

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

67

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 10 2021

RE: S.B. No. 479
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-First State Legislature
Regular Session of 2021
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture and Environment, to which was referred S.B. No. 479 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to require the Department of Agriculture to collaborate with agricultural growers and researchers to develop and implement a program to safely distribute disease- and insect-free tropical plant materials to Hawaii farmers.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i Farm Bureau. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Department of Agriculture.

Your Committee finds that there are concerns within the State's agricultural community that certain diseases that affect tropical flowers and foliage grown in the State have caused a decline in this industry. When the local supply of tropical flowers and foliage cannot meet local needs, tropical flowers and foliage must be imported from foreign countries, which in turn carries an elevated risk of inadvertently introducing other dangerous insects and diseases to the State's farms and plant nurseries.



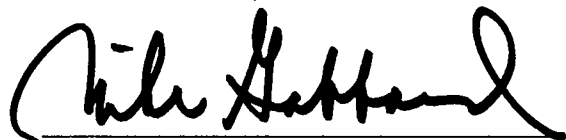
Your Committee has heard the concerns of the Department of Agriculture that this measure lacks a definition for tropical plant materials and could potentially turn the Department of Agriculture into an importer, breeder, producer, and distributor of tropical plant materials, creating direct competition with existing nurseries both in State and out-of-state that produce plants for sale in Hawaii. In addition, because the Department of Agriculture's Plant Quarantine Branch is charged with regulating the import of plants, the Department of Agriculture would have a conflict of interest as both the importer and regulator.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Requiring the Department of Agriculture to adopt rules by January 1, 2023, to specify the plant species and varieties that would need additional regulations, and establish quarantine requirements, diagnostic measures, and import requirements; 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. 479, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 479, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

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



MIKE GABBARD, Chair



