

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

30

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 08 2021

RE: S.B. No. 777
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. 777 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE CRIMINAL DESTRUCTION OF TREES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to establish the crime of the destruction of a tree on state or county property punishable as a misdemeanor.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Trees for Honolulu's Future, and the Lani-Kailua Outdoor Circle.

Your Committee finds that trees are integral tools in tackling the climate crisis. In addition to carbon sequestration, trees reduce ambient temperatures and storm water runoff, increase wildlife habitat, and provide human health, psychological, and quality of life benefits. New seedlings can take years before they realize ecological and human health benefits; however, existing mature trees already provide significant benefits, underscoring the importance of their protection. Establishing criminal penalties to apply to destruction of trees would strengthen enforcement capabilities and allow for greater protection, preservation, and enhancement of natural resources,

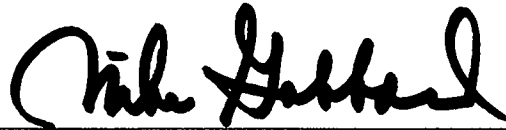


while providing an opportunity for education about the benefits of trees, which may result in impacts beyond issuing penalties.

Your Committee has amended this measure by 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. 777, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 777, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Judiciary.

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



MIKE GABBARD, Chair



