

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 16, 2024

RE: H.B. No. 1937

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. 1937 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds to the Department of Agriculture for the preparation of an environmental impact statement to drill non-potable water wells on individual parcels at Panaewa and Pahoehoe Agricultural Parks.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association and Hawai'i Farm Bureau. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Department of Agriculture. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General.

Your Committee finds that Hawaii's farms need affordable and reliable water for irrigation to sustain themselves. However, access to reliable water remains a challenge for many farmers, as existing law requires a time-consuming and often cost-prohibitive environmental impact statement to be prepared before a farmer can drill for non-potable water on their land. This measure will help subsidize Panaewa and Pahoehoe Agricultural Park farmers and



additionally support the State's general effort to meet its self-sustainability goals.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Changing the appropriation to an unspecified amount; and
- (2) 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 \$100,000.

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. 1937, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1937, 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



