

Honolulu, Hawaii

**FEB 17** , 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1602  
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2026  
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems, to which was referred H.B. No. 1602 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds to establish one full-time equivalent grant specialist position with the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity; Hawaii Fish Company Inc.; Ulupono Initiative; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.; Hawaii Food Industry Association; Hawai'i Food+ Policy; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Local Food Coalition; Hilo County Farm Bureau; Maui County Farm Bureau; East Oahu County Farm Bureau; North Shore Economic Vitality Partnership; and four individuals.

Your Committee finds that many of the State's farmers and ranchers struggle to secure the financial support needed to grow and sustain their businesses. While grants from the United States Department of Agriculture, State, counties, and private entities offer valuable funding opportunities, the complex application processes can discourage farmers from applying. Without specialized knowledge in grant writing, many farmers and ranchers



miss out on crucial resources that could strengthen the local agricultural industry.

Your Committee further finds that the appropriation of funds to establish a grant specialist position within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity will assist farmers and ranchers in navigating the application process, securing funding, and fulfilling grant requirements. By providing this support, the State can help to ensure that local agricultural businesses thrive and contribute to food security and economic resilience.

Your Committee has amended this measure by changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion.

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. 1602, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1602, 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,

  
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CORY CHUN, Chair



