

**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 COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**FEBRUARY 3, 2023  
1:30 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE BILL NO. 519  
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 519. The bill establishes the Aquaculture Advisory Committee and makes an appropriation. The Department supports this bill.

If properly selected and positioned, an Advisory Council could be very beneficial in supporting the continued expansion the aquaculture industry. Rather than limiting the selection of members from those experienced in aquaculture, the Department would like to expand selection criteria to other industries such as technology, finance, and conservation. Aquaculture has evolved greatly, since the previous Aquaculture Advisory Council was repealed in 2000 (§HRS 148D), and meeting its current challenges and opportunities requires cross-industry thinking and knowledge.

As such, the Department supports this measure, 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.





Feb 1, 2023

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair, and Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards III, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)  
Friday, February 3, 2023, 1:30 PM, Conference Room 224

Re: Senate Bill 519 Relating to Aquaculture

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association (HAAA) representing aquaculture industry members, researchers, and supporters Statewide strongly supports the intent of SB 519 which would establish the Aquaculture Advisory Committee. The Hawaii aquaculture industry's sales in 2021 reached a record high \$79.7 Million with expectations for continued growth, yet our industry has had no direct input to State government since the Governor's Aquaculture Advisory Council was eliminated more than twenty years ago. This important bill will reverse this unfortunate situation and help to accelerate the growth of Hawaii's economically and environmentally sustainable aquaculture industry.

To maximize the input, communication, and benefits of this Advisory Council, the HAAA respectfully requests your consideration of the following amendments:

1. The Advisory Council should be attached to the DOA Chairperson's Office.
2. Membership should be increased from five to eleven in recognition of the significant diversity of the Hawaii aquaculture industry, to include a cross section of aquaculture producers, researchers, extension, investors, and seafood wholesalers, distributors, and restaurant sector.
3. Membership recommendations should be made to the DOA Chairperson for final selection.
4. A two-term limit should be set unless extended on a case-by-case basis by a majority vote of the Council.
5. Meetings should be increased to quarterly.
6. A recording and communications secretary should be provided by the DOA.

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

Sincerely,

Ron Weidenbach  
HAAA President



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921  
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 3, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON HB 519**  
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
1:30 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

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 strongly supports SB 519** which would establish the Aquaculture Advisory Committee and appropriate funds.

The aquaculture industry in Hawai'i, which has grown from almost zero in the 1970s to now generating more than \$70 million annually, is one of the largest sectors of Hawai'i's diversified agriculture and promises to increase its growth. As such, it warrants an advisory committee that adequately represents its diversity and is able to provide recommendations about its findings and needs to the department that supports the industry. We respectfully offer the following three suggestions:

- **Increase the number of members to at least nine** to best include and represent the major sectors of the industry, including both public and private support institutions.
- **Hold meetings of the Committee more frequently** (suggest quarterly) to ensure adequate time for members to meet, review, discuss, and decide on recommendations on the myriad issues facing the industry.
- Specify that **recommendations from the Committee be submitted to the Board of Agriculture**, the entity that provides policy direction for the Department, so it directly receives the benefit of the expertise and work of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important matter.

## Testimony In support of SB 519

Hearing AEN 02-03-23-1 THE SENATE KA 'AHA KENEKOA THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE  
REGULAR SESSION OF 2023 COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT Senator  
Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair  
NOTICE OF HEARING DATE: Friday, February 3, 2023 TIME: 1:30 PM PLACE: Conference Room 224 &  
Videoconference

To support highly renewable sustainable industries, we need this bill desperately. **Marine fish are the most reproductive vertebrates on the planet.** Making fish the most renewable resource there is. The state has greatly ignored the potential the **100-billion-dollar a year pet industry** and the food security seafood aquaculture can supply. The state allowed Tourists to shut down the aquarium fishery with lawsuits. Opah Moon Fish produce 300 million eggs a year, many other reefs fish produce tens of thousands to millions of fry per spawn per pair. We need to support a managed sustainable fisheries and promote aquaculture to create a more sustainable society.

I have been blessed to supply live fish and broodstock for many aquaculture projects. As a former aquarium fisherman, the ability to find and catch broodstock is key. Aquaculture of fish is very difficult and expensive business to start up. Aquairum fishers have a head start at aquaculture because they own tanks and have many years of expertise in fish husbandry. Shifting to a highly specialized aquaculture field requires expensive specialized equipment and funding is needed to jump start many aquaculture projects. Support the aquarium fishery they are key to aquaculture broodstock collection and husbandry knowledge. We desperately need the aquairum fishery for the future of Hawaii's sustainability.

