



Aloha e Friends,

Mahalo to everyone who came to our “Open House” on the first day of the 2020 Legislative Session January 15. I was stoked to see so many familiar faces, as well as new ones. Our collective island community filled the halls and rotunda at the capitol with echoing voices and moving songs. It was a pleasure to be a part of, not to mention an awesome way to celebrate my 72nd birthday ;) Be sure to check out my [Flickr album](#) to see photos. [.bit.ly/OpeningDay2020](http://bit.ly/OpeningDay2020).

This session, the Senate introduced 1,180 bills, and the House (which has twice as many members as the Senate) introduced 1,156 bills. I introduced 99 bills, setting a new personal record. To view the complete list, go to bit.ly/bills2020.

My first “Listen Story” meeting of 2020 will be held on Saturday, February 29th from 9 am to 10 am at the [Kapolei High School Teachers’ Lounge](#), 91-5007 Kapolei Parkway Kapolei. This is a nice opportunity to come talk story and voice any concerns. As always, please contact me at (808) 586 6830 or sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov if I can help you or your family in any way. You can also follow me on Twitter [@senmikegabbard](#), Instagram [@sengabbard](#), or Facebook at facebook.com/senmikegabbard.



Sen. Gabbard’s awesome 2020 Session staff: Jami Chapman, HPU Intern and Legislative Assistant; Skylar Geasey, UH Manoa Intern and Legislative Assistant; Sydney Williams, Asst. Committee Clerk; and Tonya Miller, Legislative Asst.

My 2020 Legislation

In my fifth year as Chair of the Agriculture and Environment Committee (AEN), I continue to make it a priority to help our

farmers produce more locally grown food and work toward protecting our environment. Below are some of the bills I’m introducing.

Shark Protection ([SB 2717](#))

This bill was drafted with input from Inga Gibson - Policy Director, Pono Advocacy. This is the fourth year I’m introducing the bill. There’s currently a law on the books that bans the taking of shark fins. Ironically, this doesn’t prevent people from taking whole sharks. This bill would ban someone from knowingly capturing, taking, possessing, abusing, or entangling any shark, whether alive or dead, or kill any shark in state waters. The penalty for violation would be a misdemeanor with hefty fines attached and stiff penalties. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) has an exemption for the protection of public safety for the taking of sharks; and, there’s an exemption for Native Hawaiian gathering rights. The bill passed out of my Committee (AEN) on February 5 and passed Second Reading as amended and is now waiting for a hearing in the Judiciary (JDC) Committee, of which I’m a member.

COMMITTEE CHAIR

AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

MEMBER

- ◆ Judiciary
- ◆ Labor, Culture & the Arts

DISTRICT 20

- ◆ Kapolei, Makakilo and portions of Ewa, Kalaeloa and Waipahu

“Listen Story”

Saturday, February 29th from 9 am to 10 am at the Kapolei High School Staff Lounge, 91-5007 Kapolei Parkway.



MY 2020 LEGISLATION



Sen. Gabbard was interviewed by Kimberlee Speakman, with KHON2 News on Feb. 4, about his Silver Alert bill (SB3123).

Public Trails (SB 2759)

I introduced this bill last year, and while it got tons of positive support from the public and in the media, it didn't get a hearing in the Judiciary/Ways and Means Committees (JDC/WAM) and died. You probably read in the paper about people being cited for entering Manoa Falls Trails illegally, even though there are signs saying the trail is closed due to dangerous conditions. Unfortunately, there are situations where individuals who trespass in county/state parks end up needing to be rescued by emergency personnel. Often, Government bears the responsibility for their irresponsibility.

This bill would require government agencies to seek reimbursement when they initiate a search and rescue mission for someone. The reimbursement would only be required if the search or rescue was caused by any act or omission by the person searched for or rescued, constituting intentional disregard for the person's safety, including intentionally disregarding a warning or notice. It would also impose fines for these violations, including charges of petty misdemeanor or for violations involving marked trails in state parks, trails

that are part of DLNR's Na Ala Hele trail system, and trails on state lands (in instances where there's signage). Sadly, the current penalties for trespassing on state public trails aren't much of a deterrent to folks seeking hiking adventures, which all too often, end badly. Those who oppose the bill feel it could discourage individuals from calling for help if they do get lost or injured. The bill passed out of the Water Land and Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs (WTL/PSM) Committees on February 5 and is waiting for a hearing in JDC.

