

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 20 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2174

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 S.B. No. 2174 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AGRICULTURE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Authorize the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to declare an emergency quarantine when it has been reasonably determined that there is a threat to the environment in the State;
- (2) Authorize the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to halt operations related to or within the affected area for ninety-six hours, subject to extension by vote of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity;
- (3) Authorize the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to quarantine any business or other area that is known or reasonably suspected to be infested or infected with any pest or any other prohibited, restricted, or unlisted organism; and
- (4) Authorize the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish interim rules governing the transportation



of any material into and within the State that creates a situation dangerous to public or ecological health.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species, and Hawai'i Food+ Policy.

Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from one individual.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Hawai'i Farm Bureau and Hawai'i Farmers Union United.

Your Committee finds that due to its unique geographic isolation, the State is particularly vulnerable to invasive species. High-impact species, such as the coconut rhinoceros beetle, have disastrous effects on the State's agriculture and food industry. Your Committee recognizes the need to act quickly to contain threats from invasive species. Quarantines, which although at times can be disruptive when initiated early and quickly, can neutralize and eradicate an invasive species threat more quickly than if no quarantine were initiated. This measure will support critical biosecurity procedures and provide further authority for the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to engage in pest mitigation and prevention measures.

Your Committee acknowledges the concerns raised in testimony of the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity that the emergency quarantine authority granted to the Department needs to be clarified. Your Committee further acknowledges the concerns raised in testimony by the Hawaii Farmers Union United that quarantines can cause economic harm to small agricultural producers. Therefore, amendments to this measure are necessary to address these concerns.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

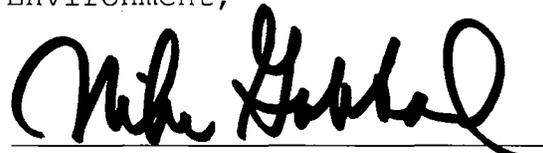
- (1) Inserting language clarifying that the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity may declare an emergency quarantine if it determines there is a threat to agriculture;



- (2) Inserting language that would require the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to provide detailed information regarding the emergency quarantine to any farmers that would be impacted by the quarantine;
- (3) Inserting language that would require the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to provide compensation for farmers who incur significant losses due to a quarantine and establish a compensation mechanism to provide compensation;
- (4) Deleting language that would have authorized the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to quarantine areas infested or infected with any other prohibited, restricted, or unlisted organisms and clarifying the Department's authority to quarantine an area to prevent movement of a pest to or from the infested location;
- (5) Clarifying that the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity shall have the authority to enact interim rules for importation and quarantine of flora, fauna, and other materials known to harbor or transport a high-impact invasive species or pest; and
- (6) Making a technical, nonsubstantive amendment for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

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 S.B. No. 2174, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2174, 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



