



### Aloha e Friends,

Happy New Year! I hope you and your 'ohana are safe and well. Please **Save the Date** for my next Virtual Listen Story meeting on **Feb. 12, 9-10AM**. I'll be sending out a meeting invite, so keep an eye out. You can view the recording from my [December meeting here](#). The Legislative session officially starts Jan. 19. Unfortunately, the Capitol remains closed to the public due to COVID-19, so there'll be no Opening Day festivities. We'll continue to have live testimony via Zoom instead of in-person at the Capitol. As always, please don't hesitate to contact me at 586-6830 or [sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov) if I can help you or your family in any way. You can also follow me on Twitter [@senmikegabbard](#), Instagram [@GabbardAloha](#), or Facebook at [@senmikegabbard](#).

*Mike*

## COMMITTEE CHAIR

AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

## MEMBER

- ◆ Judiciary
- ◆ Government Operations

## DISTRICT 20

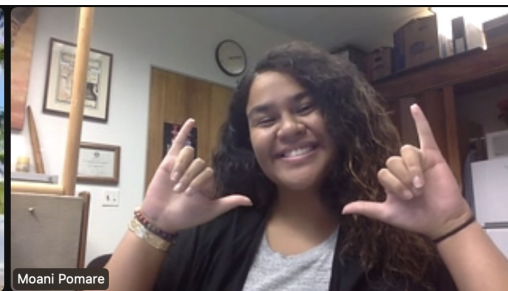
Kapolei, Makakilo and portions of Ewa, Kalaeloa, and Waipahu

### At Your Service: My 2022 Session Staff

For the 2022 legislative session, my Office Manager is **Corinne Gallardo**, who oversees overall operations of my office. With 8 years at the Capitol and 12 years at City Council, Corinne comes to us with a wealth of experience. **Meg Turner**, who enters her 8<sup>th</sup> year with me at the Senate is my Community Liaison and Social Media Mgr. Meg and Corinne are my full-time year-round staffers. I have two session hires who will be with me, for the duration of the session. **Myke Greenough**, who's worked at the Leg since 2011, is my Committee Clerk. He'll assist me with my Agriculture and Environment Committee that I chair, as well as the other committees I sit on: the Judiciary, and Gov't Operations Committee. **Ms. Skylar Geasey** worked in my office in 2020, under the Senate's Internship Program while attending UH Manoa. Sky graduated recently with a Political Science degree and is my Legislative/Committee Assistant for Session 2022. My legislative intern is **Moani Pomare**, via the UH Manoa Internship partnership.



Meg Turner



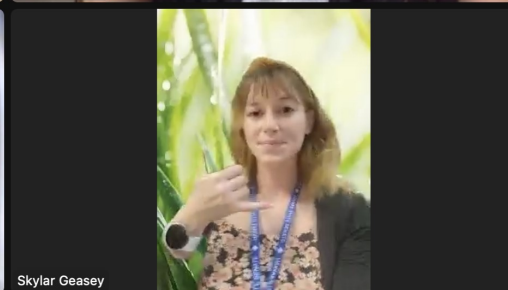
Moani Pomare



Sen. Mike Gabbard



Corinne Gallardo



Skylar Geasey



Michael Greenough

### Red Hill Fuel Tank Update

If you know civilians on the Navy's water system, please tell them about the **CDC Public Health Survey of Navy Water System Contamination**. The CDC and a public health team began conducting a survey to investigate the potential health impacts on the civilian population affected by the contamination of the Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Water Distribution System. [Learn more here](#). Contact the CDC team at (404) 657-3256 or [ATSDRACE@cdc.gov](mailto:ATSDRACE@cdc.gov). Click below to visit the webpages.

of key organizations for updates about Red Hill: [Board of Water Supply](#); [Dept. of Health](#); [U.S. Navy](#).





# AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT UPDATES

## Animal Protection Bills Go into Effect



The Shark protection bill HB553 (Act 51), went into effect Jan. 1, 2022.

Did you know local reef shark populations have declined by over 90%? Globally 71% of these magnificent creatures have declined with ¾ of the species facing potential extinction. In 2010, Hawai'i became the first state to ban possession, sale, trade, and distribution of shark fins, but we knew back then it was only a partial solution. So, I was happy when our **Shark Protection Bill**, (HB553, Act 53) was finally signed into law and went into effect Jan. 1. The other bill that went into effect on New Year's Day was my **No Cosmetic Animal Testing Bill** (Senate Bill 345, Act 160), making Hawai'i the sixth state in the country to ban cosmetic animal testing!



Sen. Gabbard's No Animal Testing bill SB 345 (Act 160), went into effect Jan. 1, 2022.

## MY 2022 LEGISLATION

The bill introduction deadline is fast-approaching with a hard stop on January 26. Below are a couple of the bills I plan to introduce this session relating to my AEN Committee. Please be aware that these bills won't be numbered until later in the month. Stay tuned for updates via my social media and February Newsletter.

