

Honolulu, Hawaii  
, 2024

**APR 15**

RE: S.C.R. No. 52  
S.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 S.C.R. No. 52, S.D. 1, entitled:

"SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE PERCENTAGES OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS BEING LEASED BY THE STATE THAT ARE SUITABLE FOR FARMING AND ACTIVELY BEING USED FOR FARMING PURPOSES AND CERTAIN DOLLAR AMOUNTS RELATING TO LEASE TRANSFERS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to request the Board of Agriculture to:

- (1) Conduct a study of the percentages of agricultural lands being leased by the State that are suitable for farming and actively being used for farming purposes;
- (2) Determine certain dollar amounts for each agricultural lease transferred from one lessee to another lessee; and
- (3) Submit a report to the Legislature before the Regular Session of 2027.



Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i Farm Bureau and one individual.

Your Committee received testimony in opposition from the Department of Agriculture.

Your Committee finds that state agricultural lands are a crucial resource for achieving Hawai'i's goals of economic diversification and food self-sufficiency, but some subsidized leases are being used for non-agricultural purposes or remain unused. Furthermore, the transfer of leases to the highest bidder can result in windfall profits for lessees and may not ensure that the land is used by the most suitable farmers for agricultural production. Your Committee further finds that additional data is needed to assess the effectiveness of Department of Agriculture leases in maximizing the benefit of these lands to the State and to determine whether the transfer of leases results in the monetization of the difference between the actual and subsidized lease values for private, rather than State, benefit. This measure seeks to provide for this data by requesting the Board of Agriculture to conduct a study.

Your Committee notes testimony received from the Department of Agriculture stating that the study requested by this measure is unfunded and would cost approximately \$500,000 to conduct.

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 concurs with the intent and purpose of S.C.R. No. 52, S.D. 1, and recommends that it 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



