

**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2023**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 648, RELATING TO AQUACULTURE.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT AND ON
HIGHER EDUCATION

DATE: Tuesday, February 14, 2023 **TIME:** 3:07 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 229

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Candace J. Park, Deputy Attorney General

Chairs Gabbard and Kim and Members of the Committees:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

The purposes of this bill are to (1) require the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, to establish and administer an aquaculture disease diagnostic laboratory to support the development of the aquaculture industry; (2) appropriate funds to the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources for establishment of the aquaculture disease diagnostic laboratory; and (3) appropriate funds to the Department of Agriculture for the establishment of one full-time aquaculture veterinarian position within the Aquaculture and Livestock Support Services Branch of the Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Industry.

Section 6 of article X of the Hawai'i State Constitution gives the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i "exclusive jurisdiction over the internal structure, management, and operation of the university." Section 6 further provides: "This section shall not limit the power of the legislature to enact laws of statewide concern. The legislature shall have the exclusive jurisdiction to identify laws of statewide concern." If the Committee decides to pass this bill, we recommend an amendment that adds a statement identifying this bill as a law of statewide concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 3:07 p.m.

By

Anna Wieczorek, Interim Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 648 – RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Chairs Gabbard and Kim, Vice Chairs Richards and Kidani, and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment and Senate Committee on Higher Education:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 648 that appropriates funds to support the aquaculture disease diagnostic laboratory at the University of Hawai'i's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), in partnership with the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA).

We support the intent of this bill, however, we have concerns with the measure as written.

HDOA has a veterinary laboratory within the Division of Animal Industry (AI) that provides disease diagnostic laboratory support for livestock, poultry, and to some extent, aquacultured animals. CTAHR has built disease diagnostic laboratory capabilities for aquacultured animals but cannot provide services to the aquaculture industry with only project-supported personnel.

We believe the needs of the aquaculture industry would be best served by establishing an aquaculture disease diagnostic program within the existing HDOA AI Veterinary Laboratory that already provides disease diagnostic laboratory support for livestock, poultry, and to some extent, aquacultured animals. This laboratory should be administered by the HDOA, in consultation with CTAHR.

We defer to HDOA regarding the appropriation amount that they require to establish an aquaculture disease diagnostic laboratory within the existing AI Veterinary Laboratory.

We support the intent of the bill; however, we cannot support the passage of this bill as written. And, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON

**HIGHER EDUCATION
AND
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**FEBRUARY 14, 2023
3:07 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 229**

**SENATE BILL NO. 648
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE**

Chairpersons Kim and Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 648. The bill requires the University of Hawai'i, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, to establish and administer an aquaculture disease diagnostic laboratory. Appropriates funds for the laboratory. Establishes and appropriates funds for an aquaculture veterinarian position within the Department of Agriculture. The Department supports this bill and respectfully requests the following amendments.

Location of the proposed laboratory in the Department is more advantageous to aquaculture and agriculture because it will allow the technology and staff to support all livestock sectors of both industries. Timely and accurate diagnostic services are a requirement for all sectors of livestock development – including aquaculture. Currently, the aquaculture industry depends on Mainland laboratories to provide molecular tests, such as polymerase chain reaction (PCR). PCR tests are necessary to identify the



presence or absence of specific pathogens in samples from animals and other sources. In the case of the export shrimp broodstock, these tests are required to establish specific pathogen-free status that is required by receiving countries.

The Department suggests the following amendments to the proposed bill to make it more efficient and effective, while enabling staff to support all livestock sectors:

- replace UH-CTAHR with the Department as the recipient of the appropriation
- establish the proposed laboratory in the State Veterinary Laboratory Building in the HDOA Animal Industry Division Veterinary Laboratory Services Branch
- Add two additional full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) Microbiologist III (SR-20) positions (NOTE: the Aqua Veterinary Medical Officer III was recently hired).

The Department estimates personnel costs at \$500,000 for 2 Microbiologist III staff, equipment and operations annually and adding renovations for PCR testing would bring the total request to \$950,000.

