

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

525

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 17 2017

RE: S.B. No. 481
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Twenty-Ninth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2017
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committees on Water and Land, Agriculture and Environment, and Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs, to which was referred S.B. No. 481 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL LANDS,"

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to provide grants-in-aid to the counties for the identifying and mapping of important agricultural lands.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from the Land Use Commission; Office of Planning; Department of Planning and Permitting of the City and County of Honolulu; Alexander & Baldwin, Inc.; Ulupono Initiative; Hawai'i Association of REALTORS; Hawaii Farmers Union United; Sierra Club of Hawai'i; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; and Maui County Farm Bureau. Your Committees received comments on this measure from the Department of Agriculture.

Your Committees find that Article XI, section 3, of the Hawaii State Constitution provides, among other things, protections for lands identified as important agricultural lands. In service of this duty, the Legislature enacted Act 183, Session Laws of Hawaii 2005, which was codified in part III of chapter 205, Hawaii Revised Statutes. Act 183 directed each county to identify and map potential important agricultural lands within the



county and make recommendations to the Land Use Commission for their proper designation. However, most counties have not received state funds to assist them in fulfilling their duties under Act 183. Accordingly, this measure appropriates funds as grants-in-aid to the counties of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui, and the City and County of Honolulu to identify and map important agricultural lands.

Your Committees note that some counties have already begun fulfilling their duty to identify and map important agricultural lands despite the lack of state funding. Consequently, those counties who have initiated this process on their own should not be penalized and should be able to apply funds appropriated through this measure to any expenses previously incurred.

Accordingly, your Committees have amended this measure by adding language to allow the appropriated funds to apply to any expenses a county incurred in identifying and mapping important agricultural lands before the effective date of this measure, provided that the county has not previously received reimbursement for those expenses from the State.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Water and Land, Agriculture and Environment, and Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 481, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 481, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committees on Water and Land,
Agriculture and Environment,
and Public Safety,
Intergovernmental, and Military
Affairs,



MIKE GABBARD, Chair



KARL RHOADS, Chair



CLARENCE K. NISHIHARA, Chair



