

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

1437

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 30 2023

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 501

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2023
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture and Environment, to which was referred Governor's Message No. 501, submitting for study and consideration the nomination of:

CHAIRPERSON, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

G.M. No. 501 SHARON HURD,
for a term to expire at noon on 12-31-
2026,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Sharon Hurd for service as the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture.

Your Committee received testimony in support of Ms. Hurd's nomination and appointment as Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture from the Office of the Governor; Department of Health; Department of Transportation; Department of Budget and Finance; Department of Land and Natural Resources; Department of Labor and Industrial Relations; Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs; Department of Taxation; Department of Public Safety; Office of Planning and Sustainable Development; Hawaii Technology Development Corporation; Office of Enterprise Technology Services; Maui County Farm Bureau; Hawaii Export Nursey Association; Big Island Association of Nurserymen; Pohaku Farm; Matson Navigation Company, Inc; Hawaii Harbor Users Group; Hawai'i Hemp Farmers Association; Kauai Kunana Dairy; Lokoea Farms; Puna Flower Power; Kuahiwi Ranch; MauiGrown Coffee, Inc.; Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council; North Shore Economic Vitality Partnership;

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Ponoholo Ranch Limited; Hawaii Farmers Union United; Kona Coffee Farmers Association; Kona Earth, LLC; Green Point Nurseries, Inc.; Huahua Farm; Meadow Gold Dairies Hawaii; Elevation Coffee Farm; Adaptations, Inc; Hawaii Foodservice Alliance, LLC; Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association; Orchid Growers of Hawai'i; Hawaii Tropical Flower Council; Hawaii Ulu Producers Cooperative; Diamond B Ranch, LLC; Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action; Hawaii Agriculture Research Center; Hawaii Food Industry Association; Funder Hui; Kona Perfect; Hawaii Meats, LLC; Larry Jefts Farms, LLC; Hawai'i Forest Industry Association; Kahua Pa'a Mua; Ho'ōla Farms; Palani Ranch; Wakefield and Sons, Inc.; Isla Custom Coffees, LLC; Hawaii Master Food Preservers; Rancho Aloha Coffee Farm; Ulupono Initiative; Hibiscus Lady Nursery; Hawaii Tropical Fruit Growers; Hawaii Coffee Association; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.; Plant Hawaii; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Hawaii Avocado Association; Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association; Kau Coffee Growers Cooperative; Kapāpala Ranch; Manowaiopae Excellent Adventure Farm; Aina Ho'okupu o Kilauea; The Food Basket, Inc.; Mahi Pono; Rusty's Hawaiian, LLC; Island Harvest; Maui Floral; Waimanalo Agricultural Association; Trees for Honolulu's Future; Hawaii Organic Farming Association; Hua Orchards; and ninety-nine individuals.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Ms. Hurd's background, experience, and desire to serve Hawaii's agriculture community qualify her to be nominated for appointment as the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture. Your Committee notes that Ms. Hurd has been with the Department of Agriculture since 2007 as a Business Development Program Manager where she focused primarily on securing and administering federal grants to increase the quantity and quality of locally grown food and to enhance the competitiveness of Hawaii specialty crops. Furthermore, your Committee finds that Ms. Hurd has proved pivotal throughout several agricultural policy initiatives, which has allowed her to develop a reputation as a committed leader throughout Hawaii's agricultural industry and state government.

Ms. Hurd earned her Bachelors of Arts in Zoology from the University of Hawaii at Manoa and worked at Delta Air Lines as a Cargo Sales Manager, gaining twenty-five years of experience and insight into air cargo sales, contract negotiation, logistical planning, and customer service. Ms. Hurd has a demonstrated track record of achievement that spans over forty years and a wide range



of knowledge with state and federal regulations, specializing in procurement, grant administration, and contracting procedures.

As the Chairperson of Board of Agriculture, Ms. Hurd pledges to commit the Department of Agriculture to the full implementation of Act 90, Regular Session 2003 (Act 90), which was enacted to transfer certain non-agricultural park lands from the Department of Land and Natural Resources to the Department of Agriculture. While three hundred parcels consisting of approximately nineteen thousand acres have been transferred, many parcels have yet to be. Ms. Hurd pledges to complete this transfer in one year and to provide a progress report of the implementation of Act 90 in eight to nine months to the Legislature. Ms. Hurd additionally pledges to focus on biosecurity and invasive species management. Furthermore, as the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture, Ms. Hurd's top priority will be to shift Hawaii agriculture towards commercial production by supporting subsistence farmers to aid in their transition, and to develop a masterplan for food security that will support all of agriculture and its subsectors.

Ms. Hurd is also committed to expanding agriculture, with sensitivity towards farm buffer zones near residential areas, to ensure that neighborhoods bordering agricultural lands are not victims to unreasonable amounts of noise, debris, or smells that may reduce their quality of life. She is committed to compensating homeowners; redoing leases; and handling noise, debris, and pollution issues diplomatically, as is needed. Lastly, Ms. Hurd has made the commitment to your Committee to bring attention to the water meter issue on Molokai, where over twenty-five farmer and rancher retirees are being overcharged for water use despite the removal of their meters years ago, which are used to calculate water usage. Your Committee therefore recommends that Sharon Hurd be appointed as Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture based on her background, knowledge, and commitment to public service.

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, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the nominee, has found the nominee to be qualified for the position to which nominated and recommends that the Senate advise and consent to the nomination.



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



MIKE GABBARD, Chair



