

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 15 2023

RE: S.B. No. 782  
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2023  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture and Environment, to which was referred S.B. No. 782 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO TARO,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to appropriate funds to the Department of Agriculture to provide grants to be disbursed directly to taro farmers in the State.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture; Adaptations, Inc.; Ka Ohana O Na Pua; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Hawai'i Farmers Union United; Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action; and twenty-eight individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General and one individual.

Your Committee finds that taro farmers in the State face a myriad of challenges from the expensive and labor intensive processing of taro to poi, to the high cost of land and increasingly unpredictable weather conditions due to climate change. Your Committee acknowledges that the occurrence of taro farming has been on the decline for decades due to these mounting challenges, and taro farmers continue to struggle to survive and sustain their operations in the State. Your Committee further finds that the State has more recently pivoted its focus to the issue of food security and agricultural self-reliance in Hawaii.



and now finds tremendous potential in the taro plant beyond its cultural and traditional value. Thus, this measure supports the taro farmer in Hawaii by appropriating funds through grants for taro farmers and farms for improvements in their operations, thereby protecting the Hawaiian traditions of taro and taro farming, encouraging new taro farming, and improving the livelihoods of existing taro farmers.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying legislative findings;
- (2) Deleting language that would have prohibited grants to be given unless the applicant has spent money toward producing taro for consumption and for costs incurred more than five years prior to the time of application;
- (3) Inserting language to require qualified applicants to submit a plan for increasing taro production, including activities in which the applicant intends to engage in;
- (4) Including a definition for "qualified applicant" to mean taro farmers and certain taro-producing private organizations; and
- (5) 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. 782, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 782, 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



