urgent need for worker housing while strictly upholding the long-term integrity of the State's agricultural districts.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heaivilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

LATE

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/25/2026 10:18:28 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colehour Bondera	Testifying for Kanalani Ohana Farm	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members:

Please receive this as strong support for SB2006.

Our farm recognizes that the problems for many farms is the lack of capacity for housing needs and this will help!

Thank you in advance,

Colehour Bondera

KANALANI OHANA FARM

Honaunau, HI

GRASSROOT INSTITUTE OF HAWAII

1050 Bishop St. #508
Honolulu, HI 96813
808-864-1776
info@grassrootinstitute.org

Removing barriers to Hawaii's prosperity

Feb. 26, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 016 and Videoconference

LATE

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary
Sen. Karl Rhoads, Chair
Sen. Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii
Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2006 SD1 — RELATING TO FARM EMPLOYEE HOUSING

Aloha chair, vice chair and other committee members,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** SB2006 SD1, which would update the state's definition of "farm dwelling" to include employee housing structures under certain conditions.

Under the bill, "farm employee housing" could be one or more dwelling units as long as the habitable square footage of the dwellings does not exceed 800 square feet and no unit is used as a vacation rental.

Grassroot pointed out in its January 2026 policy brief "How to facilitate more housing for Hawaii farm and ranch workers" that a lack of affordable housing has consistently been cited as a barrier to expanding agricultural production in Hawaii. The report also made clear that there is no statewide standard for how and where farm employee housing can be built.

Approving this bill would give farmers and ranchers an extra tool to help attract and retain workers, because living on the land could minimize commute times and transportation expenses. Consider the following information:

>> Hawaii imports 85-90% of its food supply.[1]

[1] Hannah Leto, Jordan Mitkowski and Katie Hogan et al., "Agricultural Labor on Hawai'i Island," Swette Center for Sustainable Food Systems at Arizona State University, May 2025, p. 1.

>> A 2020 U.S. Department of Agriculture survey found that 41% of the state's farmers and ranchers cited a lack of labor as a barrier to expanding their operations.[2]

>> More than 9,500 people in Hawaii were employed as "hired farm labor" in 2023.[3]

>> Almost half of those people worked on farms and ranches on Hawaii Island alone,[4] but only one-quarter of Hawaii Island farmers reported hiring labor.

Allowing more housing on farms and ranches, especially for temporary and seasonal workers, would be a win for farm and ranch owners, a win for their employees and a win for everyone who enjoys local food.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

[2] "Labor Shortage as a Barrier to Agricultural Expansion 2020," Hawaii Department of Agriculture in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, April 2022.
[3] "Hawaii PYs 2024-2027," Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, p. 70.
[4] Hannah Leto, Jordan Mitkowski and Katie Hogan et al., "Agricultural Labor on Hawai'i Island," Swette Center for Sustainable Food Systems at Arizona State University, May 2025, pp. 4-5.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/23/2026 5:30:13 PM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!!

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:23:05 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rosemary Alles	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I've heard that farmers are getting squeezed by how hard it is to find good help. Please vote for HB1737 and SB2006 to give them the ability to Build Housing for their employees, that would let them offer the housing as a perk of working on the farm. Would also save on Gas and Fuel costs for the employees!

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:27:06 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Askman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass S.B. 2006. Farmers need housing options that fit farm life. This change is overdue.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:31:09 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wendy Bernier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I am submitting testimony in support of S.B. 2006 along with H.B. 1737. Small homes make agriculture more realistic for young people starting out. Without housing options, we lose the next generation of farmers. These bills are practical and overdue. Please pass them.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:32:30 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Faith Burns	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oh my gosh, are you kidding me? Working on a "farm" or any endeavor to grow any type of food or livestock is super hard work. ADU's a MUST, let people live where they work. Mahalo!

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:33:47 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronda Castillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of sb2006 and hb1737. Workers need affordable places to live, and farms need workers. Allowing housing on farms helps solve both problems. I need help to farm but have no proper dwelling under the current 200 sq ft allowance. That is not adequate space for one person let alone a couple to desire to work our farm.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:35:13 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tawna Chun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support H.B. 1737 / S.B. 2006. If farmers can't afford to live here, they will leave. That means less local food for everyone. These bills help keep agriculture alive.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:37:03 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Camille Erickson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support House Bill 1737 and Senate Bill 2006 because farming is a family commitment, not just a job. Families grow, kupuna need care, and workers need stable housing. ADUs give farmers flexibility without harming agricultural land. This is a common sense change. Please vote yes!