As such, the Department supports this measure, with suggested amendments, and provided it does not impact the Department's priorities identified in the Executive Budget request.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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February 14, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

TESTIMONY ON SB 648
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
3:07 PM

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Kim, Vice-Chairs Richards and Kidani, and Members of the Committees:

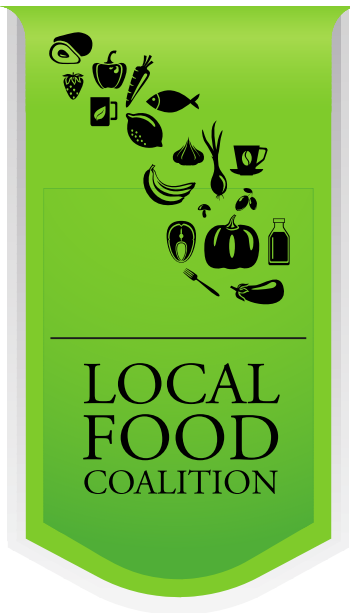
I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 648, which requires the University of Hawaii, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, to establish and administer an aquaculture disease diagnostic laboratory, appropriate funds for the laboratory, and establishes and appropriate funds for an aquaculture veterinarian position within the Department of Agriculture.

The Legislature has acknowledged the importance of Hawai'i's aquaculture industry and recognizes that supporting local aquacultural production can help the State move toward greater food sustainability and economic diversification. Hawai'i's aquaculture industry continues to be one of the fastest-growing segments of Hawai'i agriculture and has become an important source of seafood and other products for local sale and export. Currently, Hawai'i imports about 63 percent of its seafood.

SB 648 is a much-needed measure to provide essential support to Hawai'i's diverse aquaculture industry and we look forward to its passage and the benefits it will bring to aquaculture production.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.



Hawai'i Aquaculture & Aquaponics Association
Hawai'i Cattlemen's Council
Hawai'i Farm Bureau Federation
Hawai'i Farmers' Union United
Hawai'i Food Industry Association
Hawai'i Food Manufacturers Association
Kohala Center
Land Use Research Foundation of Hawai'i
Maui Farm to School Network (Maui F2SN)
Ulupono Initiative
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources - University of Hawai'i at Manoa

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
and
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

February 14, 2023 – 3:07 p.m. – Conference Room 229 & Via Videoconference

**SB 648 – RELATING TO AQUACULTURE
SUPPORT, REQUEST AMENDMENT**

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Kim, Vice Chairs Richards and Kidani, and Members of the Committees:

The Local Food Coalition **SUPPORTS** SB 648, which appropriates funds to support the Aquaculture Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), in partnership with the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA).

This lab is critical to the continued development and expansion of the aquaculture industry. Currently, aquaculture samples are sent to the University of Arizona for testing, which creates delays and prevents timely industry action.

A similar bill was heard in the House last week (HB 694) and there seemed to be agreement between CTAHR and HDOA that this lab should be housed within HDOA. If that is still the case, we would support that move.

We also support the Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponic Association's request to amend the bill to clarify that the funds may be used for the day-to-day support for the larger aquaculture production industry.

The Local Food Coalition is an organization comprised of farmers, ranchers, livestock producers, investors and other organizations working to provide Hawaii's food supply.

We respectfully request your support of SB 648 with the clarifying amendment. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Kendall Matsuyoshi
808-544-8345
kmatsuyoshi@wik.com

SB-648

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 12:14:44 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/14/2023 3:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Corbin	Testifying for Aquaculture Planning and Advocacy	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is John Corbin and I strongly support the intent of this measure. I managed the State Aquaculture Development Program from 1978 to 2006 , when I retired. I have continued involvement in the industry through membership in the Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association and the USDA Regional Aquaculture Center.

Having managed the Aquaculture Disease Prevention Program in past years, I can testify that having a qualified Aquatic Veterinarian supported by a well-equipped Laboratory is a conerstone of a successful and growing commercial aquaculture industry. For example, Hawaii has an international reputation for producing certified Specific Pathogen Free shrimp broodstock because of this Program; this industry sector is valued at tens of millions of dollars a year.Even more exciting, with this laboratory in place, this same model (State certification) could be applied to shellfish seed production and export.