Silver Alert (SB 3123)

I introduced SB 3123 after learning about the disappearance of 76-year-old Milton Ishii of Makakilo back in November of last year. Milton has dementia and is a neighbor of my constituent, Kathy Davenport - who used to work for Councilmember Kym Pine and is currently running as a candidate for City Council District 1. Kathy and my office began to collaborate on this issue to see what the best strategy was for addressing this during the 2020 session. The bill would direct our Attorney General to implement a statewide silver alert program that would be activated when there's a missing senior. The silver alert program would be integrated with the existing MAILE/AMBER alert for missing children. The Committee on Human Services (HMS) passed the measure with amendments on February 10 and it's awaiting a hearing in the Judiciary Committee (JDC). I'm hopeful we can get this passed to better protect our kupuna.



Lieutenant Governor Josh Green and Sen. Gabbard at the Governor's State of the State address on Jan. 21.

LEGISLATIVE EVENTS

Hawai'i's Interagency Biosecurity Plan Info Briefing

I've been hearing some alarming news about invasive species and recently learned that coqui frogs can transmit rat lungworm disease. Unfortunately, both coqui frogs and Little Fire Ants are spreading rapidly across O'ahu. Two-lined Spittlebugs are trashing ranch lands and Rapid Ohia Death is killing our Native Forests. We definitely have our work cut out for us.

On January 21, the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment, which I chair, held a joint informational briefing with the House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection, chaired by Representative Nicole Lowen, and the House Committee on Agriculture, chaired by Representative Richard Creagan, to get an update on Hawai'i's Interagency Biosecurity Plan. Each year, I host this info briefing to bring awareness to the importance of making invasive species a priority for state action. We've got incredible field crews that are doing great work, but the truth is that we at the Legislature, and the Governor, need to step up in a bigger way to ensure these folks have the resources to do their job. This session, we'll be working to establish an Invasive Species Emergency Response Fund ([SB 2713](#)) in addition to legislation that will dedicate more resources for aquatic biosecurity ([SB 1162](#)), aquaculture extension ([SB 2729](#)), and forestry and wildlife positions ([SB 2758](#)) to aid in this important fight. Rep. Lowen and I are also partnering on increasing staffing to the Hawai'i Ant Lab ([SB 2737](#)). To read the Biosecurity Plan, go to bit.ly/BioSecurityPlan. During the briefing, presentations were made by the following departments and agencies:

- ◆ [Hawaii Invasive Species Council](#)
- ◆ [Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife and Division of Aquatic Resources](#)
- ◆ [Department of Agriculture](#)
- ◆ [Department of Health, Vector Control Branch](#)
- ◆ [University of Hawaii, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources](#)
- ◆ [Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Office of Planning](#)
- ◆ [Department of Transportation](#)

Press Conference on New Sunscreen Bill

Hawai'i made history in 2018 when we were the first in the world to take action to help protect our coral reefs and

human health by creating a law to ban the dangerous chemicals, oxybenzone and octinoxate, from sunscreens. Other countries and jurisdictions followed Hawai'i's example, implementing their own bans, including Palau, Aruba, Bonaire, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Marshall Islands, and the city of Key West, Florida. Then, in February 2019, the FDA published industry guidelines saying that the only active sunscreen ingredients not harmful to human health are zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. *Enter SB 2778*. With [SB 2778](#) and its companion bill, HB 2248, introduced in the House by Representative Gene Ward, we're taking the next step to protecting human health by prohibiting those sunscreen chemicals that the FDA doesn't consider to be safe.

I held a press conference on January 30, along with Rep. Ward; Cindi Punihaole, Executive Director of The Kohala Center's Kahalu'u Bay Education Center; Mendy Dant, Executive Vice President, Fair Wind Cruises Kona Sunrise Charters; Henry J. Kaiser High School Wipeout Crew; Lisa Bishop for Friends of Hanauma Bay; Joe DiNardo, Research Scientists Emeritus and retired toxicologist; and a handful of safe-sunscreen representatives. We started the public conversation on the need for this ban on February 5, during the Senate Agriculture & Environment (AEN) Committee Hearing and passed the bill out unanimously. For more details on the bill, visit mikegabbard.com.



