



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

News Release

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STATE CONVENES SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE SKILL PANELS FORUM IN EAST HAWAII'

STATEWIDE EFFORT UNDER WAY TO DEVELOP STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR AG WORKFORCE

HONOLULU — The Hawai'i State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR), in partnership with the state Departments of Agriculture and Public Safety, University of Hawai'i Career and Technical Education Center, County of Hawai'i, University of Hawai'i Community Colleges, University of Hawai'i at Hilo, and Hawai'i Farm Bureau Federation, today announced that the East Hawai'i Sustainable Agriculture Skill Panels Forum will convene on Tuesday, January 24, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Nani Mau Gardens in Hilo.

“This statewide effort to meet the current and future workforce needs of the agriculture industry is a critical part of developing the agricultural renaissance envisioned in my New Day Plan,” said Governor Neil Abercrombie. “Maintaining a healthy agricultural industry is an investment in the people of Hawai'i Island and has the potential to supply needed jobs for families across generations.”

“Agriculture is an essential component for the well-being of our Big Island community,” stated Mayor Billy Kenoi, who continued, “We are hopeful that many local agricultural

leaders participate so that collectively we develop a capable and competent workforce with the ability to fulfill the unique needs of agriculture.”

“Offering solutions and assisting with the implementation of initiatives that support and grow Hawai‘i’s agricultural industry are outcomes we are seeking to facilitate as part of our ongoing effort to develop a sustainable economy for Hawai‘i,” said HDOA Director Russell Kokubun.

DLIR employs skill panels to better identify strategic planning issues, make recommendations and develop action plans to ensure that employees in key industries have the skills to meet the changing needs of businesses quickly and competently.

“These skill panels are public-private partnerships that harness the expertise of leaders in business, labor, education, economic development and other sectors to identify workforce development strategies while closing skills gaps in a specific industry,” said DLIR Director Dwight Takamine.

Skill panels will include innovation and sustainability, regulatory issues, education and training, and infrastructure and marketing. Facilitators will guide discussions in which industry leaders identify workforce concerns and comment on the connection with education, training and recruitment. The goal is to collectively identify focus areas and address clear career pathways for high need occupations, changing skill requirements, work readiness skills and aptitudes, and bridging skill gaps.

DLIR facilitated a similar panel last month on O‘ahu and planning is under way for forums in West Hawai‘i, Maui and Kaua‘i in the near future.

For registration inquiries, or for more information contact:

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