

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 3593

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAY 19 2020

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 501

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirtieth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2020
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture and Environment, to which was referred Governor's Message No. 501, submitting for study and consideration the nomination of:

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

G.M. No. 501 MORRIS ATTA,
for a term to expire at noon on
12-05-2022,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Morris Atta for service as the Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Morris Atta from the Governor; Department of Agriculture; Department of Budget and Finance; Department of Land and Natural Resources; Department of Transportation; Department of Taxation; Department of Labor and Industrial Relations; Department of Accounting and General Services; Department of Public Safety; Department of Defense; Department of Hawaiian Home Lands; Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Department of Human Resources Development; Department of Health; Office of Enterprise Technology Services; Office of Planning; Agribusiness Development Corporation; Hawaii State Energy Office; Harbors Division of the Department of Transportation; Scott E. Enright Company LLC; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council; Ulupalakua Ranch, Inc.; Rosehill & Associates; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Kauai County Farm Bureau; The

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Kohala Center; Ponoholo Ranch Limited; Larry Jeffs Farms, LLC; Aikane Plantation; Aileen's Nursery; Hawaiian Flower Gardens; Tropical Flowers Express; Waihale Products; Pacific Ag Consultants; Dina's Garden; The Grassmaster; Orchid Plantation, Inc.; Flowers Forever LLC; Melvin Kunitake Farm; KRB LLC; Mulkern Landscaping & Nursery; Ulupono Initiative; SanHi Government Strategies; and forty-four individuals.

Mr. Atta earned a Juris Doctorate from the New York University School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Yale. After his admission into the Hawaii Bar in 1984, Mr. Atta began working full time as an attorney for various law firms before opening his own private practice, where he took on cases with an emphasis in Real Property, Environmental, Land Use, Health, Intellectual Property, Estate Planning, General Business, and Nonprofit Law issues for almost fifteen years. It was during this time where he also lent his legal expertise to the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs and the Hawaii State Senate.

In 2004, Mr. Atta was hired by the Land Division of the Department of Land and Natural Resources as a Special Projects Coordinator. Mr. Atta rose within the ranks of the Land Division and became the States Land Administrator during the next twelve years. Throughout this time, Mr. Atta worked to ensure the economical and productive management of state-owned lands and to support the State's priorities to support agriculture, increase renewable energy production, protect natural resources and the environment, and perpetuate Hawaii's unique cultural identity.

Soon after, Mr. Atta was hired as the Deputy Director, Right-Of-Way, for the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART), where he served as the head of land acquisition for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project and oversaw the right-of-way acquisition, including real property management and agency compliance with the federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970. After three years at HART, the Agricultural Resource Management Division of the Department of Agriculture hired him as their Agricultural Land Program Manager/Administrator where he promoted and supported the effective planning, acquisition, disposition, development, and use of the State's agricultural land resources.

Mr. Atta has served as both a member and a chair of several professional associations. He continues to serve on various



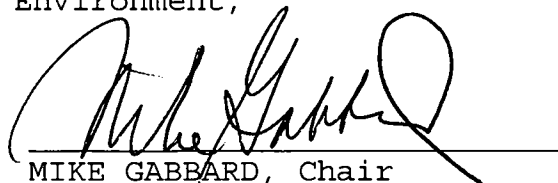
boards and advisory committees, including the American Diabetes Association's Advocacy Committee, Community Leadership Board, and National Legislative & Regulatory Subcommittee.

Your Committee finds that testimony submitted in support of Mr. Atta's nomination universally speak to his impressive background and extensive knowledge of the land and agriculture laws and policies in Hawaii. Additionally, testifiers commended his calm demeanor and high level of competency in the face of difficult policy issues. Testimony submitted by the Department of Agriculture specifically praised his genuine commitment to public service and desire to serve Hawaii's farmers, ranchers, and growers.

After hearing from Mr. Atta and considering his resume and statement, your Committee finds that Mr. Atta demonstrates a high-level of understanding of not only government administration, but also the State's efforts to maintain the agricultural sector of Hawaii's economy, including livestock production, forestry, crops, and aquaculture. His background, including his expertise in Agriculture, Land Use, Emergency Management, Natural Resource Management, Water Resource Management, Policy Analysis, and Renewable Energy issues, along with his dedication to public service make him exceptionally qualified to serve as the Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture.

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, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the nominee, has found the nominee to be qualified for the position to which nominated and recommends that the Senate advise and consent to the nomination.

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

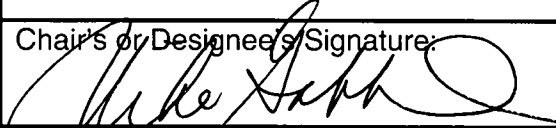


MIKE GABBARD, Chair



The Senate
Thirtieth Legislature
State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Agriculture and Environment
AEN
Advise and Consent

Governor's Message No.:* GM 501	Committee Referral: AEN	Date: 5/18/20		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its decision				
The Recommendation is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advise and Consent 2340 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Advise and Consent 2345				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
GABBARD, Mike (C)	✓			
RUDERMAN, Russell E. (VC)	✓			
RHOADS, Karl	✓			
THIELEN, Laura H.	✓			
FEVELLA, Kurt				✓
TOTAL	4	—	—	1
Recommendation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: 				
Distribution: Original Yellow Pink Goldenrod File with Committee Report Clerk's Office Drafting Agency Committee File Copy				

*Only one Governor's Message per Record of Votes