Sen. Gabbard at Press Conference, Jan. 30, for SB 2778, taking sunscreen protection to the next level by banning ingredients not deemed generally safe and effective by the FDA.

DISTRICT NEWS

Future Farmers of America

On January 30, I had the pleasure and honor of recognizing the Waipahu Intermediate School Future Farmers of America (FFA) - a national youth organization that prepares students for leadership and careers in the science, business, and technology of agriculture. In the Fall of 2019, eight students from Waipahu Intermediate School placed in the 92nd National FFA Convention! FFA, has been in Hawai'i for 91 years. During that time, this program has produced successful farmers, business and community leaders, and legislators. Prior to 2000, the state had a vibrant secondary agricultural FFA education program in over 30 high schools with a statewide FFA membership of over 800 members. After 2000, due to several factors, local FFA membership began to decline, and in 2010 hit a historic low of ten active FFA schools with a statewide membership of just 120. Thankfully, there's been a resurgence in agricultural education due to strong concerns about the health of our agricultural industry and a renewed commitment from both the government and private sectors. In 2018, our local FFA had 18 active schools with over 400 members. Nationally, there are over 700,000 student members, easily making FFA the largest Career and Technical Student Organization in the nation.

The National FFA Convention is held every year at the end of October in Indianapolis with over 70,000 in attendance. In 2017-2018, Waipahu Intermediate chartered one of only two middle school level chapters in the state, with only 15 active members. At the end of their first year, five students with three projects qualified and competed in the National Agriscience Fair at the National FFA Convention. To qualify for the National Agriscience Fair, students need to be the state champion for their category. Out of all the state champions across the nation, the National FFA selects the top 12 for each category and age division. The three projects from Hawai'i placed 3rd, 6th and 7th in the nation in their

respective categories. In 2018-2019, Waipahu Intermediate qualified seven students with four projects and Waipahu High School qualified three students with two projects for the National Agriscience Fair in October 2019. Waipahu Intermediate had another 3rd place finisher and for the first time since 1955 in Hawai'i FFA history, National Champions!



Waipahu High School students Sean Michael Valencia Monte and Mariah Pricella Quibol Jan. 30, honored for outstanding achievements in their field.

HONORARY CERTIFICATE

On January 30, my colleagues and I recognized Waipahu High School students Sean Michael Valencia Monte and Mariah Pricella Quibol for outstanding achievements in their field. They won 1st place in the Environmental and Natural Resource Systems category at the National Agriscience Fair for their project on Bokashi Composting.

As an 8th grader, Sean Michael was a proud FFA member and was involved in Student Government, Youth For Safety, and National Junior Honor Society. He was a Bronze Presidential Service Award winner for putting in over 60 hours of community service and maintaining honor roll the entire year. He also traveled to Washington DC to attend the National FFA Washington Leaders Conference. Currently, Sean Michael is a 9th grader at Waipahu High School, the Assistant Treasurer of the 9th Grade Council, and a member of the Science Olympiad team, Key Club, and Waipahu FFA. He's in the Academy of Natural Resources to pursue his dream job as an environmental scientist to create a more sustainable world in the future.

Mariah Pricella is a two-time National Agriscience qualifier, placing 3rd her first year and now 1st in her second year. As an 8th grader she was involved in FFA, Student Council, Youth for Safety, National Junior Honor Society and was a Silver Presidential Service Award winner for putting in over 80 hours of community service and maintaining honor roll the entire year. Currently, Mariah Pricella is the Senate Representative for the 9th Grade Council and a member of the Science Olympiad team and Waipahu FFA. She is in the Academy of Professional and Public Services and is pursuing a career in Agribusiness. Beyond impressive! We wish them both continued success.



On Jan. 30, Sen. Gabbard recognized Waipahu School Future Farmers of America (FFA) (L-R: Ken Kozuma, WIS Ag teacher and FFA Coordinator; Sean Valencia Monte; Mariah Quibol; Vheena Sistoza; Darren Estal; Jhanella Gerardo; Mariah Ramo and Jeff Garvey, WHS Natural Resources teacher.)