

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 10 2025

RE: S.B. No. 496
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture and Environment, to which was referred S.B. No. 496 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the Board of Agriculture to define the terms "bona fide farmer" and "bona fide agricultural activity"; and
- (2) Require the Department of Agriculture to submit a report to the Legislature before the Regular Session of 2026.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Agribusiness Development Corporation; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Hawai'i Farmers Union United; Island Harvest; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.; and three individuals.

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

Your Committee finds that there is no clear and comprehensive definition for the terms "bona fide farmer" and "bona fide agricultural activity" in existing law. Establishing universal definitions for these terms would provide more effective policy



implementation, ensure that resources are directed to those truly engaged in farming, and help the State achieve its agricultural and environmental objectives.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting language to require the Board of Agriculture to solicit and include stakeholder input in drafting the definitions for "bona fide farmer" and "bona fide agricultural activity"; and
- (2) Making a technical, nonsubstantive amendment 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. 496, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 496, 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,



MIKE GABBARD, Chair



The Senate
 Thirty-Third Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Agriculture and Environment
AEN

Bill / Resolution No.:* SB 496	Committee Referral: AEN, WAM	Date: 2/3/25
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The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure.
 If so, then the previous decision was to: _____

The Recommendation is:

Pass, unamended 2312
 Pass, with amendments 2311
 Hold 2310
 Recommit 2313

Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
GABBARD, Mike (C)	X			
RICHARDS, III, Herbert M. "Tim" (VC)	X			
DECOITE, Lynn				X
RHOADS, Karl	X			
AWA, Brenton	X			
TOTAL	4	0	0	1

Recommendation:
 Adopted
 Not Adopted

Chair's or Designee's Signature:


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***Only one measure per Record of Votes**