

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

82

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 04 , 2025

RE: H.B. No. 498
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 Agriculture & Food Systems, to which was referred H.B. No. 498 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL CRIMES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii Agricultural Crimes Council to develop agricultural crime prevention, problem solving, and crime control recommendations and implement related programs to encourage timely reporting of agricultural crimes; and
- (2) Require the Department of Agriculture to collaborate with and support the Council.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture; Department of Research and Development of the County of Hawai'i; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Hawai'i Farmers Union United; North Shore Livestock; Hawaiian Host Group; Kealia Ranch; and numerous individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General.

2025-1182 HB498 HD1 HSCR HMSO



Your Committee finds that theft and vandalism within the agricultural sector are significant problems in the State. Because these crimes occur in rural and geographically isolated locations and due to limited resources, law enforcement agencies often cannot timely respond to and adequately address reports of the crimes. This measure establishes the Hawaii Agricultural Crimes Council to help the State address resource limitations and enforcement capabilities, enhance data collection, and restore public trust in law enforcement to adequately prosecute agricultural crimes.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Modifying the membership of the Hawaii Agricultural Crimes Council to include designees of certain members;
- (2) Clarifying that the Hawaii Agricultural Crimes Council may investigate and enforce violations of agricultural crimes by appointing and commissioning investigators;
- (3) Inserting language that establishes the Agricultural Enforcement Special Fund, to be administered by the Department of Law Enforcement;
- (4) Directing monies, revenue, and fines received by the Hawaii Agricultural Crimes Council into the Agricultural Enforcement Special Fund instead of the Animal Industry Special Fund;
- (5) Changing the appropriation to an unspecified amount;
- (6) Changing the numbers of various positions to be established for the Hawaii Agricultural Crimes Council to unspecified numbers;
- (7) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (8) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

Your Committee respectfully requests your Committee on Finance, should it deliberate on this measure, to consider an appropriation amount of \$2,000,000 for the establishment and



operation of the Hawaii Agricultural Crimes Council, including one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) Executive Director position, one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) Staff Assistant position, and two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) Deputy Inspector positions.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 498, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 498, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Agriculture & Food
Systems,


KIRSTIN KAHALOA, Chair