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:39:12 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wayne Feike	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will make it easier for people who live on farms to build small homes. This would be good for Hawaii's farms, because it would get more people in touch with nature, and also it would help housing be more affordable. Please pass this bill.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:41:31 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Hastings	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote yes on House Bill 1737 and Senate Bill 2006. Farmers and ranchers deserve reasonable housing options. These bills are common sense.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:42:54 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank Hinshaw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi - Please vote YES on sb2006 and hb1737 when you hear it in committee. It lets farmers and ranchers build small homes for their families and workers. Hawaii needs more people working on the land, and this bill is a great way to encourage rural lifestyles. The ability to have people living on the farm will help to reduce theft of agriculture products and provide timely aid to livestock suffering from illness or injury.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:44:28 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John-Michael Kamakahi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm writing in support of hb1737 and sb2006. Farming is often a family business, and housing flexibility helps families stay together. These bills reflect the reality of rural life in Hawaii.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:56:36 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leslie Lewis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will make it easier for people who live on farms to build small homes. This would be good for Hawaii's farms, because it would get more people in touch with nature, and also it would help housing be more affordable. Please pass this bill.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:58:36 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tracie Lutzenhiser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm writing in strong support of House Bill 1737 and Senate Bill 2006. Farming in Hawaii is already expensive and unpredictable, and housing rules only make it harder. Farmers should be able to build small homes for themselves, their kids or their workers on land they actively farm. This isn't about development, it's about survival. If farmers can't live on their land, they won't stay in agriculture. This will not only add more housing; that is desperately needed, but it can also create more jobs. Mahalo.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:00:17 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Makaneole	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha committee members, I strongly support hb1737 and sb2006. These bills remove barriers that don't make sense anymore. I hope you will approve them!

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:02:11 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Willa Marten	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support House Bill 1737 and Senate Bill 2006. Letting people live where they work makes sense, especially on farms.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:03:08 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Monoscalco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I submit testimony in support of sb2006 and hb1737. This change helps farmers stay on their land and keep producing food. We need more local food production.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:04:54 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Pelca	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 1737 / SB 2006. The current rules make it harder to house farm workers even when there is plenty of land. That doesn't make sense during a housing shortage. Allowing ADUs helps farms stay staffed and productive. It also strengthens the connection between people and the land they work. Hawaii needs more local food, not more barriers.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:07:01 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Posatiere	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I support HB1737 & SB2006 because farmers already face enough challenges. Housing should not be one of them.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:08:50 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Roy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass S.B. 2006 and H.B. 1737. These bills will help farmers stay rooted in Hawaii. ADUs are a reasonable way to support agriculture.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:09:44 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Ann Santiago	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1737 and SB2006. ADUs on farms are not luxury housing. They are simple homes for families and workers. Mahalo for considering my testimony.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:12:31 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Duane D Santiago	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support hb1737 / sb2006 because too many farmers are being squeezed out. Housing flexibility helps them stay and succeed.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:16:51 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Scott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! I strongly support sb2006 & hb1737. Let farmers farm and live on their land.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:19:01 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Harold Snyder	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I support House Bill 1737 / Senate Bill 2006 because agriculture depends on people living on the land. ADUs will help make that possible. I live on Ag5 land. My wife's mother is probably coming to live with us. There is room in the house for her, but at 94 we may need to bring in an onsite health provider. The way the laws are written I cannot do that now.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:20:27 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Starr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha committee members! I strongly support hb1737 and sb2006. These bills remove barriers that don't make sense anymore. I hope you will approve them!

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:21:59 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alessio Stossich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will make it easier for people who live on farms to build small homes. This would be good for Hawaii's farms, because it would get more people in touch with nature, and also it would help housing be more affordable. Please pass this bill.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:23:58 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ken Takeya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

strongly support H.B. 1737 / S.B. 2006. If farmers can't afford to live here, they will leave. That means less local food for everyone. These bills help keep agriculture alive.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:24:51 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Vetter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! I support House Bill 1737 / Senate Bill 2006. ADUs on farms help attract and keep good workers. These bills help farmers focus on farming instead of looking for employees. Please pass them this year.

SB-2006-SD-1
Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:25:43 AM
Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Wendt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! I support HB 1737 & SB 2006. Farming families grow and change over time. Small homes help them adapt without harming ag land.

