



DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
MICHAEL A. DAHLIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR

News Release

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COUNTY OF KAUA'I
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
SARAH K. BLANE, CHIEF OF STAFF
(808) 241-4900

Mayor Kawakami signs Bill No. 2875 Draft 2 relating to the county's Agricultural Dedication program

LĪHU'E – Mayor Derek S. K. Kawakami signed Bill No. 2875, Draft 2, on Monday, repealing the county's outdated Agricultural Dedication program and enacting a comprehensive revision that provides increased benefits to farmers and administrative improvements for the county.

"It's an honor and pleasure to sign this bill today which will truly help our agriculture industry propel forward and will further support sustainability on our island now and for future generations," said Mayor Derek S. K. Kawakami.

Bill No. 2875, Draft 2, was passed by the Kaua'i County Council on September 21, 2022. A virtual bill-signing ceremony was held Monday, where Mayor Kawakami was accompanied by Councilmember Bill DeCosta and Councilmember Luke Evslin – who were co-introducers of the bill, along with Council Chair Arryl Kaneshiro and Council Vice Chair Mason Chock. Finance Director Reiko Matsuyama, Agriculture Land Use and Valuation Specialist Terry Phillips, and Real Property Tax Manager Mike Hubbard were also in attendance.

"I would like to thank Councilmember Evslin for all the work we've put in together, along with our county finance team, Council Services staff, ranchers, and farmers," said Councilmember DeCosta. "I also want to acknowledge and give props to the 2016 and 2018 working groups who put so much time and effort into this bill as well."

“The purpose here is to incentivize farming, and to try and reduce the abuse of our agricultural dedication program,” said Councilmember Evslin. “It also reduces the administrative burden both for the farmers and for the county.”

The signed ordinance enacts a new Agricultural Dedication program, where farmers will no longer be subject to previously burdensome requirements. All dedications will be for a five-year period, and farmers will not be penalized with rollback taxes if a dedication is canceled. Farmers will no longer need to record their dedication with the Board of Conveyance and the new program does not require all owners of properties with multiple owners to sign the petition.

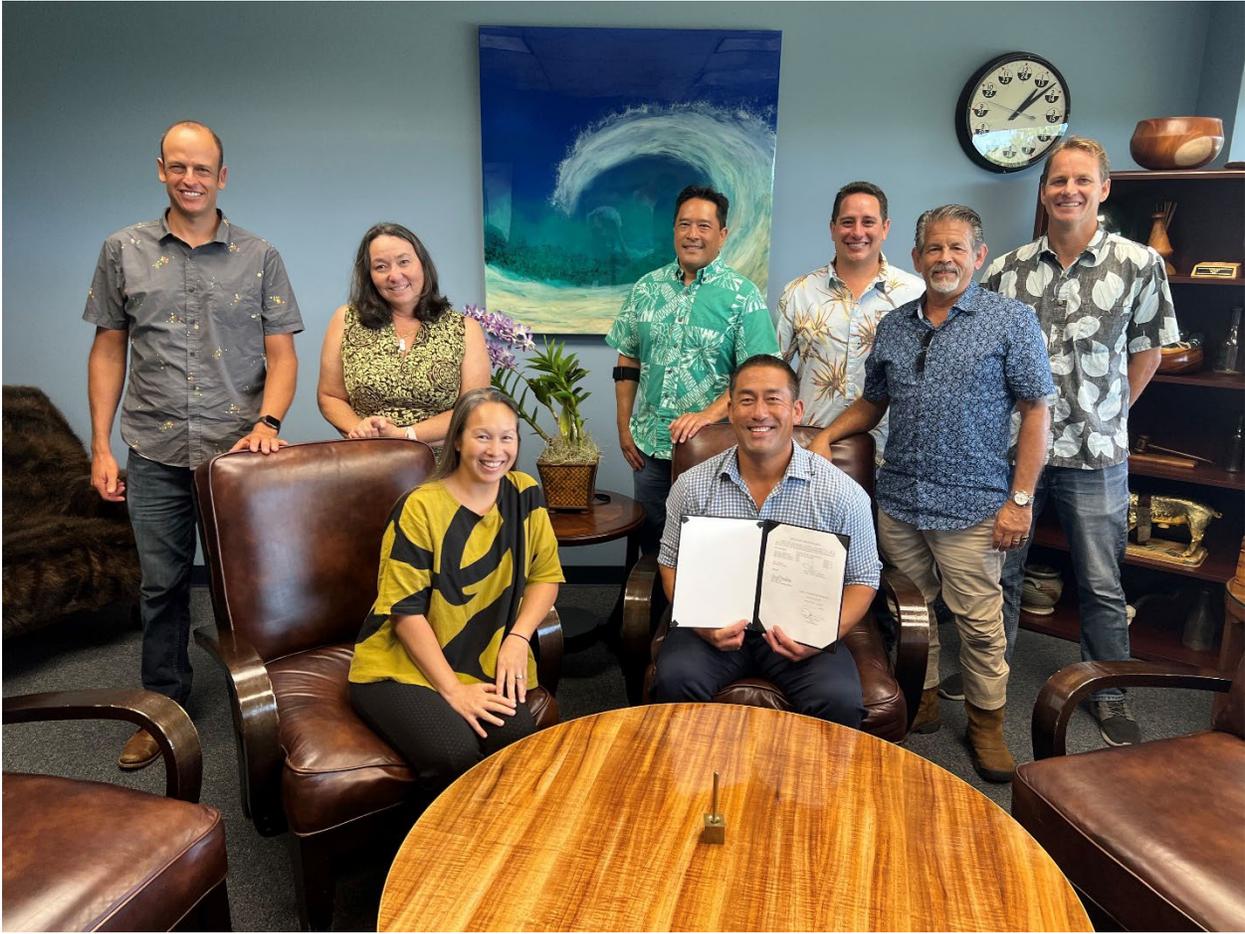
To ensure that the Agricultural Dedication program is incentivizing farming on land designated for agricultural use, farms within the Urban State Land Use District are not eligible for the program unless the county zoning is Agriculture or Open. The program’s assessment valuation method was also changed to 5% of its fair market value, giving properties dedicated to ag use a 95% discount on their tax burden. Through this change the county will continue to subsidize ag without gaining additional revenue.

Existing dedications will remain valid until their originally approved dedication period ends, or unless canceled.

“I want to thank all the ranchers, farmers, and all stakeholders that were so patient over the years and for helping us to move forward with this Ag Dedication bill,” said Terry Phillips, the county’s agriculture land use and valuation specialist. “This is a first step in simplifying things for our personnel, while allowing you to farm without fear, and together we’re looking forward to better and brighter things ahead.”

The ordinance took effect upon Mayor Kawakami’s approval and signature on September 26, 2022.

To view Ordinance No. 1132 (Bill No. 2875, Draft 2), visit https://www.kauai.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=WQOtN_mZddc%3d&tabid=187&portalid=0&mid=997.



Pictured from left to right: From Row – Finance Director Reiko Matsuyama and Mayor Derek S. K. Kawakami. Back row – Councilmember Luke Evslin, Agriculture Land Use and Valuation Specialist Terry Phillips, Council Vice Chair Mason Chock, Council Chair Arryl Kaneshiro, Councilmember Billy DeCosta, and Real Property Tax Manager Mike Hubbard.

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