

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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEAN M. MATSUKAWA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512  
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD**  
**CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

**FEBRUARY 6, 2025**  
**2:00 PM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 329**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 47 HD1**  
**RELATING TO AQUACULTURE**

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 47 HD1. The bill authorizes the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State. It requires the Aquaculture Program to develop a risk-based framework and biocontainment standards for the aquatic livestock assessment and approval process and makes appropriations. The Department supports this bill.

By implementing more robust assessment processes, HB47 HD1 promotes responsible and sustainable growth of Hawaii's aquaculture industry which has a rich history and significant potential for expansion. A risk-based framework would help evaluate potential risks associated with the movement of aquatic species and better balance industry growth while minimizing negative impact to native species and ecosystems.

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



LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

JOSH GREEN  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



## HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

1151 PUNCHBOWL ST, #325  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

### VOTING MEMBERS

DAWN CHANG  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND & NATURAL  
RESOURCES

SHARON HURD  
HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

KATHLEEN HO, D.Env  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PARWINDER GREWAL, Ph.D.  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

MARY ALICE EVANS  
BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &  
TOURISM

DEXTER KISHIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Chelsea Arnott, HISC Coordinator on behalf of  
HISC Co-Chair Sharon Hurd and Co-Chair Dawn N.S. Chang

**LATE**

### House Committee on COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Thursday, February 6, 2025

2:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Via Videoconference

### In consideration of HOUSE BILL 47, HOUSE DRAFT 1 RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

House Bill 47, House Draft 1 authorizes the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State, requires the Aquaculture Program to develop a risk-based framework and biocontainment standards for the aquatic livestock assessment and approval process, and appropriates funds. **The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (Council) supports this measure.**

The Council supports increasing local food production in Hawai'i which this measure helps address. Local production can result in more managed lands that do not become hubs for invasive vegetation and decreases our reliance on imported goods that can harbor invasive species. Utilizing a risk-based framework would help identify potential pests and pathway associated with the movement of aquatic species that will not only protect the industry, but native species and ecosystems that can also be impacted by new pests and diseases.

Mahalo for the opportunity to support this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR



WENDY GADY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
**AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
HUI HO'OUULU AINA MAHIAI

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
CONSUMER PROTECTIONS & COMMERCE  
February 6, 2025  
2:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

HOUSE BILL NO. 47  
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

**LATE**

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of House Bill No. 47, which authorizes the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State, in addition to requiring the Aquaculture Program to develop a risk-based framework and biocontainment standards for the aquatic livestock assessment and approval process.

Hawai'i is home to some of the most unique and biodiverse marine ecosystems in the world. However, these ecosystems are highly sensitive to external influences, including the introduction of non-native aquatic species. Without a robust and comprehensive approval process, there is a significant risk of introducing invasive species, pathogens, or other harmful elements that could disrupt native habitats and harm our local fisheries. Such disruptions could have long-lasting consequences for both the environment and the communities that rely on these resources.

By establishing a clear and science-based assessment process, the our government can:

1. **Protect Native Species:** Ensure that imported aquatic livestock are thoroughly evaluated for their potential impact on Hawai'i's endemic species and ecosystems.
2. **Prevent the Spread of Diseases:** Minimize the risk of introducing aquatic diseases that could devastate local aquaculture operations and wild populations.
3. **Support Sustainable Aquaculture:** Provide a framework for responsible aquaculture practices, which are essential for Hawai'i's food security and economic growth.
4. **Enhance Regulatory Transparency:** Create a clear, efficient, and fair approval process that benefits both the industry and the public by providing predictable guidelines and reducing uncertainty.

In addition to these benefits, this initiative will foster collaboration among stakeholders, including scientists, aquaculture practitioners, conservationists, and policymakers. Such collaboration is essential to developing a process that balances economic opportunity with environmental stewardship.

As Hawai'i continues to face challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, and biodiversity loss, it is imperative that we take proactive steps to manage our natural resources responsibly. Developing a rigorous assessment and approval process for aquatic livestock importation and movement is a critical step in this direction.

We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



**HAWAI'I  
FOOD+  
POLICY**

Honolulu, HI 96813  
food@purplemaia.org

February 4, 2025

To: Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Subject: **HB 47 HD1**, Relating to Aquaculture

Aloha,

Please **pass HB47 HD1**. This amendment to Chapter 141-51, 141-52 and 161-6 would aid the Division of animal industry by developing a biological aquatic risk-based framework. The current system leaves room for consequences to native and feral species. HB47 HD1 proposes adding new definitions to mitigate these risks by ensuring disease assessments and proper quarantine guidelines are followed. Additionally, the amendment to 161-6 would allow the Division of animal industry of the Department of Agriculture to employ full-time and part-time employees to evaluate live poultry and poultry products within the state.

Protecting current food resources and stock from potential disease and infections is incredibly important to the health of Hawaiians. **Saying “yes” to HB47 HD1** safeguards food supply and local ecosystems.

Mahalo,  
Jeanette Burdick & the Food+ Policy Team  
#fixourfoodsystem

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**The Food+ Policy internship** develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.

**HB-47-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 4:31:03 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/6/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Satoshi Yoshida	Kowa Premium Foods Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my support for the proposed bill that aims to transfer the jurisdiction of aquaculture from the Quarantine division to the Animal Industry division and to implement a risk-based evaluation and approval process for aquatic products imported from outside the state.

