



## From the governor: What it will take to sustain Hawai‘i

**S**ustainability for our islands means a host of things: **protecting** our people and our environment, **providing** living wage jobs and affordable housing, and **producing** more of our own food with sustainable strategies. This issue describes some of the ways the governor and his administration are working with the community to take action — now and for the future.

**Q. Does your definition of sustainability go beyond protecting the environment?**

**A.** Yes, for me sustaining Hawai‘i is part of a bigger mission of changing our economy so we can be more self-reliant. Instead of sending billions of dollars out of state for fuel or food, we need to generate more of our own energy and increase local food production. Then we could keep that money in our economy and have more capital for education, business development and job creation. I do think people are connecting the dots to see that protecting the environment, expanding clean energy, increasing food production and supporting innovation in every sector helps us all.



**AFFORDABLE RENTALS:** Gov. Ige, Ahe Group CEO Makani Maeva and her daughter join officials and residents at a recent Waipahu Tower blessing.

**Q. Over the years, others have talked about the same issues of housing, jobs, education, the environment and food security. What has the Ige administration done differently to move the needle?**

**A.** We’ve encouraged our departments to be “smart risk-takers” if it means delivering better results for taxpayers. In affordable housing, we revamped our processes to support public-private partnerships and made financing tools more attractive to encourage building more affordable units. We’ve reduced homelessness statewide two years in a row because we changed the contracts so more service providers are working together, focusing on moving people to permanent, supportive housing instead of just filling shelter beds. And we’re supporting game-changers like Early College and Hawai‘i’s Promise to give students a head start on higher-paying jobs.

**Q. What about concerns over balancing land and water for housing and agriculture?**

**A.** Conditions have changed dramatically from the ‘80s when sugar and pineapple were big players and I was a legislator helping to write the state’s water code. Back then, the concern was to protect plantation lands. Now we have an abundance of ag-zoned land all across the state that’s lying fallow. What we need are more people to farm and help for those who want to expand production but can’t afford to take the risk. At our urging, the state’s Water Commission is getting stakeholders together to balance farming and housing needs instead of going to court. Also, with new, efficient greenhouse technology, the conflict between housing development and ag land preservation is no longer such a big issue.

**Q. What do you think of the Trump administration’s separation of migrant families? Concerns about the trade war?**

**A.** The separations are an inhumane answer for people desperately seeking a better life. I can’t imagine how terrifying it must be for the children to be in a strange land, separated from their family and not knowing when they’ll be able to see them again. As for the tariffs on foreign goods, business people I talk with say they anticipate pervasive, higher prices on goods. The global supply chain means it’s rare to buy an American manufactured product that has no foreign materials, so the costs will be passed on to consumers.

**Q. What has been the most gratifying part of being governor? The most challenging part?**

**A.** The best part is being able to see projects completed and programs working to improve people’s lives. The biggest challenge is you can’t pick and choose your issues. You have a responsibility to make some hard decisions for which there are many differing opinions. In our social media world everyone has a platform, where the minority can sound as loud as the majority. But you can’t please everyone so you just have to make the best decisions you can for the good of the community.

# Hawai'i becomes first to ban reef-damaging sunscreens

With the stroke of a pen, Governor Ige made Hawai'i the first place in the world to ban the sale of sunscreens with the chemicals oxybenzone and octinoxate, effective Jan. 1, 2021. At the signing ceremony, the governor said, "Our natural environment is fragile, and our own interaction with the Earth can have lasting impacts. This new law is just one step toward protecting the health and resiliency of Hawai'i's reefs."



PROTECTING REEFS: Gov. Ige and legislators gather at the Capitol for the historic bill signing.

The event in the Capitol rotunda drew representatives from the Friends of Hanauma Bay, the Surfrider Foundation and The Kohala Center of Hawai'i island. They called the ban "historic" and praised the state for leading the way on the issue. "This bill has enormous significance," said Sen. Roz Baker. "By signing this measure, you are presenting our community with a unique moment in time to protect our coral reefs." Rep. Chris Lee added, "In my lifetime, our planet has lost about half its reefs. We've got to take action to make sure we can protect the other half as best we can because we know time is against us."

## Bill signing: New laws from the hard work of many

Bill signings may look like just ceremonial photo ops, but they represent the culmination of a long legislative process to provide meaningful change for the community. Governor Ige reviewed 228 bills from the 2018 legislative session for legal and policy implications, along with public input. "I take all of that into account and ask, 'Is it the right thing to do, does it do it in the right way, and does it benefit the people of Hawai'i?' It's a responsibility I take very seriously," he said.



