

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

1177

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 11 , 2025

RE: S.B. No. 552
S.D. 1
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 S.B. No. 552, S.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to require and appropriate funds for the Department of Agriculture to establish a Healthy Soils Program.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission; Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition; Climate Protectors Hawai'i; Citizens' Climate Lobby Hawai'i; 350Hawaii.org; Carbon Cashback Hawaii; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Hawai'i Farmers Union; Hawai'i Food+ Policy; Kanalani Ohana Farm; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council; Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action; Haleakala Chapter of the Hawaii Farmers Union; Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management; and numerous individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Agriculture; Eden Farms Hawaii, Inc.; and one individual.

Your Committee finds that maintaining healthy soils is essential for Hawaii's agricultural sustainability and resilience. Investing in soil health supports farm productivity, strengthens

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the local economy, and enhances food security. This measure creates a Healthy Soils Program within the Department of Agriculture to evaluate and improve soil conditions while offering farmers education and technical support.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting a preamble;
- (2) Clarifying the scope and duties of the Healthy Soils Program to include:
 - (A) The integration and management of the Compost Reimbursement Program and Cover Crop Reimbursement Pilot Program;
 - (B) Education and technical assistance to support the adoption of healthy soil practices;
 - (C) The administration of financial incentives and awards to encourage the implementation of regenerative agricultural practices;
 - (D) Updated soil data and mapping initiatives, including a review process;
 - (E) Agencies that the Department of Agriculture may collaborate with for the purposes of the Program; and
 - (F) Certain reporting requirements;
- (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.

Your Committee respectfully requests your Committee on Finance, should it deliberate on this measure, to consider an appropriation amount of more than the original appropriation request of \$500,000 due to the federal administration's recent deprioritization of climate smart practices, which target improved soil health.



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 S.B. No. 552, S.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 552, S.D. 1, 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,


KIRSTIN KAHALOA, Chair



