

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 15 2024

RE: H.C.R. No. 189

H.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture and Environment, to which was referred H.C.R. No. 189, H.D. 1, entitled:

"HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION URGING THE STATE TO PROHIBIT THE INTRODUCTION OF BIOCONTROL AGENTS THAT MIGHT THREATEN ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT FORAGE GRASS SPECIES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Urge the State to prohibit the introduction of biocontrol agents that might threaten economically important forage grass species;
- (2) Request the State to consider a holistic approach to address wildfire risk by prioritizing fuel reduction of unmanaged lands that can utilize a variety of tools including grazing, creation of fire buffers, mechanical controls, and the consideration of the use of applicable strategies for landscape level control, so long that it takes into consideration economic and ecological implications as well as potential impacts to critical industries; and
- (3) Urge the State to provide for the protection of Hawaii's rangelands and important forage grass species that sustain beef cattle production through funding policies,



initiatives, and directives to state agencies to incentivize livestock grazing for the management of forage grasses and other vegetation on lands managed by the State and private sector that are currently undermanaged.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Larry Jefts Farms, LLC; Kealia Ranch LLC; and five individuals.

Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from one individual.

Your Committee finds that many forage grass species support livestock production and provide important manageable and sustainable ground cover for the State's rangelands, thereby minimizing bare soil and erosion, maximizing water infiltration, improving soil health, and decreasing the spread of noxious weeds. This measure aims to protect local livestock production and manage the environment of the State by preventing the eradication of these important forage grasses species.

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 concurs with the intent and purpose of H.C.R. No. 189, H.D. 1, and recommends its adoption.

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



MIKE GABBARD, Chair



