

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2486

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 20 2026

RE: S.B. No. 3296

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. 3296 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 Conservation and Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Pilot Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity;
- (2) Require a report to the Legislature; and
- (3) Appropriate funds.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity; Office of Economic Revitalization of the City and County of Honolulu; Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Hawai'i Farmers Union United; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.; Hawai'i Good Food Alliance; Hawai'i Food+ Policy; Big Tree Farm LLC; and three individuals.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General.



Your Committee finds that farmers and land stewards face persistent barriers to adopt conservation agricultural practices including limited access to technical assistance, underinvestment in farm-level conservation infrastructure, and a lack of coordinated statewide support for soil health, regenerative agriculture, and climate-smart stewardship. Although federal conservation programs provide important resources nationally, many of these programs were developed for large-scale, continental agricultural systems and do not align well with Hawaii's small, diversified farms or indigenous and community-based restoration practices. Therefore, this measure will establish a coordinated statewide approach to assist the State's producers in conservation and sustainable agriculture in tropical agroecosystems, mixed land-tenure arrangements, and culturally grounded stewardship methods.

Your Committee notes the testimony of the Department of the Attorney General that, pursuant to the Hawaii State Constitution, this measure requires language establishing appropriate standards for state agencies to issue grants. Therefore, amendments to this measure are necessary to address this concern.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

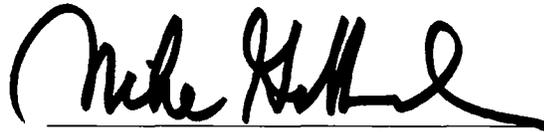
- (1) Inserting language establishing appropriate standards for the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to issue grants for the Conservation and Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Pilot Program;
- (2) Inserting a blank appropriation amount;
- (3) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

Your Committee notes that this measure, as amended, contains an unspecified appropriation amount. Should your Committee on Ways and Means choose to deliberate on this measure, your Committee respectfully requests that it consider inserting an appropriation amount of \$3,000,000 to implement the pilot program.



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. 3296, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 3296, 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,



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MIKE GABBARD, Chair



