

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2002

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 25 2025

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 697

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2025  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture and Environment, to which was referred Governor's Message No. 697, submitting for study and consideration the nomination of:

DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRPERSON, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

G.M. No. 697      DEAN MATSUKAWA  
for a term to expire 12-07-2026,  
(Position corrected to Deputy to the  
Chairperson by GM798),

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Dean Matsukawa for service as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Dean Matsukawa from the Governor; Department of Agriculture; Department of Accounting and General Services; Department of Budget and Finance; Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; Department of Defense; Department of Education; Department of Human Resources Development; Department of Labor and Industrial Relations; Department of Land and Natural Resources; Department of Taxation; Department of Transportation; Agribusiness Development Corporation; The Hawai'i Ag Finance Network; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Maui County Farm Bureau; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.; Ponoholo Ranch; Hawaii Agriculture Research Center; Larry Jeffs Farms, LLC; Ulupono Initiative; and twenty-three individuals.

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Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Mr. Matsukawa's background, education, experience, and commitment to public service qualify him to be nominated for appointment as Deputy to the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture. Your Committee notes that Mr. Matsukawa retired after over thirty years of experience at the Department of Agriculture (Department) in 2022 and recently came out of retirement, serving as the interim Deputy to the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture since January 2025.

Mr. Matsukawa earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Washington, with extensive coursework in botany, horticulture, accounting, and agricultural economics. He began his career as a third-generation farmer managing and operating his family farm in Waiahole. In 1991, Mr. Matsukawa joined the Department of Agriculture as a Business Loan Officer in its Agricultural Loan Division (Division). Over the next fourteen years, he worked on all major islands of the State, assisting farmers and ranchers and gaining an understanding of the various crops, production techniques, and challenges facing the agricultural industry. Through his hard work and leadership, Mr. Matsukawa became the Administrator of the Division, where he managed daily operations and developed budgets, long-term strategies, and new loan programs to serve the agricultural community. During his twenty-year tenure with the Division, Mr. Matsukawa increased the Department's loan portfolio from \$17 million to \$25 million, which helped to support and grow the State's agricultural industry.

In addition to his experience in diversified agriculture and expertise in agricultural finance, Mr. Matsukawa supplemented his knowledge of the agricultural sector with additional educational training from the Agricultural Leadership Program at the Agricultural Leadership Foundation of Hawaii, graduating as a member of Class VI; Hawaii Leadership Academy; and Agricultural Lending Institute at Fresno State. Mr. Matsukawa further demonstrated his commitment to professional growth and public service, having served as the President of the East Oahu County Farm Bureau and the Kona County Farm Bureau and represented the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation and Community-Based Economic Development Advisory Council, including serving as the Chairperson of the Advisory Council.




As the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture, Mr. Matsukawa aims to restore and improve the internal functions of the Department to better serve the agricultural community by filling vacant positions, obtaining appropriate levels of resources, and better directing Department actions. Your Committee notes that, since he began serving as interim Deputy to the Chairperson, the Department has filled key positions, including the Administrator of the Plant Industry Division, Administrator of the Agricultural Loan Division, Administrative Services Officer, and Human Resources Officer. Mr. Matsukawa's personal statement indicated that his long-term vision is to ensure that the Department has the flexibility, capacity, and resources to assist the farming and ranching communities in managing current and future economic and environmental challenges.

As evidenced by the unanimous and wide-ranging testimony in support submitted on his behalf, Mr. Matsukawa is a well-respected and forward-thinking leader who embraces innovation and adaptability. His deep-rooted knowledge of the agricultural industry, coupled with hands-on experience, has given him a comprehensive understanding of both the challenges and opportunities facing Hawaii's agricultural community. His proven track record in assisting farmers and other local producers through the Department's loan programs has been instrumental in supporting agricultural businesses, strengthening food security, and fostering economic growth in the State. Mr. Matsukawa recognizes the evolving nature of the agricultural industry and is committed to implementing new strategies and solutions that enhance efficiency, sustainability, and resilience. His leadership will be invaluable in guiding the Department toward adopting policies that support farmers and other local producers, improve food production, and address the sector's most pressing needs. Your Committee therefore recommends that Dean Matsukawa be appointed as Deputy to the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture based on his background, education, experience, and commitment to public service.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Agriculture and Environment that is attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the nominee, has found the nominee to be qualified for the position to which nominated and recommends that the Senate advise and consent to the nomination.



Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Agriculture and  
Environment,

  
MIKE GABBARD, Chair



The Senate  
Thirty-Third Legislature  
State of Hawai'i

**Record of Votes**  
**Committee on Agriculture and Environment**  
**AEN**  
**Advise and Consent**

Governor's Message No.:* <div style="font-size: 1.5em; margin-top: 5px;">697</div>	Committee Referral: <div style="margin-top: 5px;">AEN</div>	Date: <div style="font-size: 1.5em; margin-top: 5px;">4-4-25</div>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its decision				
The Recommendation is: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advise and Consent 2340         </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Advise and Consent 2345         </div> </div>				
<b>Members</b>	<b>Aye</b>	<b>Aye (WR)</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Excused</b>
GABBARD, Mike (C)	X			
RICHARDS, III, Herbert M. "Tim" (VC)	X			
DECOITE, Lynn	X			
RHOADS, Karl	X			
AWA, Brenton	X			
<b>TOTAL</b>	5			
Recommendation: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 5px;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted         <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted         </div>				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> </div>				
Distribution: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 5px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">Original File with Committee Report</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Yellow Clerk's Office</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Pink Drafting Agency</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Goldenrod Committee File Copy</div> </div>				

\*Only one Governor's Message per Record of Votes