

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 30 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1604
H.D. 2
S.D. 1

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

Sir:

Your Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Housing,
to which was referred H.B. No. 1604, H.D. 2, entitled:

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

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish an Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to address the shortage and challenges of agricultural workforce housing in the State;
- (2) Require reports to the Legislature; and
- (3) Appropriate funds.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Housing Hawai'i's Future; Hawai'i Farmers Union United; Hawaii Farmers Union, Haleakala Chapter; Chamber of Commerce Hawaii; Maui Chamber of Commerce; and two individuals.

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



Your Committees find that workforce housing remains a significant challenge affecting the State's agricultural sector, as farmers consistently identify access to appropriate and affordable housing as a limiting factor in recruiting and retaining employees. This poses challenges for the State's goals to increase local agricultural production and improve food sovereignty, as many farms are limited in their ability to scale-up production without sufficient labor. This measure provides a collaborative and practical forum to bring together state agencies, counties, agricultural organizations, and housing stakeholders to better understand agricultural workforce housing needs and identify potential solutions.

Your Committees have amended this measure by:

- (1) Adding a representative of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs as a member of the Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group;
- (2) Specifying that the Working Group's scope shall also include:
 - (A) Consideration of certain innovative housing models; and
 - (B) Examination of opportunities to streamline permitting and zoning processes;
- (3) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

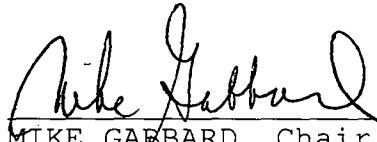
Your Committees recognize that despite the need to promptly increase the supply of agricultural workforce housing in the State, it is critical that housing remains safe and should conform to appropriate electric and plumbing codes. Should subsequent Committees choose to deliberate on this measure as it moves through the legislative process, your Committees respectfully request that the working group's scope be amended to consider this concern.



As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Housing that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1604, H.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1604, H.D. 2, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committees on Agriculture and
Environment and Housing,

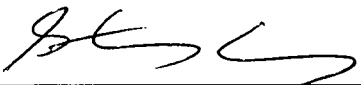

STANLEY CHANG, Chair


MIKE GABBARD, Chair



The Senate
Thirty-Third Legislature
State of Hawai'i

**Record of Votes
Committee on Housing
HOU**

Bill / Resolution No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:		
HB 1604, HD 2	AEN/HOU, WAM	03/18/26		
<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
CHANG, Stanley (C)	✓			
HASHIMOTO, Troy N. (VC)				✓
ELEFANTE, Brandon J.C.				✓
RHOADS, Karl	✓			
FEVELLA, Kurt	✓			
TOTAL	3			2
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