



Aloha e Friends,

On Saturday, Oct. 22, 9-10am I invite you to attend my second in-person **Listen Story Community Meeting** since the shut down in 2020! The meeting is a hybrid, so you can either attend in-person at the **Kapolei High School Teachers' Lounge**, or via Zoom. Our **Special Guest, Corporal Roland Pagan**, will provide an update on the current staffing shortage of HPD District #8 and discuss how folks can get engaged in a neighborhood watch. Please feel free to send questions ahead of time! Following Corporal Pagan's presentation, I'll give some community updates. There will be time for Q & A. Please email sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov to RSVP.

COMMITTEE CHAIR

AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

MEMBER

- ◆ Judiciary
- ◆ Government Operations

DISTRICT 20

Kapolei, Makakilo and portions of Ewa, Kalaheo, and Waipahu

My September Listen Story featured Special Guest, Ed Sniffen, Hawai'i Department of Transportation's Deputy Director for Highways. Dir. Sniffen provided an update on the Makakilo Drive Extension from the State's perspective, along with DOT's revenue plans for highway maintenance. Please visit my [YouTube channel](#) to watch the zoom recording. As always, please don't hesitate to contact me at (808) 586-6830 if I can help you or your family in any way. I also invite you to follow me on social media: [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and [Twitter](#). Best wishes to you and your 'ohana. *Mike*

Hawai'i Statewide Transportation Plan Public Engagement Survey

I recently received the info below from the HDOT (Hawai'i Dept. of Transportation) and thought you might like to participate. They're soliciting public input for their 2045 Hawai'i Statewide Transportation Plan (HSTP). The survey will be available until the end of October 2022, online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/J8RHRTT>. If you prefer to complete the survey via pdf form, contact my office. The completed pdf file or scanned survey can be returned by email to kchu@bowersandkubota.com or masatomo.murata@hawaii.gov, or the survey can be printed and mailed to the Statewide Transportation Planning Office, Hawai'i Department of Transportation, 200 Rodgers Boulevard, Honolulu, Hawaii 96819. Those who want to provide verbal responses to the survey questions can call (808) 440-0260 for assistance Mon –Thurs, 9am to noon, until October 27, 2022.



Honolulu Rail Transit Project - Emergency Training Exercise

As part of the Trial Running test phase of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project, the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation, Hitachi Rail Honolulu, and city's first responders will be conducting an emergency training exercise between the Kualaka'i (East Kapolei) Station and the Keone'ae (UH-West O'ahu) Station on Saturday, October 22, 2022 from 6:30am – 3:00pm. Please do not call 911 as this is a first responder exercise. The exercise will simulate an emergency scenario involving a train that requires a public safety response. HPD, HFD, and Honolulu EMS will be participating. Certain travel lanes on Kualaka'i Parkway and Keahumoa Parkway will be closed. Area residents and businesses may experience increased traffic congestion and noise during the duration of this exercise.

AG & ENVIRONMENT NEWS



During the 2022 Session, Sen. Gabbard was able to get \$600k appropriated for the eradication of the Little Fire Ant. (Here he's pictured at an Invasive Species Award Ceremony in 2017).

During the month of October, you can also pick up free LFA test kits to collect ants at the following locations on O'ahu:

- ◆ Kailua – Ko'olau Farmers
- ◆ Kāne'ohe – Ko'olau Farmers
- ◆ Kāne'ohe – Yamashiro's (Ace Hardware)
- ◆ Pearl City – Home Depot Garden Center
- ◆ Hale'iwa – Ace Hardware
- ◆ Lā'ie – Ace Hardware

In my role as Ag & Environment Committee Chair, the eradication of Hawai'i invasive species falls under my purview. The Little Fire Ant (LFA), has spread throughout the island of Hawai'i, and is quickly spreading to O'ahu, Maui, and Kaua'i. I visited the Hawai'i Ant Lab (HAL) on Big Island last year, run by Cas Vanderwoude and his team to see if I could help them. Since its inception, HAL has become one of the leading LFA research entities in the world, known for having developed effective LFA management strategies for tropical environments. Changes in appropriations as the result of the pandemic caused our Dept. of Agriculture (HDOA) funds to be reallocated. This had a domino effect, which left HAL only partially funded for 2022, with staffing and services being cut 50%. I introduced SB2996 which appropriated \$600,000 to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (LNR402) for research, extension, and control of the little fire ant and other harmful ants. Fortunately, funds were dispersed when the State Budget passed in July.

