

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

99

Honolulu, Hawaii

Feb 6, 2007

RE: H.B. No. 1577  
H.D. 1

Honorable Calvin K.Y. Say  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Twenty-Fourth State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2007  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection, to which was referred H.B. No. 1577 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO GENETICALLY MODIFIED COFFEE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this bill is to prohibit, for a period of five years, genetically modified coffee in Hawaii, except for research in environmentally secure facilities, and to provide penalties for violations.

Currently, genetically modified coffee is not regulated in Hawaii and subject only to federal regulation. The Kona coffee industry contributes significantly to the economic and cultural vitality of Hawaii. There is a strong desire to maintain the unique brand identity and the market price of Kona coffee, which is a highly regarded specialty coffee. There is substantial concern that permitting genetically modified coffee in the Hawaii market will lead to a substantially reduced market price and erode the niche that Kona coffee, as a specialty coffee, enjoys.

This bill would make genetically modified coffee illegal in Hawaii except for certain research purposes and provide for penalties for violations. These measures would protect the Kona coffee industry, and Kona coffee farmers in particular, support Kona coffee's status as a specialty coffee, and permit a five-year period to evaluate the importance and the extent of research of genetically modified coffee under state regulation.

HB1577 HD1 HSCR LRB 07-1987.doc



Your Committee finds, however, that because reasonable and workable rules regarding research on genetically modified coffee have yet to be established, there is significant uncertainty as to when a violation would occur.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this bill by removing the provision that provided for civil liability for damages that result from genetically modified coffee, and by making a technical nonsubstantive change.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1577, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1577, H.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Agriculture.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Energy &  
Environmental Protection,

*Hermina Morita*

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HERMINA MORITA, Chair



