

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 11 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2323
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. 2323 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) Establish the Farmland Transition Commission to examine barriers certain farmers face when trying to purchase or access farmland and provide recommendations on possible incentives or policies to assist these individuals in purchasing or accessing farmland; and
- (2) Require an annual report to the Legislature.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i Farmers Union United, Hawai'i Food+ Policy, and one individual.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience, and Hawai'i Farm Bureau.

Your Committee finds that access to farmland is one of the most critical challenges facing the State's agriculture industry.



Your Committee further finds that aspiring farmers and food producers face concerningly limited access to affordable and suitable land. The inability of farmers to participate in agricultural production currently undermines the State's goal of food sovereignty. By establishing a Farmland Transition Commission to obtain accurate data regarding potential farmers, this measure will promote food security, community resilience, and environmental stewardship by creating a formal pipeline for land transfer that prioritizes active agricultural use over speculative investment.

Your Committee acknowledges the concerns raised in testimony by the Hawai'i Farmers Union United regarding both the commission membership and the scope of the commission. Your Committee finds that the Farmland Transmission Commission should include examination of agricultural conservation easements and additional land lease terms for small-scale food producers and young farmers. Your Committee also believes that to further this commitment, additional members from statewide farmer organizations should be added to the Commission. Further, the existing age limit should be modified to support prospective and current farmers of all ages. Therefore, amendments to this measure are necessary to address these concerns.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting language that would have limited the scope of the Farmland Transition Commission to farmers of a certain age;
- (2) Inserting language to require the Commission to:
 - (A) Examine the viability of state-funded agricultural conservation easements and lease-to-fee conversion programs to ensure permanent affordability for small-scale food producers; and
 - (B) Evaluate the effectiveness of current agricultural park lots and non-agricultural park land lease terms in providing the equity and security necessary for young farmers to secure traditional financing;



- (3) Adding to the membership of the Commission two representatives from statewide farmer organizations, to be invited by the Chairperson of the Commission;
- (4) Clarifying that the farmers from each county invited to serve as members of the Commission shall be active farmers of any age;
- (5) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (6) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments 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. 2323, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2323, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Agriculture and
Environment,



MIKE GABBARD, Chair



The Senate
 Thirty-Third Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Agriculture and Environment
AEN

| | | |
|---|--|------------------------|
| Bill / Resolution No.:* SB 2323 | Committee Referral: AEN, WAM | Date: 2-4-26 |
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The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure.
 If so, then the previous decision was to: _____

The Recommendation is:

Pass, unamended 2312
 Pass, with amendments 2311
 Hold 2310
 Recommit 2313

| Members | Aye | Aye (WR) | Nay | Excused |
|--------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| GABBARD, Mike (C) | X | | | |
| RICHARDS, III, Herbert M. "Tim" (VC) | X | | | |
| DECOITE, Lynn | X | | | |
| RHOADS, Karl | X | | | |
| AWA, Brenton | X | | | |
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| TOTAL | 5 | - | - | - |

Recommendation: Adopted 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**