

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 05 2025

RE: S.B. No. 661
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture and Environment, to which was referred S.B. No. 661 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO PLANT-BASED BUILDING MATERIALS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to appropriate \$3,000,000 to the Department of Agriculture for the establishment and operation of programs relating to the development of hemp- and bamboo-based building materials.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture, Climate Protectors Hawai'i, Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition, Hawai'i Farm Bureau, Hawai'i Farmers Union United, Hawaii Environmental Change Agents' Building Decarbonization and Carbon Sequestration Task Force, and six individuals.

Your Committee finds that plants, such as hemp and bamboo, are fast-growing, renewable resources that can be made into lightweight, durable, energy efficient construction materials that are not only pest and mold resistant, but can also sequester carbon. Your Committee notes that Hawaii's unique climate makes it well suited to support a plant-based materials industry. Your Committee further finds that using locally sourced structural building materials derived from plants, such as hempcrete and



bamboo panels, could reduce shipping costs and dependency on imports, increase green agricultural jobs statewide, and help the State meet its ambitious decarbonization goals.

According to testimony received by your Committee, biocement, which can be produced from several sustainable sources, including algae, is a promising substitute for Portland cement, a significant emitter of greenhouse gases worldwide.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting language to include the development of biocements in the programs to be established and operated within the Department of Agriculture;
- (2) Changing the appropriation to an unspecified amount; and
- (3) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion.

Your Committee notes that this measure, as amended, contains an unspecified appropriation amount. Should your Committee on Ways and Means choose to deliberate on this measure, your Committee respectfully requests that it consider inserting an appropriation amount of \$3,000,000.

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 is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 661, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 661, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

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



MIKE GABBARD, Chair



