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HEARING BEFORE THE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Kalanimoku Building
DLNR Boardroom
1151 Punchbowl St.
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Meeting ID: 830 0563 6371

December 12, 2025
9:00 a.m.

Testimony on Agenda Item D-1, Set Aside of the East Kaua'i Water and Hanama'ulu Ditch Systems to the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC); Issuance of an Immediate Right-of-Entry Permit for Due Diligence; and Approval of a Management Right of Entry

Aloha Chair Chang and Members of the Board:

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

HFB offers its strong support for the proposed set-aside and associated authorities that will allow the East Kaua'i Water and Hanama'ulu Ditch Systems to be managed by the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) for agricultural irrigation and related purposes.

As with all islands, the ability of Kaua'i farmers and ranchers to grow food depends on access to adequate and reliable irrigation water. The East Kaua'i system—which includes infrastructure extending across Wailua, Kapahi, and Hanama'ulu—is the backbone of agricultural production in the region. Without a stable management authority and continued operation of this system, diversified agricultural production on Kaua'i would be severely restricted.

Hawai'i policy clearly supports food production, rural economic opportunity, and the preservation of agricultural lands. These goals cannot be achieved without the continued operation of irrigation systems that farmers rely on to plant, expand, and sustain crops.

Providing ADC with the set-aside and right-of-entry ensures that the system is overseen by an entity with the statutory mission and operational capacity to manage irrigation infrastructure, coordinate needed maintenance, and work directly with agricultural users. This action provides certainty to both long-established producers and new farmers accessing ADC-managed lands.

Like other irrigation systems statewide, East Kaua'i requires significant upkeep. ADC's involvement will enable assessment of system conditions, identify priority repairs, and support strategic planning to ensure irrigation remains safe, reliable, and cost-effective for the farmers who depend on it.

Farmers cannot continue to invest in their operations without assurance of an adequate and consistent water supply. This set-aside and interim access rights allow uninterrupted agricultural activity while long-term planning proceeds. The system supports diversified crop production, ranching, small farmers, and the future expansion of agriculture in the region.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support** of Agenda Item D-1. Ensuring continued operation and responsible management of the East Kaua'i Water and Hanama'ulu Ditch Systems is essential to sustaining the farmers and ranchers who feed Hawai'i's residents and visitors, steward agricultural lands, and maintain Kaua'i's rural character.