

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 16, 2024

RE: H.B. No. 2134

H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems, to which was referred H.B. No. 2134 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds to establish Grant Specialist positions within the Department of Agriculture to assist farmers and ranchers in applying for, obtaining, and fulfilling the requirements of grants offered by federal, state, county, or private entities.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture; Hawai'i Food+ Policy; Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association; Ulupono Initiative; Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Local Food Coalition; Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.; Aina Hookupu o Kilauea; Maui County Farm Bureau; and four individuals.

Your Committee finds that many of Hawaii's farmers and ranchers are finding difficulty in securing the financial support necessary to build a thriving, vibrant business. Despite various sources of grant funding from federal, state, county, and private entities, farmers and ranchers applying for grants may have to complete an application process that is sometimes complex. This



measure would increase access to these grants, provide new business opportunities, and expand production capacity within the State's agricultural industry.

Your Committee notes that the Department of Agriculture is in support of this measure so long as it does not impact the priorities set forth in the Executive Budget submittal.

Your Committee has amended this measure by changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion.

Your Committee respectfully requests your Committee on Finance, should it deliberate on this measure, to consider an appropriation amount of \$300,000.

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. 2134, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2134, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.

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



CEDRIC ASUEGA GATES, Chair



