

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

1411

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 21

, 2025

RE: S.B. No. 443
S.D. 1
H.D. 1

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

Madame:

Your Committees on Agriculture & Food Systems and Energy & Environmental Protection, to which was referred S.B. No. 443, S.D. 1, entitled:

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

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to require lands within the agricultural district that have solar energy facilities to obtain certification from the Department of Agriculture that the lands are also used for farming operations.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from the Agribusiness Development Corporation; Ulupono Initiative; 350Hawaii.org; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; and Hawai'i Food+ Policy. Your Committees received comments on this measure from the Department of Agriculture and Hawaii State Energy Office.

Your Committees find that while renewable energy development is important, prime farmland is increasingly being repurposed for solar energy projects, reducing the availability of land for farming and diminishing the State's efforts to achieve agricultural self-sufficiency. This measure mitigates this issue by requiring that any lands within the agricultural district with class B or C soils upon which are sited solar energy facilities

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obtain certification from the Department of Agriculture to confirm active and legitimate farming operations. By reinforcing agricultural use requirements, this measure safeguards vital farmland, ensures that agricultural lands remain productive in agriculture, and upholds the State's commitment to strengthening local food security.

Your Committees have amended this measure by:

- (1) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style, including conforming amendments to section 205-2(d)(6)(B), Hawaii Revised Statutes.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Agriculture & Food Systems and Energy & Environmental Protection that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 443, S.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 443, S.D. 1, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committees on Agriculture &
Food Systems and Energy &
Environmental Protection,



NICOLE E. LOWEN, Chair



KIRSTIN KAHALOA, Chair



State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
The Thirty-third Legislature

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Record of Votes of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Bill/Resolution No.: SB 493, SD1	Committee Referral: AGR/EEP, CPL	Date: 3/19/25
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The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on the measure.

The recommendation is to: Pass, unamended (as is) Pass, with amendments (HD) Hold
 Pass short form bill with HD to recommit for future public hearing (recommit)

AGR Members	Ayes	Ayes (WR)	Nays	Excused
1. KAHALOA, Kirstin (C)	X			
2. KUSCH, Matthias (VC)	X			
3. LOWEN, Nicole E.	X			
4. PERRUSO, Amy A.	X			
5. QUINLAN, Sean				X
6. WARD, Gene				X
TOTAL (6)	4			2

The recommendation is: Adopted Not Adopted
 If joint referral, _____ did not support recommendation.
committee acronym(s)

Vice Chair's or designee's signature: _____

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