Virtual Island Summit

On September 28, I was invited to speak at the fourth annual [Virtual Island Summit](#) which took place virtually from September 26 - October 2, with over 10,000 registered participants from 500 island communities worldwide.

The Virtual Island Summit connects global islands in order to share ideas, best practices, and solutions for sustainable development. The Summit featured over 160 expert speakers – heads of state, policymakers, development partners, entrepreneurs, academics, and NGO leaders – widely covering the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and other topics pertinent to island communities. My Session was titled: *“Creating Vibrant Economies on Islands.”* (cont. p. 3)

Month of the Ant

October is “Spot the Ant, Stop the Ant Month” in Hawai'i. This campaign is being conducted state-wide to educate residents of threats posed by Little Fire Ants, especially the painful, itchy stings the ant can inflict on both island residents and their pets. You can help participate in early detection surveys by collecting and submitting ant samples to the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture or OISC (O'ahu Invasive Species Committee) for identification. By testing once a year, you can ensure that you are either LFA-free or find the ants while the infestation is still small enough to isolate and eradicate. If you've never experienced the bite of these tiny creatures, count yourself lucky! The LFA ranks among the world's top invasive pests, out of plants, animals, and insects! If you want to check your property for LFA, it's an easy experiment; all you need is some sticks and peanut butter. You can leave the sticks coated in peanut butter out overnight, and carefully deposit them into a Ziploc bag in the morning to examine for LFA's.

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SESSION

VIRTUAL EVENT
FREE SIGN UP
SEP 26TH - OCT 2ND, 2022
FOLLOW #VIS2022

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER

Using Island Heritage & Culture to Promote a Vibrant Economy

21:00PM EDT (NEW YORK) | 02:00AM BST (LONDON | NEXT DAY) | 11:00AM AEST (SYDNEY | NEXT DAY)

Sustainable development is geared towards creating vibrant economies which make the most of local communities' resources and knowledge. This session will focus on how different islands are working towards future-proofing and growing their economies.



BIANCA PETERS
Founding Partner, 360° of Innovation, Island Impact and WCVW



HONORABLE KITLANG KABUA
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of the Marshall Islands



CATHERINE ETUATA PAPANI
CEO, New Chamber of Commerce



SENATOR MIKE GABBARD
Governor of Hawaii



ALLAN CHOU
Expert in renewable energy transition and climate justice at London International School of Finance, Global Advisor to the Governor of Taiwan China and its Free Trade Port

For more information: www.virtualislandsummit.com

(cont. from p. 2) It focused on how different islands are working towards future-proofing and growing their economies. As the Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment, I was asked to discuss agriculture and food security in Hawai'i. To watch my seven-minute speech, please [click here](#). It was exciting to hear about what others are doing globally in this arena. Heartfelt thanks to the [Hawai'i Green Growth](#), [Hawai'i Local2030 Hub](#), [the AGHui](#), [Hawai'i Farmers Union United](#), and [MA'O Organic Farms](#) for their resources and knowledge. Huge shout-out for all you do to enhance ag and food security in Hawai'i nei and to advance our progress with the 17 UN SDGs. So much momentum to be proud of and to celebrate!



On Sept. 28, Sen. Gabbard attended the 2022 Hawai'i AG Conference at the Hawai'i Convention Center. (Pictured with Future Farmers of America: First Row (L-R): Rona Duldulado and Nicholas Nishimura. Second Row (L-R): Leila Gonzales, Ronya Malae, Jhanella Gerardo, Ynez Gaborno, Alaiza Alvarez, and Dalen Calistro.)

