

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 24 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1603
H.D. 1
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture and Environment, to which was referred H.B. No. 1603, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL PARK LEASES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to repeal the requirement for land covered by an agricultural park lease with a remaining term of fifteen years or less to be located in a county having a population of less than five hundred thousand in order for the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to extend the lease.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of the Mayor of the County of Maui; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Ahiki Acres, LLC; Waimanalo Agricultural Association; Hawai'i Farmers Union United; Hilo County Farm Bureau; Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association; East Oahu County Farm Bureau; Maui County Farm Bureau; and five individuals.

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

Your Committee finds that lease certainty is essential for agricultural viability for farmers operating in agricultural parks. Agricultural lenders routinely consider the remaining



lease term when evaluating loan applications, and farmers with limited lease horizons are often unable to secure financing for their farm operations. Your Committee further finds that the City and County of Honolulu is the only county where farmers operating on agricultural parks cannot obtain a lease extension from the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. This measure will expand agricultural lease extension equity to all counties, increase local food production, and strengthen food security throughout the State.

Your Committee has amended this measure by inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion.

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 H.B. No. 1603, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1603, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Judiciary.

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.:* HB 1603, HD1	Committee Referral: AEN, JDC	Date: 3-16-26		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is: <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 <input type="checkbox"/> 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			1
Recommendation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: 				
Distribution: Original Yellow Pink File with Committee Report Committee Drafting Agency				

*Only one measure per Record of Votes