

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 20 2023

RE: H.B. No. 974
H.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 H.B. No. 974, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish a program grant specialist position within the Department of Agriculture and appropriate funds for the position; and
- (2) Require the program grant specialist to prioritize assistance for farmers and ranchers who produce local food for which at least some portion is consumed within the State.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture; Office of Hawaiian Affairs; Food+ Policy Internship 2023; Agriculture and Food Security Committee of the Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i; Ulupono Initiative; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition; Climate Protectors Hawaii; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.; Hawai'i Seed Growers Network; and three individuals.

Your Committee finds that the decrease in direct federal appropriations for agriculture has resulted in a fiscal policy



landscape characterized by a dependance on and competition for limited grant funding options. Grant writing typically involves complex application processes that can be difficult to navigate, particularly for farmers and ranchers heavily preoccupied with their day-to-day farming or ranching operations. Your Committee further finds that farmers and ranchers can often lack the time, know-how, and skills required to draft compelling grant applications, despite clear and apparent needs for funding of their operations, which in itself can often deter farmers and ranchers from applying all together. Therefore, this measure establishes and appropriates funds for a grant specialist position at the Department of Agriculture to assist farmers and ranchers in applying for and obtaining grants offered by the United States Department of Agriculture and other sources.

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 H.B. No. 974, H.D. 1, and recommends that it pass Second Reading 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



