

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 20 , 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1953
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. 1953 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to establish and appropriate funds for a Conservation and Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Pilot Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Hawai'i Farmers Union United; Hawai'i Food+ Policy; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.; Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i; and one individual. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General.

Your Committee finds that Hawaii's agricultural lands and watersheds are vital for food security, climate resilience, and environmental health. Farmers could better incorporate conservation practices into farming practices with greater access to technical support, farm-level conservation infrastructure, and statewide coordination for soil health, regenerative agriculture, and climate-smart stewardship.



Your Committee further finds that federal programs often do not suit Hawaii's small, diverse farms or indigenous restoration efforts due to these programs' large-scale focus and temperate climate standards. Your Committee believes that a unified statewide approach that integrates conservation agriculture training, on-the-ground implementation, and infrastructure development will enhance environmental stewardship, boost local food production, improve soil and water quality, and increase long-term resilience in the State's food systems.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Establishing the Conservation and Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Pilot Program within the Session Laws of Hawaii, rather than statutorily;
- (2) Inserting language establishing standards for the grants awarded under the Pilot Program;
- (3) Changing the appropriation to an unspecified amount;
- (4) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (5) 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 \$3,000,000 to implement the Conservation and Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Pilot Program.

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. 1953, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1953, 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,



CORY O'N, Chair



