

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 461

Honolulu, Hawaii
Feb 15, 2007

RE: H.B. No. 780

Honorable Calvin K.Y. Say
Speaker, House of Representatives
Twenty-Fourth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2007
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture, to which was referred H.B. No. 780 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this bill is to provide equitable treatment for agricultural water users by establishing that county agricultural water users (county users) shall be entitled to a reimbursement from the Department of Agriculture (DOA) for the difference between the actual costs of irrigation water that the county user paid to the county and the cost of the equivalent amount of irrigation water had that amount of irrigation water been provided by the state irrigation system.

The Maui County Farm Bureau supported this bill. The Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation supported the intent of this measure. DOA opposed this bill. The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association submitted comments.

Your Committee finds that only a fraction of all agricultural water users have access to affordable water provided by the state irrigation system. In many cases, those water users who do not have access to this system must rely on the counties to provide the water. County water rates are substantially higher than the state irrigation system. Your Committee finds that this measure will help to address this disparity and provide equitable treatment to agricultural water users.



As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Agriculture that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 780 and recommends that it pass Second Reading and be referred to the Committee on Finance.

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



CLIFT TSUJI, Chair



