

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 05 2019RE: S.B. No. 759
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirtieth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2019
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture and Environment, to which was referred S.B. No. 759 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to establish and appropriate funds for a two-year agricultural theft and vandalism pilot project to examine the effectiveness of prosecuting agricultural theft and agricultural vandalism in the County of Hawaii.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture; one member of the Hawai'i County Council; County of Hawai'i Office of the Prosecuting Attorney; Maui County Farm Bureau; Young Brothers, LLC; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; O'ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i; Neighborhood Watch Hawaii Island; and four individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from We Are One, Inc.

Your Committee finds that agricultural theft and vandalism in the County of Hawaii is not only an impediment to running a successful and profitable farming operation but can also prove harmful to consumers. It is hard to ensure product safety if stolen produce makes its way back to the consumer market. Agricultural vandalism and theft in the County of Hawaii includes



theft of seasonal fruit, including coffee, avocados, lychee, rambutan, noni, and more. This vandalism and theft has resulted in economic hardships for farmers and their families.

Your Committee notes that the Department of Agriculture has entered into a two-year contract with the County of Hawai'i Office of the Prosecuting Attorney for one investigator to conduct agricultural theft and agricultural vandalism investigations. This has been a very valuable and productive project with the limited staff performing investigations and outreach with farmers, law enforcement, and at farmers' markets.

Your Committee finds that this pilot project will provide enforcement officers with the ability to concentrate on agricultural issues as the police department does not have the capacity to devote a police officer exclusively to investigate agricultural crimes. Approving this project will help protect Hawaii's agricultural industry, ensure the food safety of local products, support local farmers and growers, and allow farmers to focus on safe farming techniques and producing high quality products instead of focusing on the security of their crops.

Your Committee further finds that the County of Maui experiences similar theft and vandalism and should be included in the pilot project in partnership with the County of Hawaii to share the limited resources proposed in this measure.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

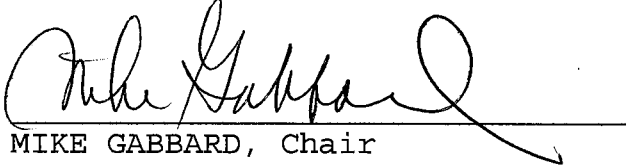
- (1) Adding the County of Maui to the two-year agricultural theft and vandalism pilot project to partner with the Department of Agriculture and County of Hawaii to share the resources appropriated; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

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. 759, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 759,



S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committees on Judiciary and Ways and Means.

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


MIKE GABBARD, Chair



