



Tuesday, January 26, 2016
AgTourism Bill

Good Afternoon,

My name is Sydney Smith. I'm the president of The Maui Coffee Association and I own Maliko Estate Coffee Farm in Makawao. I'm also a member of The Ag Working Group.

I'm speaking this afternoon on behalf of The Maui Coffee Association and as a member of the Ag Working Group.

I support and my Association supports AgTourism. Coffee Orchards in particular are well suited to AgTourism. There's generally no plowing, heavy equipment or pesticides involved so it's easy to make a family-friendly, safe and beautiful environment for the visitor.

Most of you know that I've been working on this bill for some time. I've become very familiar with the laws and ordinances in other Counties and States. I've also become very familiar with legislation from our own state.

In 2005 the State of Hawaii passed Act 183. This is generally known as IAL or Important Ag Lands. But it's much more than that. It's a mandate from the state to encourage the Counties to assist farmers and ranchers to keep land in agriculture. This is a quote: "...the intent of this Act is not only to set policies for important agricultural lands and to identify important agricultural lands but also to provide for the development of incentives for agricultural viability in Hawaii, particularly for agricultural enterprises that farm important agricultural lands and for landowners of important agricultural lands. These incentives would be designed to promote the retention of important agricultural lands for viable agricultural use over the long term."

The following year in 2006 the Hawaii Legislature's "**PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACT 183 INCENTIVES FOR IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL LANDS**" lays out 31 pages of recommendations for these incentives. Only three of them do not involve grants or tax credits.

Here's the three:

Expedited permitting process

Flexibility in County and State Land Use Commission Conditions

and

AgTourism as an allowed activity on Ag land.

I for one would much rather see the farmer or rancher finance their own viability as a producer rather than the the tax payer having to foot the bill.

I hope you do too.

Sydney Smith
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