



# MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

June 5, 2025

Maui County Council

Agriculture, Diversification, Environment, and Public Transportation Committee

Gabe Johnson, Chair

Shane M. Sinenci, Vice Chair

Members of the Agriculture, Diversification, Environment, and Public Transportation Committee

**(ADEPT-3) - BILL 75 (2025), AMENDING THE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE ON AGRICULTURAL TOURISM**

Aloha Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Sinenci and members of the Committee,

The Maui Chamber of Commerce supports Bill 75 (2025) as agricultural tourism (agtourism) offers a multitude of benefits for both farmers and local communities including diversified income streams, community engagement, economic growth, job creation, and more. We appreciate the opportunity to provide additional comments on this revised version of the bill.

We support many of the changes made to this bill by the Maui Planning Commission. However, we are concerned about the provision requiring agtourism activities to cease if active agricultural operations stop for 60 days. While we understand the intent, we feel 60 days is too short a period, especially considering the realities of farming like crop rotation, market fluctuations, or unexpected setbacks like natural disasters. We recommend extending this timeframe and creating a process for appeals or extensions in cases where a farmer has a valid reason for the extended temporary pause. Establishing and running agtourism operations requires significant investment and this bill's intent is to support our agricultural producers.

We also want to address two proposed amendments from Councilmember Paltin:

- Activity Hours: We are concerned that the proposed change to only allow agtourism activities from 8am-6pm may be too limiting. Without surveying farmers and based on quick research, we believe extending the hours to 8am-8pm would provide more flexibility. As some farms may also wish to offer evening activities like stargazing, mo'olelo, or other activities, we recommend allowing a time extension process where farms can apply to have nighttime agtourism operation hours by detailing the activity, its connection to the farm, and how they will mitigate impacts to neighbors.
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- Cultural Misappropriation: We appreciate that you are following up on the Maui Planning Commission's recommendations. As a chamber of commerce, we stand for ethics and have concerns on this as well. We believe this topic and how to handle any issues requires further community insight and discussion. Rather than holding up this bill, we recommend not adopting these amended sections (sections iv and v under paragraph 15e, and section v under paragraph 15h) for now and creating a working group to explore how best to address this more thoroughly. The working group could include representatives from the Maui Farm Bureau, Hawaii Farmers Union United, Activities & Attractions Association of Hawaii, Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association, cultural practitioners, community members and more. We would be happy to be involved and alert our members and others to encourage participation. One idea the working group could consider is to have a hotline/reporting system at the Department of 'Ōiwi Resources where a representative could then go meet with the company and learn more to assess if there was a misunderstanding, cultural variation, lack of knowledge, or willful misappropriation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap  
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.