Amazing video please watch ocean fishery environmental review.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xt8sRh493UI>

**Read article about how important it is to support aquaculture:**

<https://www.hawaii.edu/news/2020/09/10/can-aquaculture-repair-hawaii-economy/>

HEPA is cumbersome and overbearing and this bill does not go far enough to address issue with HEPA laws. **All permits issued by a highly regulated government agency DLNR and DAR should be exempt from HEPA laws!**  
**Ornamental Aquaculture is currently at a standstill due to HEPA laws.**

Instead, Hawaii allows rich lawyers to shut down opposing businesses with **Endless Environmental Litigation** using defective HEPA (Hawaii Environmental Policy Act HRS 343 Ch 189) laws. Even if you pass the HEPA you face endless environmental litigation and will never get permits just look at TMT. The Superferry knew it could not pass HEPA and just pulled out. Hawaii business is at extreme risk due to the defective laws.

Legally the aquarium fishery when **West Hawaii Passed its HEPA review in 2022 it should have received permits right away.** Instead, the state chose to delay giving out the aquarium permits. Why? Maybe the fact that every permit DLNR issues should also have to do an environmental review and pressure received by eco groups to sue is why. Blackmail! Justice is not being served! Laws are being misused.

The environmentally friendly Superferry was effectively shut down by tour boat, airline, and inter-island cargo businesses. It was a lower carbon footprint way of traveling. The scientifically proven sustainable aquarium fishery was closed by tourist businesses spouting misinformation for private gain and with tourist billionaire business (Michael Dell Four Seasons Kona) money paying off Earth Justice to perpetuate the continuing lawsuits.

Why is the aquarium fishery the only DLNR issued permit who must do a HEPA permit process? Legally all permits DLNR issues should have to do HEPA permit processes too, if they have any environmental impacts. Any lawsuit would force the issue very quickly. All DLNR permits are at risk to lawsuits.

The states only argument fighting for the aquarium fishery permits was legal definition. The state lawyers did not use any of the science of the fishery. Unscientific opposing profiting tourist user group misinformation was allowed into depositions without any scientific opposition. The **miscarriage of justice**

continues for the overly regulated highly proven sustainable “Model Fishery” when it was closed due to “User Conflict”.

### **Conclusion Suggested Legislation Needed**

**Instead of penalizing highly sustainable fisheries and depending on highly destructive tourism; Hawaii needs to support and develop renewable resources. Fishery laws are being made with out proper studies and fish counts. Over regulation of renewable resource use is being done every year! Do fish counts on every Island. Manage stocks with science.**

**Fisheries are the solution not the problem!**

**Step back, review and promote sustainable agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and look at Hawaii’s renewable resources with a new perspective. The fate of the planet lies in the use of renewable resources and their sustainable use! More legislation against highly renewable resources is the worst thing Hawaii can do.**

Thanks please support SB519

Ron Tubbs B.S.N.D.

8 year research degree in Nutrition UHM CV available upon request.

NOAA grants and aquaculture research available upon request.



Testimony Before The  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Environment  
**IN SUPPORT OF SB 519**  
Wednesday, February 3, 2023, 1:30PM, Room 224  
Via Zoom

My name is Kevin Chang and I am the Executive Director of [Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo \(or KUA\)](#). KUA works to empower grassroots rural and Native Hawaiian mālama 'āina groups to celebrate their places and pass on their traditions to better Hawai'i and achieve 'āina momona— an abundant, productive ecological system that supports community well-being.

KUA employs a community-driven approach that currently supports a statewide network of 36 mālama 'āina community groups collectively referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together), 40 fishpond projects and practitioners called the Hui Mālama Loko I'a, and a growing group of over 60 Limu practitioners and supporters called the Limu Hui. Participants in our networks have had long term dreams of bringing fishponds, food fish and limu back to our shorelines and dinner tables.

