

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

2625

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 20 2026

RE: S.B. No. 3253
S.D. 1

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

Sir:

Your Committees on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts and Agriculture and Environment, to which was referred S.B. No. 3253 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO CONSERVATION,"

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to establish the Hawaii Conservation Sanctuary as a nonprofit group to work with the Department of Land and Natural Resources to support conservation, wildlife preservation, and ancillary programs by establishing sanctuaries in the State.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources and Hawai'i Ocean Reef and Ocean Coalition.

Your Committees find that successful sanctuary models in the United States generate substantial revenue for conservation efforts, foster tourism, educate visitors on environmental and wildlife stewardship, and provide critical habitat for endangered or other species. Additionally, your Committees believe that these models, which are run by nonprofits, are preferable to a government-run program because they provide more flexibility in management, operations, innovation, and community engagement. Furthermore, the State's climate and biodiversity make it uniquely positioned to become a national forerunner in the research,



education, and protection of endangered species. Thus, this measure will support the mission of the State to preserve the State's natural resources for present and future generations and increase public engagement and education in the critical field of conservation.

Your Committees note that S.B. No. 2606, Regular Session of 2026, is a substantially similar measure that intended to establish a wildlife sanctuary nonprofit for the purpose of overseeing the conservation of a recreation area containing a body of water. Accordingly, your Committees have amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting language from S.B. No. 2606 that would establish a conservation nonprofit public corporation, its powers and duties, its board of governors, its leadership and employment structure, the limits of its conduct, and specific requirements related to its operations; and naming it the Hawaii Conservation Sanctuary Corporation;
- (2) Clarifying the purpose of the Corporation to be to protect and expand populations of native and endangered species and other wildlife from within and outside the State by developing and operating at least three conservation sanctuaries in the State as follows:
 - (a) One around a recreational body of water;
 - (b) One in an area appropriate for the protection of native birds; and
 - (c) One in an area appropriate for the protection of larger species of wildlife;
- (3) Inserting language that would allow the Corporation to partner or otherwise collaborate with the Department of Land and Natural Resources for the purposes of this measure;
- (4) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and



- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts and Agriculture and Environment that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 3253, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 3253, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the members of the Committees on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts and Agriculture and Environment,


MIKE GABBARD, Chair


CHRIS LEE, Chair



