

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 12 2015

RE: S.B. No. 380

Honorable Donna Mercado Kim
President of the Senate
Twenty-Eighth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2015
State of Hawaii

Madam:

Your Committee on Agriculture, to which was referred S.B. No. 380 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to improve food security and self-sufficiency in the State by encouraging the development and implementation of a whole system approach to agriculture in Hawaii through the establishment of an on-farm mentoring program within the Department of Agriculture.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawaii Primary Care Association, Hawaii Farmers Union United, and three individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Agriculture and Hawaii Farm Bureau.

Your Committee finds that the development of a whole system approach to agriculture in Hawaii that pays close attention to soil health, specifically increasing mineral availability and improving soil structure, water-holding capacity, crop health, and food nutrition levels, will lower water usage through deployment of green manure, compost, and cover crops; reduce crop loss from pest damage; and decrease weed pressure. This whole system approach to agriculture can improve food security and benefit the local economy through reducing production costs by promoting locally sourced inputs and the manufacturing thereof. Teaching a new generation of farmers to use this whole system approach will create an alternative method of farming that appeals to many young

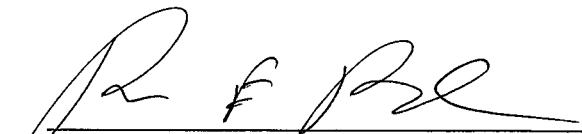


farmers across the State. Your Committee finds that currently there is a shortage of qualified teachers for these farm methods; therefore an on-farm mentoring program will fulfill this need by bringing the students to the farm and providing qualified farm mentors with funding.

Your Committee also finds that consideration should be given to whether the Department of Agriculture's role should be amended from housing the on-farm mentoring program to overseeing current mentoring programs. As raised in testimony, Go Farms may be an alternative to the on-farm mentoring program; however, Go Farms requires participants to enroll in college courses and is not present on the islands of Maui and Hawaii. Your Committee finds that although Go Farms is a great program, it benefits a different farmer than those who might benefit from the on-farm mentoring program. Therefore, your Committee encourages the Department of Agriculture to consult with Go Farms and all other relevant resources in order to support the on-farm mentoring program.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Agriculture that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 380 and recommends that it pass Second Reading and be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

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



RUSSELL E. RUDERMAN, Chair



