

JAN 23 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that coffee is the
2 State's second most lucrative agricultural crop, valued by the
3 United States Department of Agriculture at up to \$64,300,000
4 annually, with additional upstream and downstream impacts that
5 include employment, land preservation, and tourism.

6 The legislature further finds that Hawai'i-grown coffee is
7 among the highest priced coffee sold anywhere in the world,
8 largely due to the high cost of production and its reputation
9 for outstanding quality. As such, the State's coffee industry
10 is susceptible to fraud when less expensive coffees are falsely
11 labeled as originating from Hawai'i. Currently, state law
12 imposes penalties for the false labeling (counterfeiting) of
13 Hawai'i-grown coffee in cherry and parchment form, but the fraud
14 of coffee counterfeiting has been almost exclusively committed
15 in roasted coffee products. Coffee counterfeiting undermines
16 Hawai'i's coffee farmers by misrepresenting an increase in
17 supply, thereby creating downward price pressure and value



1 depreciation in the marketplace. Additionally, further harm
2 occurs when inferior products are introduced into the supply
3 chain, thereby undermining Hawai'i's hard-fought brand identity
4 for high quality crops.

5 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to deter coffee
6 counterfeiting by enhancing the penalties for the false labeling
7 of Hawai'i-grown coffee with regard to its geographic origin
8 through the imposition of a mandatory fine and specification
9 that each act of false labeling is a separate offense.

10 SECTION 2. Section 708-871.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
11 amended to read as follows:

12 **"[+]§708-871.5[+] False labeling of Hawaii-grown coffee.**

13 (1) A person commits the offense of false labeling of
14 Hawaii-grown coffee if the person knowingly transports,
15 distributes, advertises, sells, or possesses with the intent to
16 sell Hawaii-grown green coffee, cherry coffee, ~~[or]~~ parchment
17 coffee, or roasted coffee that is falsely labeled with regard to
18 the geographic origin of the Hawaii-grown coffee.

19 (2) For purposes of this section:

20 "Cherry coffee" means the unprocessed fruit of the coffee
21 plant.



"Geographic origin" means the geographic areas designated as follows:

(a) Hamakua is the Hamakua district on the island of Hawaii, as designated by the State of Hawaii tax map;

(b) Hawaii is the State of Hawaii;

(c) Kau is the Kau district on the island of Hawaii, as designated by the State of Hawaii tax map;

(d) Kauai is the island of Kauai;

(e) Kona is the north Kona and south Kona districts on the island of Hawaii, as designated by the State of Hawaii tax map;

(f) Maui is the island of Maui;

(g) Molokai is the island of Molokai; and

(h) Oahu is the island of Oahu.

"Green coffee" means the agricultural commodity comprised of green coffee beans.

"Parchment coffee" means the dried product that remains when coffee cherries are processed by removing the coffee seeds from the pulp.

"Roasted coffee" means the product that results from heating the coffee cherry seeds to augment aroma and flavor.

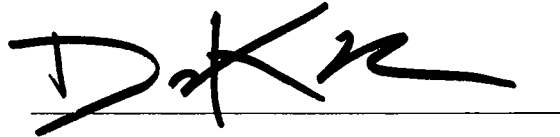


1 (3) False labeling of Hawaii-grown coffee is a class C
2 felony. In addition to any penalties imposed pursuant to
3 section 706-605, the court shall impose on any defendant
4 convicted of false labeling of Hawaii-grown coffee a mandatory
5 fine of \$10,000 for each separate offense. The mandatory fine
6 imposed shall not be suspended or waived."

7 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
8 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

9 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

10
INTRODUCED BY:





S.B. NO. 1276

Report Title:

Roasted Coffee; False Labeling; Fines

Description:

Extends the offense of false labeling of Hawaii-grown coffee to include roasted coffee. Imposes \$10,000 fine for each separate offense of false-labeling of Hawaii-grown roasted coffee.

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