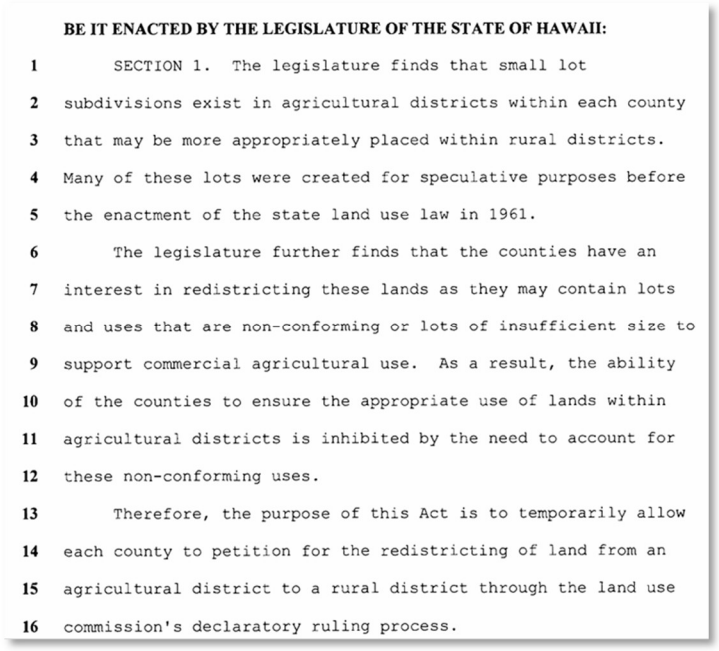
Aloha Chairs and Members of the JDC Committee,

State and County can not use defective agricultural zoning to shut down vacation rentals

This bill would work, **IF** land parcels were appropriately classified as agriculture. On the Big Island for example, we have many thousands of parcels that were wrongly zoned agriculture. The county has shown intend to "fix" this with several state bills in the last few years, asking for a temporary window to rezone these small lots under 1 acre to rural (see screenshot below). None of these bills have passed and the county has made no other efforts to rectify the zoning. The county did go ahead and changed the property tax classification to "Residential" in 2019 for ag lots under 1 acre, stating that these parcels could never be bona fide farms. Yet the zoning remains agriculture to this day. Tightening down uses will adversely affect over 25,000 small agriculture parcels on the Big Island alone.

Thousands of homeowners shouldn't continue to be suffering under a false agriculture classification, if fulfilling the requirements is impossible. Can't do a farm, can't do ag tourism, can't do a vacation rental, can't make a living... The counties have to go through the work and separate bona fide farm land from fake ag subdivisions. Instead of using misapplied agricultural zoning to shut down vacation rentals, the county should work in partnership with local residents (farmers and non-farmers) to develop a fair and inclusive regulatory framework for vacation rentals. These are existing longstanding lawful uses of property and vested property rights can not be ignored.

This bill at this time would create unintended consequences and potential legal liabilities, at least for the Big Island.



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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that small lot subdivisions exist in agricultural districts within each county that may be more appropriately placed within rural districts. Many of these lots were created for speculative purposes before the enactment of the state land use law in 1961.