Some of the bills the governor has signed into law this year include:

- Eight bills from the Women's Legislative Caucus, including a paid family leave report (SB 2990), preserving Affordable Care Act benefits (SB 2340) and creation of a Sexual Assault and Training Program (HB 2131).
- SB 2046 (Act 157) – Prohibits bump stocks and multi-burst devices, such as were used in the deadly Las Vegas shooting. HPD Chief Susan Ballard also announced a 30-day amnesty program to turn in bump stocks at any police station or to call 9-1-1 for officers to pick it up.
- SB 2790 (Act 105) – Expands basic rights for children in foster care.
- HB 2607 (Act 51) – Requires all public high schools in the state to offer at least one computer science course by 2021.
- SB 2087 (Act 145) – Amends the Good Samaritan Law to provide civil liability exemptions for saving someone with a rescue tube.
- SB 3058 (Act 149) – Establishes a pilot project to revitalize the Hilo Community Economic District.
- SB 2293 (Act 150) Maui Front Street Apartments – appropriates rental housing revolving funds to expedite affordable housing.
- Comprehensive bill package for the Hawai'i Opioid Initiative, including warning labels and preventing overprescription of drugs.



The Women's Legislative Caucus holds copies of their signed bills (top). HPD Chief Susan Ballard and advocates join Gov. Ige and legislators for the signing of the bill banning bump stocks and other multi-burst devices.

## FEMA individual aid approved

Persistence and determination at every level — from emergency response teams who went door-to-door to government officials who wouldn't give up — paid off in getting federal aid to Kaua'i and O'ahu families hard hit by the severe floods.

In a June 27 news conference, Governor Ige announced the president had approved the state's appeal of a Major Disaster Declaration for individual assistance. The approval paves the way for residents affected by the floods to apply to federal programs that include disaster crisis counseling, disaster unemployment assistance, and FEMA grants for home repairs and temporary housing.

Dolf Diemont, FEMA coordinating officer, praised the state's efforts, calling it "a model of how you respond to a disaster."



DISASTER AID APPROVED: Gov. Ige, mayors Kirk Caldwell and Bernard Carvalho and FEMA's Dolf Diemont deliver the good news for O'ahu and Kaua'i families.

For locations of Disaster Recovery Centers and other questions, go to <http://dod.hawaii.gov/hiema/frequently-asked-questions-federal-assistance-and-disaster-recovery-centers/>. The deadline to apply for FEMA aid is Aug. 27, 2018.

# Finding the game-changers for local food production

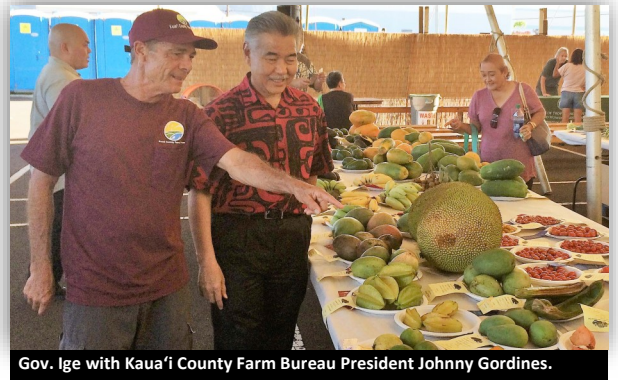
**F**arm to table” sounds fresh and appealing — like going to your nearest farmer’s market — but how many of us really know the hard work it takes to grow food? So when Governor Ige set **doubling local food production** as one of his administration’s goals, skeptics wondered, “Is that even possible?” **The answer is yes**, say state agriculture officials — with the right combination of available land and water, public-private investment, more support for current and future farmers, and new technology, such as high-tech, climate-controlled greenhouses on a scale that can make a difference for diversified ag.

**It’s a complex matrix of pieces and a far cry** from the days when large plantations took care of everything — from housing the workforce to quality assurance and distribution. Increasing local production includes supporting current growers as well as planning for a new kind of farming that relies less on back-breaking labor and more on “smart” technology to increase productivity. Determined farmers, aquaculture entrepreneurs and ag innovators are working with the state to increase Hawai’i’s food security, but they need more support. “Currently, only 15 percent of food consumed in Hawai’i is actually produced here,” said the governor. “We need to move island agriculture from the plantation era into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. That means combining sustainable practices with new technology to help current small farmers and attract a new generation of growers.”

**The Ige administration has taken action on several fronts** to make the transition to diversified agriculture possible, including:

- Preserving thousands of acres of prime agricultural land statewide for food production and coordinating water-related policies
- Providing farmers and aquaculture operators with \$8.1 million in loans and state long-term leases
- Developing public-private partnerships for greater capital investment
- Encouraging new farmers through business incubators and ag tech to help them become more productive
- Building community awareness through farm-to-table movements and the ‘Aina Pono, farm-to-school program
- Revitalizing dairy, egg and livestock production as well as employing new greenhouse technology and sustainable practices

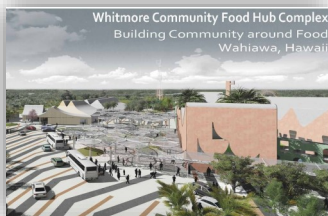
**New greenhouse technology** - The game-changer for the future may be increased use of **climate-controlled greenhouses** that can grow more produce on a small amount of land. “This is the new generation of farming,” said James Nakatani, executive director of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC). “It’s super compact and very productive compared with needing thousands of acres to farm.” For the past few years, Fred Lau, owner of **Mari’s Garden in Mililani** has been working with ADC to field test systems at the largest aquaponics greenhouse in the state. Every month Mari’s turns out 36,000 heads of baby romaine for several O’ahu hotels and military commissaries. The pilot project comes from a \$2 million collaboration between the state and Mari’s Garden to showcase best practices for hydroponic/aquaponic systems and greenhouse design. Now the plan is to take what’s been learned about greenhouse design adapted to the islands’ heat and humidity and build a **next-generation greenhouse in Wahiawa**, using sustainable practices and energy-efficient technology.



