

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

202

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 19 2009

RE: S.B. No. 1116
S.D. 1

Honorable Colleen Hanabusa
President of the Senate
Twenty-Fifth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2009
State of Hawaii

Madam:

Your Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs, to which was referred S.B. No. 1116 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to establish an Organic Agriculture Task Force under the administration of the Department of Agriculture to develop a business plan for the Hawaii Organic Food Center, and to appropriate funds for the Task Force to carry out its purpose.

Testimony in support of this measure was submitted by one organization. Two organizations supported the intent of this measure, and one state agency submitted comments. Copies of written testimony are available for review on the Legislature's website.

Organic farming practices are beneficial to human health and towards the preservation of environmental quality because these practices emphasize sustainability, enhance soil health, and promote the practice of growing agricultural products without the use of toxic substances. While organic farming is an important building block for maintaining and preserving the State's scenic and environmental resources, it is also an essential element in creating economic viability and preserving the quality of life in rural and agricultural communities.



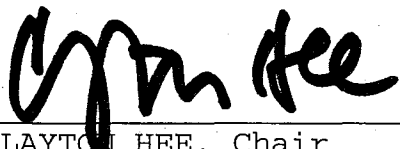
According to a national study, approximately two per cent of the United States food supply is grown using organic methods and the nationwide retail sales of organic food and beverages in 2005 totaled approximately \$12,800,000,000. There are over ninety organic farms in Hawaii, which produce organic products such as coffee, macadamia nuts, bananas, pineapples, ginger, mangoes, citrus fruits, avocados, tomatoes, and salad greens. The Hawaii Organic Farmers Association, an accredited third party certification agency for the United States Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program, estimates that organic farming is a \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 per year industry in Hawaii.

Your Committee finds there is currently a high and increasing demand for organic produce that exceeds the State's locally produced organic food supply, and to meet this demand, local produce markets and large mainland chain stores must import organic produce from the mainland and other countries. The importation of organic produce can result in a higher number of invasive species that are inadvertently brought into the State upon arrival, and can adversely impact the State's agriculture sector, economy, and sustainable food supply.

Your Committee has amended this measure by amending the effective date to July 1, 2050 for the purpose of encouraging further discussion.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 1116, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 1116, S.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

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



CLAYTON HEE, Chair