**Catalytic Converters** – this bill establishes the theft of a catalytic converter as a class C felony. A catalytic converter is an auto part that converts pollutant gas emissions into less harmful emissions. You may have seen on the news that theft of these auto parts has become rampant over the past few years. But not for their intended use. Thieves sell them for \$200 to \$1,000, for their precious metals. Unfortunately, it can cost thousands to replace these parts. Hopefully, you're not one of the many victims who have had yours stolen. This bill will mandate that scrap dealers require the seller's identity and, in some cases, take a photograph of the seller and a photocopy of their ID card.

Putting more measures on the sale and purchase of catalytic converters, as well as making it a class C felony will hopefully deter the theft of these valuable devices.

## Hawaii Farms to Food Bank Program - this bill will create a Hawai'i

Farm to Food bank program and provide a source of funding for the program. The purpose of a Farm to Food Bank Program is to (a) reduce food waste at the agricultural production, processing, or distribution level through the donation of food, (b) provide food to individuals in need, and (c) build relationships between agricultural producers, processors, and distributors through the donation of food (USDA.gov).

This program will serve the State's food needs, provide local food producers with a market to support their operations, and keep moneys circulating within the State to boost the local economy. Buying local would be made easier. This bill would also create a Hawai'i Food Assistance Special Fund if low-income and unemployed families and individuals experience food shortages. Supporting local food production starts with establishing access. This bill grants that opportunity.



John and Emily Emmons of Ho'ōla Farms hosted Sen. and Carol Gabbard, Dec. 28, 2021.



Sen. Gabbard met with Evan Kamber of Grow Green Farms, in Papaikou on Dec. 28, 2021.



Sen. and Carol Gabbard with Gordon Inouye of Puna Flower Power in Keauau on Dec. 29, 2021.



# AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT UPDATES

## BIG ISLAND FARM TOURS, DEC. 28-29

As AEN Chair one of the best parts of my job is being out in the field and getting first-hand knowledge of who farmers are and what they're going through. The last week of December, I did a two-day site tour of Hawai'i Island farms, which included several farms on the Hilo side in order to meet with farmers and talk story.

The first three farms I visited were in Papaikou. Ho'ōla Farms has been run since 2015 by Emily Emmons and her husband, John, a military veteran. They specialize in natural agriculture educational training and hands-on experiences for veterans, caregivers, and their families, along with a variety of other



On Dec. 29, 2022, Sen. Gabbard visited Green Point Nurseries in Panaewa, owned by Eric Tanouye (Left).

Wienert uses Korean Natural Farming techniques and conducts training for people from all over the world. Because their operation incorporates KNF, there is - amazingly - a lack of smell from the cows, pigs and chickens. Steve Lund's Hawaiian Sanctuary Retreat Center was the last stop of the day - a tropical sanctuary of Wellness and Ecological Recreation in the spirit of Aloha, located in Puna, and dedicated to top experiential education in the areas of health, wellness, permaculture, leadership and sustainability.

On day two, we visited the "non-edible" farms, Puna Flower Power and Green Point Nurseries. Puna Flower Power in Keaau is an orchid farm run and operated by Gordon and Vern Inouye. The Flower Power Co-op was formed after the devastation of the volcanic eruption in 2018, to support the orchid farmers whose orchids were covered by lava. The Inouye's farm has 150,000 orchids in different stages of growth. Green Point Nurseries in Panaewa, is owned by Eric Tanouye, best known as Hawai'i's premier producer exporter of anthuriums, tropical flowers and foliage's. Eric's father saw a demand for anthuriums when military personnel and civilians were sending them home to their parents and girlfriends

during WWII via air-mail and special delivery... and it soon became his life's work. Eric followed in his father's footsteps and has kept the business thriving. The final stop on the way to the airport



Drake and Susie Wienert's KNF farm with Sen. Gabbard, Dec. 28, 2021.

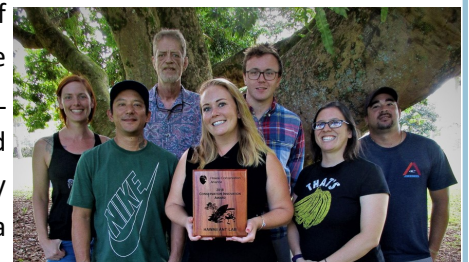
was Hawai'i Ant Lab, run by Cas Vanderwoude and his team. The invasive "Little Fire Ant" (LFA), has been spreading across the island of Hawai'i since 1999. Unfortunately, it's now invading O'ahu, Maui, and Kaua'i. Despite its small size (1/16th of an inch long), the tiny LFA has a huge impact on our island paradise.

The sting is painful, and the burning rash can last for days. Infested locations make ag workers reluctant to work where they could be stung. The tropical fruit and coffee industries have also been negatively impacted.