I agree with the adoption of risk-based evaluations. Unlike terrestrial plants and animals, the interconnectedness of the oceans means that non-native species can enter Hawaiian waters naturally through ocean currents and the movement of marine life, without any human intention. Additionally, economic activities, such as the attachment of organisms to ship hulls, present further pathways for the introduction of non-native species. Given the inevitability of such introductions in the marine environment, I support the proper risk-based assessment process. However, I kindly request that these risks be evaluated carefully to ensure they do not unnecessarily hinder economic activities.

Furthermore, I hope that this bill will expedite the review process. Our company's application, which involves the importation of grown abalone to be cultured for a while and sell as seafoods in a land-based aquaculture facility, is still under review. We included comprehensive risk-based evaluation materials with our application. We seek assurance that all pending applications will be promptly transferred to the new division and that the passage of this bill will not cause any further delays in the review process.

Thank you for your consideration.



Testimony Presented to  
Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair  
Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair  
Thursday, February 6, 2025 2:00PM  
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference  
by

Ron Weidenbach, HAAA President

SUBJECT: Support for intent of HB47 HD1 – RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Aloha Rep. Matayoshi, Chair, Rep. Chun, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association (HAAA) was established in 1975 and represents aquaculture industry members statewide.

**The HAAA supports the intent of HB47 HD1** which authorizes the DOA Division of Animal Industry to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State; requires the Aquaculture Program to develop a risk-based framework and biocontainment standards for the aquatic livestock assessment and approval process; and makes appropriations.

However, **we respectfully request that Section 3 and Section 5 be amended to mandate that:**

- 1)** the development of the noted standards and the approval process be under the direction and oversight of the Division's State Aquaculture Veterinarian; and
- 2)** that all pre-existing aquatic animal import permits previously vetted in public hearing and approved by the Plant and Animal Committee and the Board of Agriculture be carried forward to the Division of Animal Industry and remain in force, so as to not disrupt existing aquaculture operations and approved expansion plans and activities.

The requested aquaculture veterinary direction and oversight will help ensure that Hawaii's aquatic resources and aquaculture industry are well protected from imported and interisland biohazards, and, help maintain the high level of environmental credibility that the Hawaii aquaculture industry has achieved through decades of cooperation with the State Aquaculture Veterinarian.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB47 HD1 and the requested amendment.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald P. Weidenbach". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ronald P. Weidenbach

**HB-47-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 6:38:52 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/6/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cecilia Viljoen	KPFHC (Big Islans Abalone)	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The permitting process has been crippling to the business because it has been too slow to support aquaculture business viability and growth. We fully support the change in the hope that under the new regime the permitting process will be more efficient and happens in a timely matter.



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Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921  
e-mail [info@hfbf.org](mailto:info@hfbf.org); [www.hfbf.org](http://www.hfbf.org)

February 6, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

**TESTIMONY ON HB 47, HD1**  
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Conference Room 329 & Videoconference  
2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice-Chair Chun, 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 47, HD1**, which authorizes the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State and requires the Aquaculture Program to develop a risk-based framework and biocontainment standards for the aquatic livestock assessment and approval process.

Hawai'i's aquaculture industry farm gate value is \$89.6M, 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 through Act 63, SLH 2019. However, more investment and research are needed in the aquaculture industry, including research into different types of aquaculture, aquaculture system optimization, and the economic implications of various methods of aquaculture production.

The transfer of aquaculture import oversight from Plant Industries to Animal Industries would place this process under direct veterinary oversight with standardized science-based assessment protocols. Such evaluations are increasingly important as disease, quarantine, and invasive species considerations become increasingly necessary to help safeguard the environment and existing industry from external risks.

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

**LATE**

**HB-47-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 2:07:23 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/6/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robert Endreson	Kohala Mountsin Fish Company	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We support the measure. We need better management and direction in Aquaculture.



**Officers**

Kaipo Kekona  
State President

Anabella Bruch  
Vice-President

Maureen Datta  
Secretary

Reba Lopez  
Treasurer

**Chapter Presidents**

Clarence Baber  
Kohala, Hawaii

Tony Vera  
East Hawaii

Puna, Hawaii

Andrea Drayer  
Ka'u, Hawaii

Maureen Datta  
Kona, Hawaii

Fawn Helekahi-Burns  
Hana, Maui

Mason Scharer  
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros  
Mauna Kahalawai,  
Maui

Kaipo Kekona  
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy  
Moloka'i

Negus Manna  
Lana'i

India Clark  
North Shore, Oahu

Christian Zuckerman  
Wai'anae, Oahu

Ted Radovich  
Waimanalo, Oahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, Oahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the House Consumer Protection & Commerce Committee,

The Hawaii Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports HB47.**

As agriculture continues to evolve and adapt to contemporary challenges, it is crucial to embrace regulatory frameworks that prioritize sustainability and biosecurity. The proposed risk-based framework and biocontainment standards outlined in HB47 will ensure that Hawaii's ecosystems are protected while allowing farmers and aquaculture businesses to thrive. This bill empowers the Division of Animal Industry to develop robust rules that reflect the unique ecological and agricultural landscape of our islands, preventing potential invasive species threats that can arise from unregulated import activities.

HB47's provisions for appropriations demonstrate a commitment to effective implementation and oversight. By allocating resources towards the development of these necessary frameworks and standards, we not only ensure the protection of our local communities and natural resources but also pave the way for a sustainable future for aquaculture in Hawaii. This measure can lead to increased investment and innovation in local aquaculture operations and support economic growth and the local food economy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawaii Farmers Union

**HB-47-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 4:25:58 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/6/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
albert fung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The State vets at the Animal Industry are very knowledgeable in animal disease control and prevention.

The overall import permit review process will likely take less time and it is good for aquaculture development and farmers