

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2467

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 15 2024

RE: S.B. No. 2479  
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2024  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture and Environment, to which was referred S.B. No. 2479 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE HAWAII FARM TO FOOD BANK PROGRAM,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish the Hawaii Farm to Food Bank Program and the Hawaii Food Assistance Program Special Fund to alleviate food shortages in the State; and
- (2) Appropriate \$5,000,000 into and out of the Hawaii Food Assistance Program Special Fund.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture; Office of Economic Revitalization of the City and County of Honolulu; one member of the Kauai County Council; Kauai Climate Action Coalition; Hawai'i Farmers Union United; Hawaii Food Industry Association; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Hawaii Primary Care Association; Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.; Hawai'i Public Health Institute; Young Brothers, LLC; Hawai'i Foodbank, Inc.; Hawaii Chapter of 350.org; Giving Hope Hawaii; Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action; Aloha Diaper Bank; 'Elepaio Social Services; Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center; Angel Network



Charities, Inc.; Armed Services YMCA Hawaii; Hawai'i Pacific Health; Kapaa Missionary Church; and twenty-eight individuals.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General.

Your Committee finds that Hawaii's food banks have provided food to residents who experience food insecurity throughout the years, especially during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Food banks were able to meet this increased need during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic due to a major increase in federal funds and philanthropy. However, funding from these sources has declined considerably since, and Hawaii's food banks will need additional support to continue to meet the State's food needs. According to testimony received by your Committee, farm to food bank programs are essential to create a more equitable distribution of fresh, nutritious, and locally sourced produce in the State. This measure will support the efforts of Hawaii's food banks and provide local food producers with a wider market to support their operations, while keeping moneys circulating within the State to boost the local economy.

Your Committee recognizes the concerns raised by the Department of the Attorney General as the measure is unclear as to why the Hawaii Farm to Food Bank Program established by this measure cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process. Your Committee notes that the Governor has appropriated \$750,000 in the proposed supplemental budget for fiscal year 2024-2025 to fund a farm to food bank program, and respectfully requests that this concern be considered as this measure moves forward in the legislative process.

Your Committee has amended this measure by making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

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 is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2479, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2479, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.



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



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MIKE GABBARD, Chair