**KUA supports SB 519 with SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS as an incremental step on a pathway towards 'āina momona.**

We suggest that at least one advisory committee member be required to have expertise and/or experience concerning the restoration and unique qualities and needs of loko i'a. As Hawai'i begins a greater exploration of conventional aquaculture as a pillar to expand its food sustainability, it is important and to the benefit of all that we honor the foundation of aquaculture and mariculture in these islands as exemplified by loko i'a.

KUA's coordinators and network participants in all three of our networks have built stronger connections to the aquaculture community knowing very well that to reach a vision of greater food self-sufficiency we need to transform our culture, values and institutions together. Supporting loko i'a expertise in our collective advances in aquaculture will ensure progress for many of the recommendations in the 1993 Report of the Governor's Task Force on Moloka'i Fishpond Restoration. This report was published nearly 30 years ago, but many of its findings are still relevant and indeed, important to fishponds on most other islands in Hawai'i in addition to Moloka'i; a [Loko I'a Needs Assessment](#) finalized in November 2020 reiterated the continued interest in contemporary aquaculture technology to support fishpond revitalization.

Indeed, as we look to the future our communities are raising the kupa'āina who want to have jobs focused on mālama 'āina. The recent increased capacity of the DOCARE Academy enrollment is one and greater aquacultural capacity and economy are also possible pathways for our young people are another. We appreciate creative and collaborative approaches that build the capacity and skills of the next generation with intention, and in a way that benefits ongoing community efforts at loko i'a as a catalyst for ecosystem regeneration.

The communities we work with are committed to ensuring the long-term health of our biocultural resources. They have depended on them for generations. We believe our environment,

the foundation of our very existence, is about long-term investment and a vision of 'āina momona. To get there it requires among other things taking the steps toward greater self-sufficiency, development of a pipeline of new and more innovative career pathways, mindsets, relationships and resource flows for mālama 'āina. Passing this bill out of your committee with the suggested amendments will open a pathway toward reaching this vision in a practice also grounded in our community and its traditions.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in support.

Aloha 'Āina Momona.



2029 Nuuanu Ave. #1510  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817  
February 1, 2023

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair, and Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards III, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
State Capitol, 415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

**I strongly support SB 519, "Relating to Aquaculture,"** which would establish an aquaculture advisory committee within the Department of Agriculture.

I have made my living in aquaculture and aquaponics in Hawai'i since the late 1970's. At that time, Hawai'i had an excellent Aquaculture Development Program (ADP) – the first in the nation – which played a major role in establishing aquaculture as one of the largest sectors of Hawai'i's diversified agriculture. Unfortunately, even as the industry grew, ADP was downsized and eventually merged into DOA's Animal Industries Division. Since that time, although DOA has supported specific aquaculture projects, there has been no formal mechanism by which the industry as a whole can routinely express its needs to DOA. The proposed advisory committee would provide such a mechanism.

I respectfully submit a few comments and concerns regarding SB 519 as drafted:

- Five members is too few to represent the interests of an industry as diverse as aquaculture in Hawai'i. The industry includes freshwater and marine aquaculture, land-based systems and open-ocean cages, Hawaiian fishponds, aquaponics farms, and consulting services. It raises a wide spectrum of organisms including algae for food, feed, and supplements; food and ornamental finfish; shrimp for food and broodstock; sea urchins for environmental restoration; and molluscan shellfish for food as well as seed clams and oysters. It relies upon an equally diverse research and extension effort involving many institutions including UH CTAHR, UH Sea Grant, PACRC at UH-Hilo, the Center for Tropical and Subtropical Aquaculture, HATCH at NELHA, and Anuenue Fisheries Research Center, plus research efforts by many private companies. It serves numerous stakeholders including seafood wholesalers, retailers, and restaurants whose owners may want to provide input about their future needs.

Because of the size and diversity of the industry, I suggest that SB 519 be amended to allow for an advisory committee with at least nine and preferably eleven members, with the majority of members being from private industry, and that the committee should meet at least quarterly. A single annual meeting will not allow enough time for the members to discuss the many issues confronting such a varied and rapidly evolving industry.

- SB 519 specifies that "aquaculture industry leaders from the public and private sector" should recommend candidates for the advisory committee to the Governor. However, it does not clarify how these industry leaders are chosen, or by whom.
- SB 519 does not specify to whom within DOA the committee submits its recommendations. In my opinion, the Board of Agriculture should be specified to receive the committee's reports.

