

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 12 2008

RE: S.B. No. 2925
S.D. 1

Honorable Colleen Hanabusa
President of the Senate
Twenty-Fourth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2008
State of Hawaii

Madam:

Your Committee on Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs, to which was referred S.B. No. 2925 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish a state organic program under the direction of the Department of Agriculture;
- (2) Require the Department of Agriculture to develop and implement a plan for the state organic program; and
- (3) Appropriate funds to the Department of Agriculture to establish and implement the state organic program.

Testimony in support of this measure was submitted by the Department of Agriculture, Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, Hawaii Cooperative of Organic Farmers, Hana Health, Moms Going Green, MA'O Organic Farm, Hawaii Crop Improvement Association, the Hawaii Beekeepers Association, and one individual.

Your Committee finds that organic farming practices are beneficial to human health and the preservation of environmental quality. With increased demand locally and globally for organic products, Hawaii is in a position to capitalize on its optimal growing climates and nurture a growing sector of the agricultural industry and Hawaii's economy. In addition to the economic



benefits, cultivating a strong organic industry also encourages sustainable practices that enhance soil health and preserve Hawaii's scenic and environmental resources.

The Organic Foods Production Act (7 U.S.C. chapter 94) establishes national standards governing the marketing of certain agricultural products as organically produced products; assures consumers that organically produced products meet a consistent standard; and facilitates interstate commerce in fresh and processed food that is organically produced. The federal regulations under the National Organic Program (7 C.F.R. part 205) provide that each state may implement an organic program for agricultural products that have been produced and handled within the state, using organic methods that meet the requirements of the Organic Foods Production Act and the National Organic Program. Due to the sensitive nature of Hawaii's environment and the unique challenges that Hawaii organic farmers face, it is necessary to develop a state organic program pursuant to the National Organic Program, develop and implement a state organic plan, and conduct oversight of all organic agricultural activities statewide.

Your Committee has amended this measure by appropriating the sum of \$150,000 to the Department of Agriculture to establish and implement a State organic program and by making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2925, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2925, S.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Agriculture and
Hawaiian Affairs,



JILL TOKUDA, Chair



