

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 20 , 2026

RE: H.B. No. 2497.  
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. 2497 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO BIOSECURITY,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Clarify that signatory industries to a biosecurity government-industry agreement shall not be liable for costs related to performing activities pursuant to the agreement; and
- (2) Require the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish a working group that comprises signatories of the biosecurity government-industry agreements for joint decision-making.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Hawai'i Food+ Policy; and one individual. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General and Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species.

Your Committee finds that Act 236, Session Laws of Hawaii 2025 (Act 236), authorizes the Department of Agriculture and



Biosecurity to form government-industry agreements to protect Hawaii's agriculture, economy, biodiversity, and environment from invasive species. These agreements aim to strengthen cooperation between private industry and government, formalize commitments to biosecurity, respond to current pest threats, and improve future readiness. Your Committee additionally finds that further refinement of Act 236 will strengthen public-private coordination to enhance the State's ability to respond quickly and effectively to invasive species and other agricultural threats.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting language that would have clarified that signatory industries to a biosecurity government-industry agreement shall not be liable for costs related to performing activities pursuant to the agreement;
- (2) Inserting language to clarify that the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and the counties, including officers, employees, and authorized agents of the Department and counties, shall not be liable for costs relating to the entering of private property to control or eradicate pests;
- (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 notes that a more comprehensive framework for the working group established by this measure may be needed.

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. 2497, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2497, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs.



Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Agriculture & Food  
Systems,

  
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CORY CHUN, Chair