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-519**

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 6:23:15 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2023 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ashley Watts	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aquaculture is a building block for food security and island sustainability. We must create aquaculture infrastructure again like the ones that came before us.

Kailua Kona February 2, 2023

TO: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair; and Senator Herbert M. “Tim” Richards III, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)  
Friday, February 3, 2023, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 224

**RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 519 RELATING TO AQUACULTURE –  
ESTABLISH AN AQUACULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

I, Oscar Luiz de Souza Lobo Hennig strongly supports SB 519: Establish an Aquaculture Advisory Committee. I have supported, and continue to do so, my family in Hawai'i since 1999 through shrimp aquaculture. Aquaculture in Hawai'i need guidance to develop a long-term plan to attract and retain aquaculture companies. Aquaculture can and should be part of the solution for food security, in sink with other commercial activities and land use.

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

Aloha,

Oscar

**SB-519**

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 10:52:51 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2023 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am glad that this bill is coming up for discussion. SB 660 is an essential step in creating a foundation for sustainable agriculture, by focusing on the health of our soils. This bill will create a statewide soil health assessment with a list of practices specific to the State that are most effective in improving soil health and building soil carbon stocks. The health status of our soil is incredibly important, and without good soil the agriculture it yields will be at best meager, and at worst, contribute to the decline of biodiversity and our ecosystem in general.

This bill provides many incentives. It will provide farmers with education and technical assistance to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils, establish standards that apply to the healthy soils program, and are based on the findings of the greenhouse gas sequestration task force established relating to minimum levels of soil carbon and water content and required soil health practices. Additionally, subject to available funding, issue awards and other financial incentives to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

Please support this bill, so that we can begin the hard work of creating a self-sustaining economy and agriculture. Mahalo.



February 2, 2023

TO: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair; and Senator Herbert M. “Tim” Richards III, Vice Chair Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN) Friday, February 3, 2023, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 224

**RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 519 RELATING TO AQUACULTURE – DEVELOP A 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN**

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

Kulahaven Farms strongly supports SB519: A 5-Year Strategic Plan for Aquaculture. Our company was formed specifically because of Hawaii’s dire need for increased food security. I do not need to tell you how much food we import nor what a drain that is on our economy. But I would like to remind you that Hawai’i loves fish. And we have a long history of feeding our population through aquaculture.

Fish are the last wild populations to be commercially hunted at scale but this cannot and will not last. It is imperative that we accelerate development of new and improved methods of fish cultivation -not just for our own population but for that of the planet.

My personal experience has demonstrated just how difficult it is to develop and build new ventures of the sort that are so desperately needed. Aquaculture is a very efficient means of food production but aquaculture ventures require significant resources in order to succeed. Despite public consensus on the need for increased food production and the wide acceptance of seafood products here, the resources required to increase production remain woefully inadequate. Time is running out and change begins with political will. I implore you to vote yes on HB1268.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Dobovan', written over a light blue rectangular background.

John Dobovan  
President  
Kulahaven Farms  
PO Box 901301  
Kula, HI 96790  
(808) 955-0955  
jd@kulahavenfarms.com

**SB-519**

Submitted on: 2/2/2023 1:07:29 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2023 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Janet Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB 519, "Relating to Aquaculture," to establish an aquaculture advisory committee within HDOA. The proposed advisory committee would provide a voice for this sector to allow it to review and make meaningful and expert recommendations to the agency on direction and other matters of concern.

I believe that five members would be too few to represent the interests of this diverse an industry in Hawai'i and hope that you would increase the number to at least double that. I also believe that this opportunity to hear from experts in the industry in a succinct and organized manner, warrants more than one annual meeting. I would hope that the committee would meet at least several times a year to accomplish its mandate.

Thank you for your support of this bill and Hawai'i's agriculture in general.

## Angela Crumpton

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**From:** Kathryn Hurd (Waiahole Nursery and Garden Center Manager) <wnagc@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 2, 2023 1:45 PM  
**To:** Angela Crumpton  
**Cc:** Jean Isip Schneider  
**Subject:** RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 519 RELATING TO AQUACULTURE – ESTABLISH AN AQUACULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Aloha!