Gov. Ige with Kaua'i County Farm Bureau President Johnny Gordines.



Mari's Garden owner Fred Lau with his butter lettuce.



Whitmore Community Food Hub Complex  
Building Community around Food  
Wahiawa, Hawaii



The Whitmore Food Hub design (top).  
Bobby Farias of Kunoa Cattle Co.

**Whitmore Food Hub** - The Hub is part of a master plan to make Central O’ahu a major source of local food production. “To create a system for diversified ag and to meet new federal food safety standards, we’ve been working with Sen. Donovan Dela Cruz to bring together land development, infrastructure, renewable energy, ag tech research and training for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs,” said ADC staffer Todd Low. A design for a Whitmore Food Hub recently won a prestigious 2018 American Architecture Award for being among the 100 best new building designs in the United States.

**Villa Rose** - A cage-free farm being built on former Dole Pineapple land on O’ahu is expected to produce eggs by spring 2019. The farm is planned to be off the grid, with solar panels and battery storage. Up to one million laying hens will occupy the farm, to be built in phases over several years.

**Kunoa Cattle Co.** - A Kaua’i-based ranch with the state’s largest USDA-inspected slaughterhouse on O’ahu that produces grass-fed beef from 2,000 cattle. Named “Best New Business” in 2017 by Pacific Edge, its co-founder Bob Farias is a third-generation rancher who combines healthy grazing practices with sustainable systems.

**“We’re assembling the pieces for a foundation we can take into the future,”** said Nakatani. “With the threat of climate change and new federal food safety regulations, we’re focusing on sustainable, “green,” energy-efficient technology and strategies that can benefit farmers statewide to increase productivity and create jobs.”

# Governor acts to preserve, create more affordable housing

The Ige administration is ramping up the state's efforts to provide more housing for low-and moderate-income families. "Our goal is to create as many affordable units as possible — especially for families in the 30 to 60 percent area median income range," said the governor.

On Maui, Gov. Ige signed SB 2293 that aims to produce more affordable housing on the Valley Isle, while preserving affordable rentals at the **Front Street Apartments in Lāhainā**. The new law mandates the **Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC)** to begin the process of condemning the ground lease. It also appropriates \$30 million from the state's Rental Housing Revolving Fund to expedite the development of 200 multi-family rental units at the Keawe Street Apartments in Lāhainā. In **Kaka'ako**, the governor joined the **Hawai'i Community Development Authority** in signing amendments to HCDA rules that stipulate units in the area must remain affordable for at least 10 years. "Thanks to HCDA chair John Whalen and the board for listening to the community," said Gov. Ige. "It's about balancing production and affordability to make more units available for our residents."



Front Street residents celebrate; Keahumoa Place, another affordable rental in Kapolei.

**Three more O'ahu projects** also got under way last month with state-assisted financing. They include **Waipahu Tower**, an affordable rental housing project for families earning 60 percent and below the area median income (AMI). The eight-story building is an acquisition/rehabilitation project set to remain affordable for 59 years. A second project is **Nohona Hale in Kaka'ako**, being built on state HCDA land near the HART rail station. The 111 micro-units also received state financing assistance and are targeting families earning 30 to 60 percent AMI. The third project is **Keahumoa Place**, a 320-unit planned community near the **Kapolei Rail Station**. Phase I will consist of 75 units and will provide affordable family rentals at 60 percent AMI for 65 years. Estimated completion for Phase I is 2019-2020.

## 'Aina Pono wins high marks

The 'Aina Pono Hawai'i State Farm to School program has earned five-stars from some of its toughest customers: the students. "Who wouldn't want fresh, locally grown fruits, vegetables and beef instead of canned food?" said one high schooler.

Thanks to a public-private partnership spearheaded by the Lieutenant Governor's office, the pilot project that began in the Kohala district has expanded to Mililani High School, Mililani Uka and Mililani Waena elementary schools. "The students and administration of Mililani High School gave 'Aina Pono high marks," said Lt. Governor Doug Chin. "They've tasted the difference, and their excitement is spreading to other schools."

Chin and others see the program as a step toward Governor David Ige's goal of doubling local food production and improving food security for the entire state. It's a win-win for local farmers to expand demand for their goods while providing healthier



Lt. Gov. Doug Chin with Mililani High students.



meals for students. "We plan to expand the program to other schools and continue the 'Harvest of the Month' to highlight more local foods," said Albert Scales, the Department of Education's food services branch administrator.

Private funders who have helped make the program possible include Ulupono Initiative, The Kohala Center, HMSA Foundation, Johnson 'Ohana Charitable Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, The Dorrance Family Foundation, and the Hawai'i Appleseed Center. It also recently received a \$100,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for expansion and training.

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