I would note that in past years this Program, Vet and Lab, was in the Department of Agriculture, rather than split with the University of Hawaii. I suggest this DOA structure may be more functional and cost effective.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



HIplan
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February 13 2023

TO: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair; Senator Herbert M. “Tim” Richards, III, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair; Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Higher Education

Tuesday, February 14, 2023 @ 3:07 p.m. in Room 229 & Videoconference

RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 648 RELATING TO AQUACULTURE – SUPPORT AN AQUACULTURE DISEASE DIAGNOSTIC LAB

Aloha Chairs Gabbard & Kim, Vice Chairs Richards & Kidani, and Members of the Committees,

HIplan strongly supports SB 648: An aquaculture disease diagnostic lab.

Aquaculture in Hawaii has a long colorful history and I personally have a long career in the field. I started, developed and eventually sold my company High Health Aquaculture – the world’s first SPF shrimp breeding company. Over the years we developed the technology and built the markets for Hawaii SPF shrimp broodstock which has achieved cumulative sales of more than \$350 MM since the early 00s. Sales of more than \$30 MM per year have been achieved for the last 10 years. This came about because we developed a process to certify our shrimp as SPF. This came about through close collaboration with Dr. Jim Brock who was Hawaii’s Aquatic Veterinarian. All of the disease testing was done at University of Arizona. A far simpler system would utilize a Hawaii based diagnostic lab. In addition to certifying SPF shrimp for export a Hawaii diagnostic lab would be a valuable asset for the broader industry. Thus we strongly support this bill to fund development of a Hawaii aquaculture diagnostic lab.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.

Sincerely,

Jim Wyban PhD
Founder/Chairman
HIplan and
Organizer - Hawaii Aquaculture Conference
Hawaii Convention Center
September 28 2023



Feb 513 2023

Senate Committee on Higher Education and Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Tuesday, February 14, 2023, 3:07 PM, Conference Room 229

Re: SB648 Relating to Aquaculture

Aloha Chairs Kim and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Richards, and Committee Members,

The Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association (HAAA) representing aquaculture industry members, researchers, and supporters Statewide strongly supports the intent of SB 648 which appropriates funds to support the Aquaculture Disease Diagnostic Laboratory which is a partnership between University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) and the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (DOA), and currently located at CTAHR.

This Aquaculture Disease Diagnostic Laboratory is critical to the continued development and expansion of the Hawaii aquaculture industry. We understand that recent discussions between CTAHR and DOA in regards to a similar bill (HB 694) heard in the House last week indicated that their preference is to relocate this lab to DOA. We fully support their joint recommendation in this regard and respectfully request that this measure be amended to reflect their testimony.

We further understand that the DOA has recently hired a highly qualified aquatic veterinarian and that the current need is to hire two microbiologists for the lab. We fully support the hiring of two microbiologists needed to help operate this lab, and again respectfully request that this measure be amended to reflect the recommendations of CTAHR and DOA in this regard and other related matters to support this critical Aquaculture Disease Diagnostic Laboratory.

We respectfully request your support of SB 648 with the amendments noted above. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

Ron Weidenbach
HAAA President

2029 Nuuanu Ave. #1510
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817
February 11, 2023

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair, and Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair, and Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Environment
State Capitol, 415 S. Beretania St.
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chairs Kim and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Richards, and Members of the Committees,

I **strongly support SB 518, "Relating to Aquaculture,"** which would allow the U.H. Sea Grant program to hire a consultant to develop a five-year strategic plan for aquaculture.

I have made my living in aquaculture and aquaponics in Hawai'i since the late 1970's. Since that time, aquaculture has grown into a major component of Hawai'i's diversified agriculture, with sales of almost \$80 million in 2021 and with much room for further growth. The five-year plan proposed by SB 518 is a current industry priority, and is needed to guide State policies and programs in order to encourage the orderly development of this valuable and extremely diverse industry.

My only concern with SB 518 is the deadline for completion of the strategic plan: no later than 20 days before the opening of the 2024 legislative session. By the time the act takes effect in July 2023, the funds are released, and a consultant is hired, only a few months may remain for the consultant to interview the many industry participants and stakeholders, conduct the necessary planning, and prepare a detailed report. I therefore respectfully urge your Committee to support passage of SB 518, but also to amend the deadline to allow a full year for completion of the strategic plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important legislation, and for your support of Hawai'i's growing aquaculture industry.

Sincerely,



Frederick M. Mencher

SB-648

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 1:38:48 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/14/2023 3:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support