

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEXTER KISHIDA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS**

**FEBRUARY 07, 2024  
9:30 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2618  
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE**

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2618. The bill requires the Department of Agriculture to conduct a feasibility study to identify potential sites in the State for an aquaculture park that promotes commercial aquaculture expansion; requires a report to the Legislature prior to the Regular Session of 2025; declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded; and makes an appropriation. The Department supports this bill.

Dedicated aquaculture parks would be a desirable tool in the State's strategy to grow the aquaculture industry. Successful tenants would help define industry potential and become aspirational examples to potential new operators. The siting of the park(s) must be carefully considered to provide the best chance for productivity and market access.

As such, the Department supports this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**WENDY L. GADY**  
Executive Director

STATE OF HAWAII  
**AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
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**TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
& FOOD SYSTEMS**

Wednesday, February 7, 2024  
9:30 a.m.  
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING  
Conference Room 325

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2618  
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE**

Chairperson Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 2618, which requires the Department of Agriculture to conduct a feasibility study to identify potential sites in the State for an aquaculture park that promotes commercial aquaculture expansion.

Aquaculture has tremendous potential for expansion in Hawaii. It provides sustenance and is a significant source of animal protein. ADC supports the intent of this measure and believes it will help the State identify the key assets to grow Hawaii's aquaculture industry.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



## **HB2618**

### **RELATING TO AQUACULTURE**

Committee Meeting of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

February 7, 2024

9:30 AM

Conference Room 325

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB2618 which would mandate that the Department of Agriculture (DOA) conduct a feasibility study to identify potential sites in the state for the establishment of an aquaculture park that promotes commercial aquaculture expansion. Native Hawaiians have a strong history and tradition with the development of aquaculture for commercial and subsistence practices. OHA would like to see these traditions and practices of aquaculture be supported as it is integral to the long-term success and viability of the industry in Hawai'i.

For millennia, Native Hawaiians built and maintained a successful and thriving ecosystem of traditional loko i'a (fishponds) across the Pae 'Aina. These traditional aquacultural systems were so prevalent and widely adopted that loko i'a are located on every island, with many still being maintained and producing food for traditional practitioners and the broader community to this day.

OHA is encouraged by this promising proposal. We trust that, if passed, the Department of Agriculture would work hand-in-hand with the many leaders who have successfully restored and returned to production fishponds on multiple islands. OHA stands ready to kōkua the Department in this important endeavor. **We look forward to the potential an aquaculture park can have for the future of our waters, lands and people.**

OHA **SUPPORTS** HB2618 and urges this committee to advance this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

**HB-2618**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 9:00:37 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ronald Weidenbach	Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association (HAAA) strongly supports HB2618 to require the Department of Agriculture to conduct or oversee a technically sound feasibility study to identify potential sites in the State for an aquaculture park that promotes commercial aquaculture expansion. Given the high demonstrated success of the many aquaculture operations operating at NELHA in Kailua-Kona, which is now filled or nearly filled to capacity, a second similar facility focused entirely on aquaculture, either freshwater or marine, would support the continued expansion of the Hawaii aquaculture sector.



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February 7, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 2618**  
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference  
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice-Chair Kahaloa, 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 supports HB 2618**, which requires the Department of Agriculture to conduct a feasibility study to identify potential sites in the State for an aquaculture park that promotes commercial aquaculture expansion and requires a report to the Legislature prior to the Regular Session of 2025.

Hawai'i's aquaculture industry farm gate value is \$80,000,000, the second-highest contribution to the economy in diversified agriculture. Hawai'i's favorable climate and geography allow for inherent advantages benefitting aquaculture production.

The Legislature acknowledged the importance of Hawai'i's aquaculture industry by revitalizing the Aquaculture Development Program (ADP) through Act 63, SLH 2019, and in SLH 2022 provided funding for 4 positions for ADP. Supporting local aquacultural production can help the State move toward greater food sustainability and there is significant growth potential for the aquaculture industry in Hawai'i.

However, more investment and research into the aquaculture industry is needed, including investment and research into different types of aquaculture, aquaculture system optimization, and economic implications of various methods of aquaculture production. A Hawai'i Aquaculture Park could facilitate this and the growth of our Aquaculture sector.

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

**LATE**

**HB-2618**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 12:33:39 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ethan Onipaa Porter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa,**

**Mahalo for affording me this opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 2618.**

**I consider it paramount that our state continues its pursuit of self-sustainability across all sectors, particularly in food production. Our excessive reliance on imported goods significantly contributes to the inflationary pressures experienced by our community.**

**As a parent of two young children, I am committed to raising them in our island home, where they can cultivate an appreciation for living off the bounty of our land. HB 2618 is instrumental in establishing the necessary infrastructure to maximize the potential of our aquaculture resources.**

**Thank you for considering my testimony.**

**Sincerely,**

**Ethan Porter**