



# HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE STATE OF HAWAII

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Testimony of  
**SCOTT J. GLENN, Chief Energy Officer**

before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND**

Tuesday, February 1, 2022  
8:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

In SUPPORT of  
**HB 1668**  
**RELATING TO SOIL CLASSIFICATIONS.**

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Branco, and Members of the Committee, the Hawaii State Energy Office (HSEO) supports HB 1668, which requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) to conduct a study of the suitability of the State's current soil overall (master) productivity rating system classified by the Land Study Bureau's (LSB) detailed land classification. HB 1668 also requires a report to the Legislature and appropriates funds.

HSEO's comments are guided by its mission to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy, and clean transportation to help achieve a resilient, clean energy, decarbonized economy.

HSEO agrees with Section 1 of HB 1668 that the LSB system "reflects the agricultural activities of plantation sugar cane and pineapple production that dominated Hawaii agriculture at the time of the study" and may no longer be appropriate to guide Hawaii's food and agricultural sustainability goals. Further, HB 1668 references the U.S. Department of Agriculture's national soil classification system as an example of other methods that can be used to classify agricultural soils more appropriately.

Current state law (sections 205-2 and 205-4.5, Hawai'i Revised Statutes) directs the permissibility of solar energy projects on Agricultural land based on the land's LSB rating. However, in some cases the practical use of the lands for agriculture, or co-

location of crops or livestock with solar energy projects, is greater or less than indicated by the soils alone. For example, although the soils in one area may have a productivity rating that is higher than another area, the availability or lack of irrigation water may encourage or constrain the actual productivities of the various sites. The degree to which these factors are captured (or not) in the current system deserves review.

Therefore, HSEO believes that a study of the suitability of soil classification systems for the regulation of agricultural lands would contribute to a better understanding of Hawaii's agricultural lands, systems, potential, and needs.

HSEO defers to the appropriate agencies for comment on the matters pertaining to them.

HSEO supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Supplemental Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.