Steve Lund, founder of Hawaiian Sanctuary Retreat Center in Puna; Stephen Motherwell, Mgr.; Carol and Sen. Gabbard, Dec. 29, 2021.

Infested shipments are rejected at the farmer's expense. The Hawai'i Ant Lab (HAL) was founded in 2008 to battle these invasives. Starting off with a small grant from the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council to conduct research and help with treatment advice, HAL became one of the leading LFA research entities in the world. Unfortunately, as the result of the pandemic, changes in appropriations have caused Hawai'i Department of Agriculture funds to be reallocated leaving HAL with staffing and services being cut by 50%. I'll be taking a closer look this session, to see how we can help them.



On Dec. 29, 2021, Sen. and Carol Gabbard toured the Hawai'i Ant Lab in Hilo, led by Cas Vanderwoude.

# DISTRICT 20 COMMUNITY UPDATES

## Kama'okū Kauhale: "Tiny" Homes Grand Opening

The Kauhale Tiny Home project in Kalaeloa (a few hundred yards east from where I live) celebrated their [Grand Opening on Nov. 16](#). "Kauhale" (village), is a new approach to helping the chronically houseless find a place they can call home. The project in Kalaeloa was developed by [HomeAid Hawai'i](#) largely through donations, led by Nani Medeiros, Executive Director. Nani is an extraordinary woman who persevered over the most challenging of circumstances during the past two years, to bring the first Kauhale community on O'ahu to completion. During the public blessing and grand opening, the name "Kama'okū" was revealed. The naming was thoughtful and intentional. Kama'okū signifies a place where kindness is extended by all, without expectation and regardless of status; a place to thrive even in the most difficult conditions; a place to remember our ancestors and the places we come from; a place to stand tall. Nani and her team wanted to honor our koa kahiko (veterans) in a place of protection and peace where healing of spirit can be fostered. The 37 tiny homes (each just under 100 sq. feet) are located on 1½ acres that contain community gardens and a common space. The cost for materials and labor for each tiny house is estimated at \$20,000, including solar-powered air conditioning and electricity. A renovated, former Navy warehouse was turned into a communal kitchen, with bathrooms, laundry, and medical clinic. Residents pay monthly rents of approximately \$500. **To watch a brief video of the Blessing and Grand Opening, click here** —> [Blessing and Grand Opening](#)

## Barbers Point Community Solar

Last week, the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) published its final Environmental Assessment (EA). This is one of the first hoops that new development in Hawai'i must go through to predetermine if their project would result in any negative effects to the environment. In July 2019, a Right-of-Entry permit was issued to Innergex Renewables to assess the potential of developing a solar project on DHHL's Industrial parcel in Kalaeloa. The terrain, lack of infrastructure, and proximity to Kalaeloa Airport, made the land difficult to homestead, so it was designated for industrial use. It was determined that the Barbers Point Solar Project could provide the Department much-needed resources to develop homestead lots, while also creating renewable energy for the public. Innergex presented a draft EA to HHC on Sept. 21

which was published Oct. 8. On Oct. 20, Innergex Renewables hosted a virtual public information meeting. Public comments were submitted over a 30-day public review and comment period Oct. 8—Nov. 8, with a total of 26 comments received and incorporated into the final EA. The BPSP will consist of a 15-megawatt solar photovoltaic system coupled with a battery energy storage system. The total combined footprint will be less than 100 acres, with the solar panels covering approximately 45 acres. Construction is anticipated to begin in late 2022 with major construction activities primarily occurring in 2023. Commercial operations are expected to commence in early 2024. To learn more about the BPSP and to view the final EA, visit [dhhl.hawaii.gov/po/oahu](http://dhhl.hawaii.gov/po/oahu).

## Dreamhouse Charter School Students Win 2021 Congressional App Challenge

The App Challenge is a national initiative in the US House of Representatives for middle and high school students to encourage them to focus their skills and creativity on developing, testing and analyzing new applications for real-world use. The 1st place winners for Hawai'i's First Congressional District were 8th graders Jaylen Rabago, Kaden Hieger, Aureanna Inay, & Zaydi Willis of [DreamHouse 'Ewa Beach](#) a public charter school in my district. Their teacher is Ms. Cerina Epple. Their app is called "Nani" (beautiful in Hawaiian) – a game young children play on the computer that encourages them to connect with the beauty and uniqueness of their culture. The app prompts the user to dress up a character in traditional Hula attire, using colors named for Hawaiian flowers. It promotes diversity and cultural exploration and provides keiki an opportunity to see themselves represented in an app. The eighth graders said, "... we knew that we wanted the main idea to be around mental health... a huge component of mental health well-being in Hawai'i has to do with being connected to our culture. Hawaiian children are using social media and apps at a really young age these days and are exposed to mainly Western beauty standards and culture."

The Challenge encourages students to learn code and inspires them to pursue careers in computer science. AlohaCongrats DreamHouse 'Ewa Beach!

