

LEGACY LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM

State of Hawai'i, Department of Land and Natural Resources

FACT SHEET: Kunia Agricultural Conservation Easement

The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), an agency attached to the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, used Legacy Land funds to purchase an agricultural conservation easement over 108.221 acres in Kunia, Island of Oahu, from the Hawaii Agriculture Research Center (HARC). By selling the conservation easement, HARC extinguished a significant portion of its rights to develop the property and permanently limited the land's uses to agricultural uses. The conservation easement is binding on all future landowners.



Funding and partners:

The Hawai'i Legacy Land Conservation Program provided \$1,100,000; the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture provided \$1,500,000 through the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program; and the landowner provided a \$400,000 reduction in price from the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement.

Public benefits:

Under Hawaii Revised Statutes, section 173A-2.6, the Legacy Land Conservation Program is mandated to prioritize the protection of lands that are unique and productive agricultural lands, as well as lands having resources that are in danger of being modified, changed, or diminished.

A majority of the property protected by the conservation easement is classified as Prime and Unique Farmland by the NRCS. The purpose of the conservation easement is to protect the agricultural soils, viability, and productivity of the land into perpetuity, allowing for buildings that exist to further the agricultural activities on the property. NRCS and ADC hold the easement and ADC monitors the property for compliance. HARC is currently implementing a conservation plan done by NRCS for the property and manages the property as a research station, with a laboratory facility and experimental plots of papaya, coffee, jatropha, kukui, neem, cacao, sunn hemp, pineapple.



The parcel is located at the corner of H-1 and Kunia Road, where new houses, condos, shopping centers, and retailers were rapidly erected in the ten years previous to the sale. Absent the conservation easement, county zoning for the property would allow potential subdivision into 1-acre agricultural lots. About 50% of Oahu's agricultural production comes from the former sugarcane lands in this area. This project is the first of its kind on Oahu, and can serve as a model for protecting Oahu's agriculture lands and industry.