

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

214

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 06

, 2025

RE: H.B. No. 1294
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Housing, to which was referred H.B. No. 1294 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the Department of Agriculture to establish an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group to address the shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing; and
- (2) Appropriate funds for the working group.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation; Agribusiness Development Corporation; Hawai'i Food+ Policy; Hawai'i Farmers Union United; and Hawai'i Farm Bureau. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General; Department of Agriculture; Office of Planning and Sustainable Development; and Land Use Commission.

Your Committee finds that Hawaii's agricultural industry faces a significant workforce housing shortage, which is hindering

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the growth and sustainability of the agricultural sector. Limited housing options near agricultural zones have made it difficult for farmers and farm employees to secure housing that is affordable and located in proximity to their work. This measure establishes the Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group, which can help the State explore potential policies and recommend solutions to meet the agricultural industry's need for farmworker housing while also protecting agricultural lands from non-agricultural residential uses.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group is to be established within the Department of Agriculture for administrative purposes;
- (2) Removing as unnecessary language exempting the members from the State Ethics Code, as the State Ethics Commission's longstanding practice is to exclude the activities of working group members from the general provisions of the Code;
- (3) Specifying that the Department of Agriculture is required to provide administrative support to the Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group;
- (4) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Housing that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1294, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1294, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems.



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Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Housing,

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LUKE A. EVSLIN, Chair



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