

March 16, 2023



Rep. Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair  
Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair  
Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems  
Friday, March 17, 2023  
9:30 am  
Via Videoconference

RE: **SB660 SD2** Relating to Agriculture (**Support**)

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa & Members of the Committee,

The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce (CSC) testifies in strong support of SB660 SD2, which establishes the Healthy Soils program within the Department of Agriculture, appropriates funds and requires an annual report to the Legislature.

As business owners who believe we can strengthen our economy without hurting workers, consumers, or the environment, we urge this committee to pass SB660 SD2 because it will move us toward greater food security, reduce carbon emissions through sequestration, improve the stewardship of our land and protect our water. This bill will positively impact the economic and physical health of farmers, consumers, and the communities that relies on a healthy environment.

This bill demonstrates an impressive understanding of just how foundational healthy soil is to a sustainable economy. It is evident in some of the testimony in opposition to this bill that farmers could benefit from more education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils; passage of this bill with sufficient funding could fulfill this need.

It is about time we repair the soil damage left by prior businesses and short-sighted policy makers – from the ground up.

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<b>Hawaii Legislative Council</b>	Maile Meyer Na Mea Hawaii Honolulu	Russel Rudderman Island Naturals Hilo / Kona	Tina Wildberger Kihei Ice Maui	Joell Edwards Wainiha Country Market Kauai	Kim Coco Iwamoto AQuA Rentals, LLC Honolulu
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