



TESTIMONY OF DANIEL NĀHO'OPI'I
INTERIM PRESIDENT & CEO, HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND
Thursday, February 22, 2024 1:00 p.m.
In consideration of
HB 2146 HD 2
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) supports HB2146 HD2, to authorize agricultural tourism activities. HTA recognizes the importance of protecting and uplifting Hawai'i agriculture, and the visitor industry offers paths for agricultural enterprises to enhance revenues to stabilize and bolster their businesses. Coordinating the development of new agricultural tourism products is part of our statutory mandate in HRS §201B-3(a)(19).

In 2019, direct and indirect visitor spending on local agricultural products was \$240.7 million – 9.4% of total agriculture industry sales. Expanding agricultural tourism advances a model of regenerative tourism for Hawai'i, builds capacity to advance a circular economy as articulated in the 'Āina Aloha Economic Futures Declaration, and advances Hawai'i's progress toward the Aloha+ Challenge goal of doubling local food production.

HTA has supported the development of agricultural tourism which includes:

- Partnerships for regenerative tourism product development that help our farmers through initiatives including the Community Enrichment, Kahu 'Āina (formerly Aloha 'Āina), and Signature Events programs;
- The creation of the *Hawai'i AgriBusiness GuideBook: Starting an Agri-Tourism Operation* through our partnership with GoFarm Hawai'i, the Hawai'i AgriTourism Association and the O'ahu Resource & Development Council;
- Offering capacity building opportunities to farmers and businesses interested in agricultural tourism; and
- Support for the Hawai'i Farm Trails website and app which promotes and strengthens Hawai'i's agricultural businesses and agricultural tourism.

HTA remains committed to supporting Hawai'i's farmers by encouraging buying local and developing regenerative tourism products enabled by this legislation, and we stand ready to coordinate with the counties and applicable state agencies.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of HB2146 HD2.