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SR 279
REQUESTING A STUDY TO IDENTIFY
IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND RELATED LEGISLATION

Statement for
Senate Committee on Agriculture
Public Hearing, 15 April 1980

By
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SR 279 would request that the Department of Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with other departments, undertake a study to identify, recommend, and designate lands that should be considered agriculturally important and develop criteria for their reclassification and rezoning. This statement on the resolution does not represent an institutional position of this University.

No reference is made in this resolution to the report on "Agricultural Lands of Importance to Hawaii" that was prepared by the Federal Soil Conservation Service and adopted by the State Board of Agriculture. The conclusions of that report as to the relative suitability of lands for agricultural use are as valid now as when the report was prepared.

The importance of agricultural lands is, however, determined not only by their relative suitability for agriculture, but also on the extent of present and future needs for agriculture. Further critical examination of these needs may be in order, particularly if, as now perceived, they may differ significantly from those assumed implicitly in the report.

Article XI, Section 3 of the State Constitution, as amended in 1978, requires that the Legislature provide criteria applicable to reclassification and rezoning of lands in the light of their agricultural importance. However, it does not seem necessary that detail of the criteria be incorporated in statutes passed by the Legislature as distinct from regulations developed pursuant to statutory requirements. It may be that the combination of statutory requirements and regulations pertaining to the classification and zoning of lands should be reexamined in the light of present perceptions of agricultural importance.

In summary, certain aspects of the study requested in SR 279 may be needed, but the scope of the study need not be as extensive as that implied in the resolution.