I have been running into trouble submitting testimony for the SB 519 relating to aquaculture on the government website. I successfully submitted testimony before they changed the date. I appreciate your help collecting and presenting my testimony, bellow:



02.02.23

TO: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair; and Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards III, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)  
Friday, February 3, 2023, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 224



**RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 519 RELATING TO AQUACULTURE – ESTABLISH AN AQUACULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

Waiahole Nursery & Garden Center, strongly supports SB 519: Establish an Aquaculture Advisory Committee.

My name is Kathryn Hurd, and I am the manager at Waiahole Nursery & Garden Center, in Kaneohe, HI. I have been a supporter of aquaculture and aquaponic farming in Hawaii for over 10 years. I have dedicated my time to becoming an expert in aquaponic farming (small-large scale), and I have been a member of Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics and I participate in talks with the Hawaii Aquaculture Collaboration. I hold an advanced degree in Microbiology, and am committed to educating the public on the benefits of aquaponics and aquaculture in Hawaii.

As you may know, our fisheries are at risk of over fishing and other toxic environmental/human factors. Hawaii's culture is rich in a fish diet and our economy has been reliant on tourism for the past several decades. This tourism is at risk of issues that affect our reef and the health of our oceans. Protecting our natural resources should be a huge priority for the state, for this and other reasons. One fast and effective way to protect our fisheries is to promote aquaculture in the island, by growing fish species that can supplement our ocean fish diet. Hawaii is very reliant on imported foods and although we have a year-round growing season, we are not taking advantage of it to its fullest potential. Aquaculture is an untapped economy that can not only help bring money and jobs to our state, but it can also help us to become more sustainable, when it comes to feeding our island's people. Aquaponics is scale-able, meaning it can be used in backyard home gardens and on a larger, commercial scale.

In order to tap into the economic and sustainable food potential that aquaponics and aquaculture can bring to our state, we need to make some changes! Currently, the Plant Quarantine Branch is responsible for reviewing and approving permit applications for aquatic plants AND animals. We should let the PLANT people stick to plants and move towards creating a better system and to define aquatic bio-risks, livestock and biocontainment through the Animal Industry Division of the Department of Agriculture.

Supporting this bill is a sure way to advance the opportunity for economic growth and development of aquaculture in our state. Our small farm with a 6,000 gallon aquaponic system on 1/12th of an acre, is able to produce 400 heads of lettuce per week and provide up to 400lbs of sustainable fish protein, each year. We are more than just an aquaponic farm, with a lot of potential to produce even more food for our island community with the right support. There is so much potential to develop aquaculture in Hawaii, and it would be a disservice to our Island's people, to not do what we can to support this industry that holds so much potential.

As a biologist, and fish farmer, and resident of Hawaii, I fully support the measures brought up in this bill, and I hope that you will, too. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Hurd, B.S., M.S., Manager at Waiahole Nursery & Garden Center.

Management Team @ WNGC



2/2/2023

TO: Representative Amy Perruso, Chair; and Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology  
Friday, February 3, 2023, 2:00 p.m., via Videoconference

**RE: SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 1268 RELATING TO AQUACULTURE – DEVELOP  
A 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN**

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee,

Kauai Sea Farm strongly supports HB 1268: A 5-Year Strategic Plan for Aquaculture. With the exception of a few specialty companies engaged with genetic research, the overall aquaculture food production industry in Hawaii is significantly lacking compared to other Pacific Island areas, and even the mainland US. This is due to many factors including permitting hurdles, lack of certified processing opportunities for small producers, land-use costs/restrictions, and the high cost of living requiring high wages for all levels of labor. Hawaii was home to one of the earliest forms of aquaculture in human history, and there is significantly more potential for aquaculture food production in modern Hawaii than is currently being realized.

Kauai Sea Farm is a small company formed around bringing economic security to the Nomilo Fishpond in Kalaheo, HI through production of low-trophic aquaculture species. We face similar challenges to most organizations trying to restore fishpond production, through lack of seedstock supply for native species, permitting regulations, and the general challenges of restoring a semi-enclosed aquatic ecosystem following years of neglect. We are actively engaged in projects for research and production of native species that have high market value and can be cultured in fishponds. These projects are well-supported by Hawaii Sea Grant extension agents, and we feel that Sea Grant has a strong understanding of the needs, challenges, and opportunities for aquaculture in Hawaii. We strongly believe that this group is well positioned and has the awareness and capacity to undertake the actions described in this bill, and fully support these efforts.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. Anderson".

David Anderson  
Production Manager, Kauai Sea Farm