

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 45

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 05 2025

RE: S.B. No. 498  
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. 498 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the Department of Agriculture to establish a temporary Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group to address the shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the State;
- (2) Require an interim report to the Legislature before the Regular Session of 2027 and a final report to the Legislature before the Regular Session of 2028; and
- (3) Appropriate \$800,000 for the Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group to gather the necessary data and prepare the required reports, including any consultation fees and related expenses.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture, Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Agribusiness Development Corporation, Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation, Hawai'i Farm Bureau, Hawai'i



Farmers Union United, Strata Farms LLC, Hawai'i Food+ Policy, and twenty-three individuals.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General and the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development.

Your Committee finds that agricultural workforce housing has been a longstanding concern for the agricultural sector in the State. Your Committee recognizes that the high cost of living, limited affordable housing options, and lack of workforce housing near agricultural lands create significant barriers for farmworkers and their families. The lack of adequate agricultural workforce housing contributes to worker shortages, increased operating costs, and decreased productivity. This measure provides a framework to develop, incentivize, and facilitate the creation of critical workforce housing necessary to maintain a reliable, skilled workforce to support Hawaii's agriculture industry and advance food security initiatives.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group is being established by the Legislature within the Department of Agriculture for administrative purposes; 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. 498, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 498, 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



