

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 10 2025

RE: S.B. No. 1111
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture and Environment, to which was referred S.B. No. 1111 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Statutorily establish the Agricultural Statistics Program; and
- (2) Appropriate \$880,000 for the establishment of positions and other expenses for the Program.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture, Ulupono Initiative, Hawai'i Farmers Union United, Hawai'i Food+ Policy, and Hawai'i Farm Bureau.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the University of Hawai'i System and Office of Information Practices.

Your Committee finds that, due to the inherently high risks associated with agricultural activities, a greater amount of data and information is essential to help mitigate, if not fully manage, these challenges. Your Committee recognizes that in 2024, the Department of Agriculture (Department) launched a statewide



outreach effort to identify the agricultural industry's top priorities and long-standing challenges, one of which is a significant need for consistent agricultural statistics. As a result, the Department developed a series of short-term actions and a long-term strategy to revitalize and enhance its Agricultural Statistics Program. Your Committee notes that the staff positions and surveys to be established and performed in this measure will support the Program to empower local farmers and stakeholders to make informed decisions, develop effective policies, and monitor the efficacy of the state's agricultural programs.

Your Committee has heard concerns from the Office of Information Practices as this measure requires all the information collected for the Program to be confidential. Your Committee acknowledges that because the intent of the Program is to provide agricultural producers and decision-makers with better information and analyses related to agricultural production, it would be counterproductive to require this broad level of confidentiality. Amendments are therefore necessary to address this matter.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that all data and information collected by the Department for the purposes of the Agricultural Statistics Program, or collected, compiled, and stored in the Program, shall be confidential and shall not be subject to discovery or to disclosure under chapter 92F, Hawaii Revised Statutes; provided that nothing in the measure shall preclude the disclosure of the information in a statistical or aggregate form that does not allow the identification of an individual or entity;
- (2) Changing the appropriation to an unspecified amount;
- (3) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

Your Committee notes that this measure, as amended, contains an unspecified appropriation. Should your Committee on Ways and



Means choose to deliberate on this measure, your Committee respectfully requests that it insert an appropriation of \$880,000 to be allocated as follows:

- (1) \$170,000 for the establishment of two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) agricultural economist positions;
- (2) \$280,000 for the establishment of four full-time equivalent (4.0 FTE) research statistician positions;
- (3) \$130,000 for the establishment of secured office space, equipment, the development of electronic data collection systems, and program expenses for six islands; and
- (4) \$300,000 for contracted specialty surveys to be conducted by third-party entities, focusing on critical agricultural data needs.

Your Committee also notes that with their recent hiring of additional agricultural economists, the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) now has the capacity to contribute to the implementation of the Agricultural Statistics Program proposed in this measure. Thus, your Committee encourages the Department and CTAHR to continue discussions on future collaboration.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Agriculture and Environment that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 1111, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 1111, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Agriculture and
Environment,



MIKE GABBARD, Chair



