

Aloha Councilmembers,

ADEPT Committee

Bill 42

March 7, 2024

My name is Sydney Smith and I'm the chair of the Ag Working Group. I'm testifying on behalf of myself and the Ag Working Group.

We'd like to wholeheartedly support returning the word "useable" to the definition of a farm and allowing family members to reside in a farm labor dwelling.

The current definition of a farm calls for a majority of the land to be in agriculture. It does not allow for the unusable portions to be subtracted. As far as I know the word "useable" was always in the code or rules and only recently got omitted. There was no abuse as far as I know, in determining what is "useable" and what is "unuseable."

Farmers and Ranchers who have land with streams, cliffs, roads, gulches, easements and archeological features are being required to farm and ranch areas other departments, bureaus and land use documents tell you that you can't. This is extremely difficult to manage.

On the labor house rules. I don't think the original intent was to throw a young farming couple out of their home when they started a family but that's how it was written. And several Planning Directors told me it probably wouldn't be enforced, but it seemed to us like it should be changed.

Bobby Ferreira was the manager of Kaupo Ranch for years. He told me every labor house on Kaupo Ranch has wives, babies, cousins, aunties, uncles, nieces, nephews and even dogs and cats living in them. He never even knew families weren't allowed in ranch housing.

So please pass this legislation so that our farm workers can also have families and bring their parents and grandparents into their home when it's time to care for them.

This is our culture and I think we all support finding ways to keep families together under one roof, especially in light of recent events. No one I know can afford to pay their farm or ranch labor personnel enough to pay 4 or 5 thousand a month for a house, if they can even find one at that price.

We can use all the help we can get. These two small changes will help us.

We appreciate Council member Johnson and his hard-working staff for making these two changes and urge you to pass Bill 42.

Thank you!

Sydney Smith, *facilitator*, Ag Working Group
Maliko Estate Coffee, 808-268-3646 call/text

Ag Working Group was formed in 2013 by the Ag Chair of Council who needed input from the Ag community. Members must be Farmers or Ranchers
We are comprised of neutral representatives from:
Maui County Farm Bureau • Maui Farmers Union United • Maui Coffee Association
Maui Cattlemen's Association • Maui Flower Growers Association
Kula and Makawao Community Associations • Hawaii Forest Industry Association
And include members from Hawaii State Department of Agriculture, Maui County Administration, Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, Maui County Department of Agriculture and Maui County Council



AG WORKING GROUP

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