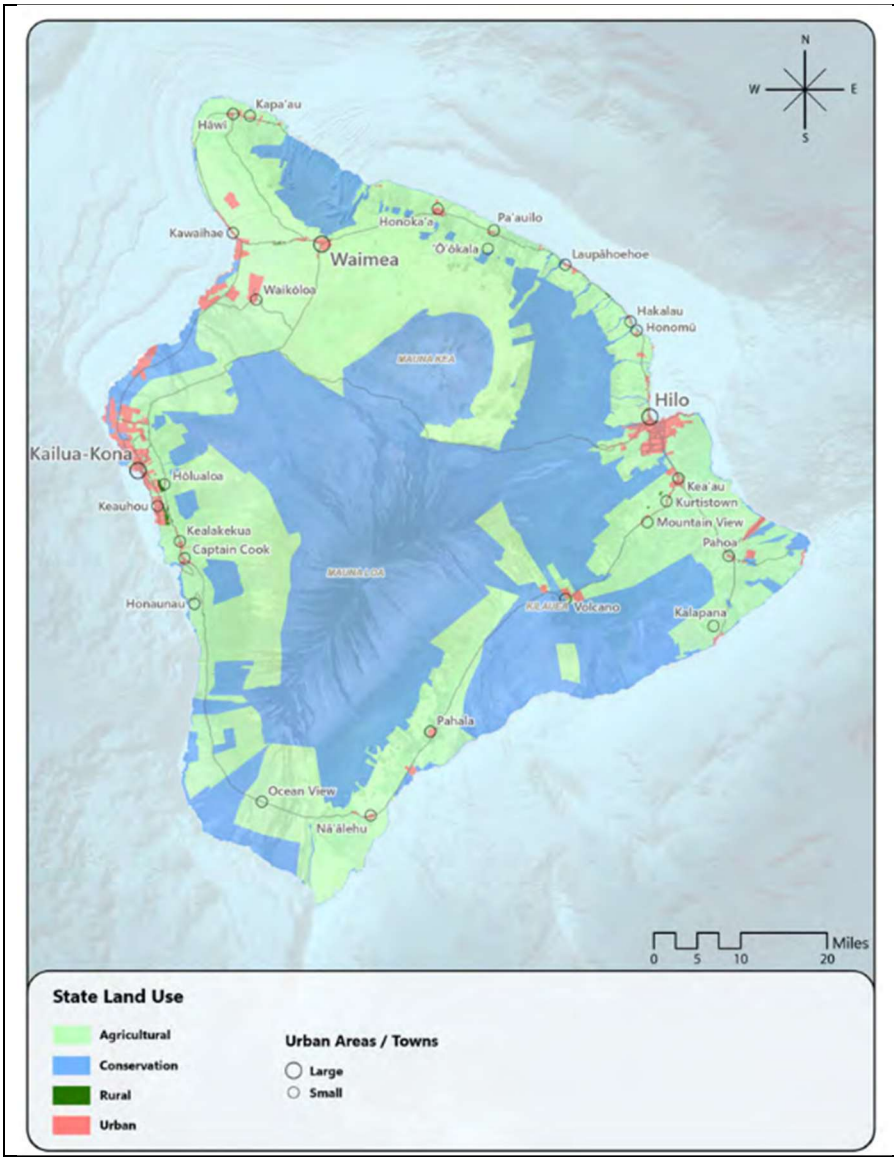
The legislature further finds that the counties have an interest in redistricting these lands as they may contain lots and uses that are non-conforming or lots of insufficient size to support commercial agricultural use. As a result, the ability of the counties to ensure the appropriate use of lands within agricultural districts is inhibited by the need to account for these non-conforming uses.

Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to temporarily allow each county to petition for the redistricting of land from an agricultural district to a rural district through the land use commission's declaratory ruling process.

Big Island – Agricultural zoning

Looking at the map of the Big Island below, do you think it makes sense to have no vacation rentals in agricultural zoning (green), which represents 45.79% of the island?

Who would benefit? Who would lose? Only 2.18% of the island is zoned urban (red), which includes resort, commercial and residential zoning. The reality on the ground is that the majority of families on the Big Island live on lots zoned agricultural. Historically agricultural zoning had been abused as a default, to help subdivision developers avoid infrastructure development costs. Many lots would never be viable for farming or are simply too small.



Big Island Zoning:

46% Agricultural (green)
52% Conservation (blue)
2.18% Urban (red)
0.06% Rural

Effects of SB2006 on the Big Island

The effect of this bill on the Big Island would be that 7 of 9 districts will be cut off from the tourism economy and no local family can own a vacation rental. Resort zoned vacation rentals are concentrated in only 2 districts and tend to be multi-million dollar investment homes for off-island owners, unaffordable and unreachable to local residents. With the neighbor islands highly dependent on tourism, economic opportunity can not be exclusive to resort zones.

Furthermore, if this blanket prohibition of vacation rentals on agricultural land would be used to shutdown existing vacation rentals, this will devastate many farmers and families on the Big Island. I don't think people understand how devastating this would be for the rural areas of the Big Island, where no alternative industries or jobs exist. Vacation rentals are a key economic driver in many areas of this very large island. Visitors shop at our farmers markets, shops and restaurants.

If the State is serious about supporting small scale farming for food sustainability, vacation rentals are a great way to make small farms financially viable. Most farms are not profitable and can hardly stay afloat. Building additional dwelling units has become very expensive. How would a local farmer be able to afford building additional housing? Especially if you are taking away an additional income stream? This might work for wealthy gentleman farmers or "luxury" farm developments who have figured out how to game the system (ie Ouli "Farms", Hokulia).

It's hard to make a living as a farmer on the Big Island. Farmers need MORE support and options to make their farm financially sustainable, not less. Opening regulations to allow for additional housing is good but will not help in reality, if economic conditions don't support it and nobody can afford to build. Unfortunately, SB2006 has the potential to inflict great harm to many families on the Big Island and their ability to make a living here.

