

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

156

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 05 , 2025

RE: H.B. No. 859  
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2025  
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems, to which was referred H.B. No. 859 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish an Agricultural Crime Prevention Program within the Department of Agriculture to provide grants, education, administrative enforcement, and other services for the benefit of the State's agricultural industry;
- (2) Clarify, create, and strengthen laws regarding crimes and violations related to agriculture or agricultural lands and hunting on private agricultural lands;
- (3) Establish clear distinctions between administrative and criminal penalties; and
- (4) Appropriate funds for certain positions.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture; Office of the Prosecuting Attorney of the County of Hawai'i; Honolulu Police Department;

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Hawai'i Farm Bureau; and three individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General; Department of Budget and Finance; and Hawaii Cattlemen's Council.

Your Committee finds that agricultural crime, including theft, vandalism, trespassing, and illegal hunting, poses a growing threat to Hawaii's farmers and ranchers, jeopardizing food security, economic stability, and the viability of local agriculture. Farmers already face numerous challenges such as unpredictable weather, pests, and labor shortages, and the added burden of crime further threatens their livelihoods. Despite efforts by the agricultural community to enhance security through surveillance and community watch programs, limited law enforcement resources make it difficult to effectively deter and prosecute offenders. This measure addresses the issue by establishing an Agricultural Crime Prevention Program within the Department of Agriculture, which will provide grants for security measures, support education and outreach, and strengthen collaboration with law enforcement. By creating a structured approach to prevention and enforcement, this measure ensures that agricultural crimes are taken seriously, protecting Hawaii's farming industry and safeguarding the future of local food production.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Strengthening language in the preamble related to how unauthorized hunting on private lands negatively impacts agricultural lands and farmers and ranchers;
- (2) Expanding certain powers of the Department of Agriculture to relate to agriculture, rather than only livestock;
- (3) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

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. 859, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass



Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 859, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the members of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

  
KIRSTIN KAHALOA, Chair