2022 Hawai'i Ag Conference

On September 28, I attended the 2022 Hawai'i AG Conference: "Collaborative Leaders as Agents of Change." Held at the Hawai'i Convention Center September 27-28 and hosted by the Agricultural Leadership Foundation of Hawai'i, it was their first in-person conference since 2019. I enjoyed seeing folks I hadn't seen in a while. Was especially nice running into these young Future Farmers of America! Lots of great booths and inspiring sessions. Governor Ige presented a special message to conference goers which summarizes the true feeling of ag in Hawai'i right now. Here's a brief excerpt: "Historically, agriculture has been at the heart and soul of Hawai'i and has always shaped our commerce, social fabric and lifestyle. While economic factors have changed the landscape of Hawai'i's agriculture over the centuries, the pandemic has dramatically increased the challenges we face. It has never been more apparent that we must do more to ensure local agriculture is able to thrive. Our goal to increase and enhance Hawai'i's food security requires forethought and collaboration between all sectors of agriculture, including farmers, growers, ranchers, as well as industry and government leaders..." Mahalo, Gov. I couldn't agree more.

Kupono Solar Groundbreaking

I attended the groundbreaking and blessing ceremony on Oct. 7, for [Kupono Solar](#), a huge new solar project coming up in Ewa, near my district. (That's me in the white hat.) The project is a photovoltaic and battery storage facility that will help stabilize energy costs, lessen fuel usage, and improve energy independence. Kupono Solar will be located on approximately 131 acres of military land on the Navy West Loch Annex of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. The project will eventually be large enough to power 10,000 homes. Also very cool, all parts made in the USA! 🇺🇸



AG & ENVIRONMENT NEWS



Sen. Gabbard gets his hands into live vermicompost, or worm compost, while on a site visit to Ka'ohao School in Lanikai, part of the Zero Waste Hui Farm-to-School program in 2017.

There were several Farm to School bills this past session, ranging from education coordinator positions, to funding cafeteria equipment, to providing staff training.

Unfortunately, most of them died either in the Ways and Means (WAM) or Education Committee (EDU). I co-sponsored [SB2182](#), which fortunately, we were able to pass into [Act 258](#), which established and appropriated \$200,000 for a School Garden Coordinator position within the Department of Education's Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design, to provide technical support and startup resources for schools interested in developing a school garden program.

Hawai'i Green Growth UN Local 2030 Hub Annual Partnership Meeting

On October 13, I attended via Zoom the Hawai'i Green Growth United Nations Local 2030 Hub Annual Partnership meeting. It was a hybrid mtg at the East-West Center's Imin International Conference Center in Honolulu. One of the panels featured three of our four county mayors: Maui County Mayor Michael Victorino, Hawai'i County Mayor Mitch Roth, and Kaua'i County Mayor Derek Kawakami, (City and County of Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi was off-island, so Managing Director, Mike Formby stepped in). They talked about challenges faced by the counties in their efforts to achieve the state's climate, economic and sustainability goals by 2030.

The mayors made a public commitment to work together to combat the threat of climate change to our beautiful island paradise. They renewed our commitment to the [Aloha+ Challenge](#) which we launched in 2014, using an online dashboard (which measures different actions individuals can take to help reduce the negative effects of climate change) to foster a competition among themselves. (I heard them use a word for the first time—"coopetition," which means cooperation and competition, in a friendly way of course, to reach our climate goals.)

Listening to the mayors and the other speakers was inspiring. Amidst the talk of doom and gloom we hear all too often regarding the consequences of climate change, this meeting gave me hope. Hope that it's not too late to preserve Mother Earth. And that if we each do our part, we can leave her in good shape for our children and our children's children....

Farm to School Month

Did you know that October is "Farm to School" month? These programs help to connect our keiki with their food and with the 'āina, helping them to understand where our food comes from (no, not the grocery store!) and to gain more respect for the 'āina which feeds and nourishes us. School leaders tell us that involving keiki in the food growing process is key to increasing fruit and vegetable consumption among students. As the Chair of the Agriculture & Environment Committee, I've partnered with the [Hawai'i Farm to School Hui](#), [UH CTAHR](#) (University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources), [Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation](#), [Hawai'i Ulu Cooperative](#), ['Aina Pono](#), and others to introduce and champion numerous bills over the years that support and improve agriculture education within our Dept. of Education.