Thank you for your careful consideration,
Penny Lee

LATE

Date: February 25, 2026
To: Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary
Re: SB2006 SD1 (Relating to Farm Employee Housing)
Hearing: February 26, 2026, 10:00 a.m., Conference Room 016 (Decision Making)

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Maui, and I respectfully submit testimony in **SUPPORT of SB2006 SD1**, **with amendments.**

Housing plays a significant role for all of us who call Hawai‘i home and is especially important in sustaining local agricultural production by helping farms retain workers. Farmworker housing may also be a key factor in recruiting and "growing" our next generation of farmers to strengthen food security in Hawai‘i.

At the same time, **Hawai‘i has a long history of agricultural lands being compromised through housing loopholes and weak enforcement.** Even with the improvements described in the committee report, key terms like “*bona fide*” and “*income to the family*” can remain vulnerable to abuse without objective verification, clear occupancy limits, and meaningful consequences for violations.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to adopt amendments that make the bill enforceable and resistant to misuse:

1. **Objective verification of bona fide agricultural activity**
   Require periodic certification based on clear, objective criteria that demonstrate ongoing commercial agricultural production, not just minimal or nominal activity.
   For example: proof of agricultural sales (GET filings and/or a tax schedule showing farm income), plus a basic farm plan and annual production update, and a simple revenue-category attestation (as documented in GET/tax records) showing that any agritourism or visitor-related revenue remains secondary (e.g., capped at no more than 25–30% of gross receipts over a two year period), so agriculture remains the primary purpose while small farms can still survive amidst potential seasonal challenges.
2. **Clear, enforceable occupancy standards for farm employee housing**
   Specify that farm employee housing may be occupied only by verified farm employees (and their immediate household), with documentation requirements sufficient for enforcement.
   For example: a simple employee verification method such as payroll summaries (W-2/W-3 or payroll service report) or equivalent documentation.
3. **Recorded restrictions that run with the land**
   Require a recorded notice or deed restriction confirming that farm employee housing is accessory to a bona fide farm operation and may not be used for visitor accommodations or short-term rentals.

For example: require a recorded deed restriction (filed with the Bureau of Conveyances/Land Court) stating that the farm employee housing remains accessory to a bona fide farm operation, may not be used for visitor accommodations or short-term rentals (STRs), **except for occasional, noncommercial hosting of ʻohana or invited guests in connection with cultural exchange, where no rent is charged, the stay is not advertised or booked, and it remains clearly secondary to the farm operation**, may not be separately sold, and remains binding on all future owners and successors. This helps prevent employee housing built under agricultural rules from later being converted into visitor lodging, and it protects honest small farmers from competing with "fake farms" monetizing housing or tourism on agricultural land.

4. **Meaningful penalties and enforcement authority**
   Establish clear penalties for violations and ensure the State and counties have explicit authority to investigate and enforce compliance.
   For example: provide escalating per-unit fines, repayment of illegal STR proceeds, and suspension of the employee-housing authorization for repeat violations, backed by clear audit/inspection authority.

Additionally, while I understand the committee report's intent not to restrict agricultural tourism activities when secondary and incidental to a bona fide agricultural operation, I respectfully ask that the bill be clarified so that "secondary and incidental" cannot be used as a pathway to expand short-term visitor accommodations on agricultural lands, except as explicitly authorized and regulated by county ordinance.

Finally, I respectfully note that Page 9 Line 8 of the bill text currently leaves the **square-feet-per-acre footprint ratio blank** ("a ratio of ____ square feet per acre"). Because this ratio is a key safeguard, I urge the Committee to insert the specific number (or clearly cite where it is defined) before advancing the measure. This would also help address concerns raised by the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity that "farm employee housing" may be interpreted broadly as "one or more" units absent clearer limits.

With these amendments, SB2006 SD1 can better meet its stated purpose of supporting legitimate farms and farmworkers while protecting agricultural districts from exploitation. I strongly support a future where Hawaiʻi is made up of thriving small farms with strong community ties, where families know their farmers and the places their food comes from, and where more of us are connected to our food, and to the ʻāina and wai that grows it. ʻĀina is that which feeds us, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Appropriate safeguards will help retain our pilina to ʻāina and protect against harmful profiteering that has become so commonplace across our pae ʻāina.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Marirai Maui Tauotaha
Kupa o Oʻahu