

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

2942

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR - 6 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2153
S.D. 2

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

Sir:

Your Committee on Ways and Means, to which was referred S.B. No. 2153, S.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to require the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity to develop and adopt multi-tiered, matrix-based definitions for the terms "bona fide farmer" and "bona fide agricultural activity."

Your Committee received written comments in support of this measure from the Hawaii Farm Bureau, Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, and one individual.

Your Committee received written comments on this measure from the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

Your Committee finds that the lack of a uniform standard for what constitutes a bona fide farmer can lead to discrepancies in the way agricultural zoning is applied. For example, landholders who do not truly engage in farming may take advantage of agricultural zoning designations, potentially reducing the availability of agricultural land and undermining the State's efforts to preserve land for commercial agriculture. Your Committee recognizes the challenges of reconciling the diversity



of agricultural practices with the need for a uniform, enforceable standard that prevents abuse of agricultural tax classifications and land entitlements. Accordingly, this measure will help to establish balanced definitions for statewide uniformity.

Having received prior concurrence from the previous subject-matter committee chair, your Committee has amended this measure by including the Agribusiness Development Corporation as a collaborating stakeholder for the development and adoption of the assessment framework to define "bona fide farmer" and "bona fide agricultural activity."

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Ways and Means that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2153, S.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Third Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2153, S.D. 2.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Ways and Means,


DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, Chair



