

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 1591
RELATING TO AVIAN INFLUENZA**

SENATOR MIKE GABBARD, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Friday, February 7, 2025, 2:00 pm, Room Number: 225

1 **Fiscal Implications:** A proposed budget of approximately \$3,300,000 to \$4,700,000, depending
2 upon availability of federal funds, will support the Department of Health's monitoring and
3 respose for avian influenza, both in current state and in the event of a larger outbreak in
4 animals or humans. This amount is not inclusive of funding for activities to be carried out by
5 other agencies, but will position the Department of Health for effective collaboration with
6 other state agencies to respond to avian influenza both in animals and in humans.

7 **Department Position:** The Department of Health ("Department") **supports** this measure
8 offering comments and proposed amendments.

9 **Department Testimony:** The Disease Outbreak Control Division (DOCD) provides the following
10 testimony on behalf of the Department of Health in support of the proposed Act which
11 appropriates funds for preventing, monitoring, and responding to avian influenza in Hawaii. The
12 recent global health challenges presented by avian influenza underscore the importance of
13 robust monitoring and surveillance measures to protect Hawaii's public health, industry, unique
14 wildlife, and our agricultural economy.

1 Avian influenza poses significant risks not only to our bird populations but also to the broader
2 agricultural and food industries that contribute to the livelihood of many residents. Hawaii is
3 particularly vulnerable to the spread of infectious diseases due to its geographic isolation and
4 unique ecosystems. While current overall risk to humans is low, the potential for the virus to
5 mutate and cause more severe disease and/or more widespread human-to-human transmission
6 is a real and present threat.

7 This Act will ensure that Hawaii has the resources necessary to quickly respond to any
8 outbreaks, animal or human, and minimize the potential for widespread transmission. The
9 Department has already taken a One Health Approach (the recognition that the areas of
10 human, animal and environmental health intersect) to this issue, by convening representatives
11 from stakeholders in a weekly status call updating partners on surveillance testing, sharing
12 resources, planning response activities, and discussing scenarios where an enhanced response
13 is needed. Heightened awareness of biosecurity and occupational health and safety protocols,
14 along with a robust wastewater and animal surveillance testing program, will protect local
15 farms, safeguard our food production systems, and reduce the risk of the virus spreading within
16 Hawaii. Enhanced monitoring for novel influenza variants in humans will enable early
17 identification and response to cases should they occur in Hawaii, and monitoring of contacts.
18 Timely investigations of cases and clusters of morbidity and mortality events support early
19 detection goals. In addition, the educational efforts outlined in this Act are essential to
20 informing the public about the risks associated with bird flu and the necessary precautions they
21 can take to stay safe.

22 This Act represents a crucial investment in the health and safety of Hawaii's residents and
23 agricultural industry. This legislation will enable proactive steps to prevent, monitor, and
24 respond to avian influenza, ultimately safeguarding our state's economy and public health.

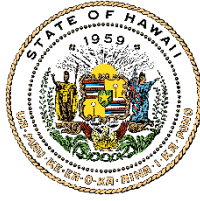
25 **Offered Amendments:** Page 2, Lines 5-9

1 ... Enhanced biosecurity will help protect local farms and food production, and increased
2 testing of birds, humans, and wastewater will help better understand the spread of bird flu in
3 Hawaii and its potential impacts on human health. In addition, education will help inform the
4 public about bird flu, their risk, and how to stay safe.

5 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

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FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
and
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Friday, February 7, 2025
2:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 225 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 1591
RELATING TO AVIAN INFLUENZA

Senate Bill 1591 proposes to allocate funds to the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture to prevent, monitor, and respond to avian influenza in Hawai'i. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), caused by the H5N1 virus, is a highly contagious disease mainly affecting birds. In November 2024, Hawai'i recorded its first HPAI case in a backyard flock on O'ahu, making it the last state to detect the virus. A migratory bird likely introduced the disease, with the first wild bird case confirmed in a hybrid mallard duck on the North Shore of O'ahu. No additional detections in birds have been reported since these initial cases.

HPAI poses significant risks to poultry and dairy farmers, public health, and Hawai'i's native bird species—many already threatened or endangered. Large-scale die-offs of wild birds, as seen on the mainland, could have serious ecological consequences. The Department supports this measure to ensure necessary funding for monitoring and response efforts that will help mitigate the virus's impact on public health, agriculture, and native wildlife.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
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SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT AND
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

FEBRUARY 7, 2025
2:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 225

SENATE BILL NO. 1591

RELATING TO AVIAN INFLUENZA

Chairs Gabbard and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Richards and Aquino, and
Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1591. The Hawaii
Department of Agriculture (Department) supports SB1591. The purpose of SB1591 is to
appropriate funds to the Department of Health (DOH) and to the Department of
Agriculture to prevent, monitor, and respond to avian influenza in Hawaii.

The Department is collaborating with DOH on avian influenza and additional
funds are needed to support ongoing activities. Therefore, the Department requests
\$293,000 to be appropriated for the purpose of this act including prevention monitoring
and response to avian influenza. The Department notes that two (2) of the largest
categories of proposed use of funds is for public outreach through radio and TV and
PPE for producers. Those amounts are estimated at \$100,000 and \$150,000
respectively. Enhanced media outreach improves public information and PPE for
producers supports increased biosecurity measures on production sites. The remainder



of \$43,000 is targeted for equipment, supplies, sample shipping, contracts and other related expenditures. The department defers to DOH for an appropriation that addresses their needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SB-1591

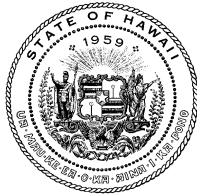
Submitted on: 2/6/2025 8:32:51 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/7/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
isaac maeda	Testifying for Hawaii Department of Agriculture	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Testimony by the Department of Agriculture was submitted. Will be present on Zoom for questions.



**STATE HEALTH PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'AINA O KA MOKU'AINA 'O HAWAII

KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOHN C. (JACK) LEWIN, M.D.
ADMINISTRATOR

1177 Alakea St., #402, Honolulu, HI 96813 Phone: 587-0788 Fax: 587-0783 www.shpda.org

February 6, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Hebert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair,

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair,
And Honorable Members

From: John C (Jack) Lewin MD, Administrator, SHPDA; and Senior Advisor to Governor Green
On Healthcare Innovation

Re: SB1591

Position: SUPPORT

Testimony:

SHPDA fully supports this bill appropriates funds to the Department of Health (DOH) and Department of Agriculture (DOA) to prevent, monitor, and respond to avian influenza in Hawai'i.

While we defer to the DOH and the DOA in terms of appropriation requests and to detailed response to this measure, it is critically important for this to pass and be funded to prevent the spread of avian influenza here and moreover, if not controlled, to reduce the risk of the development of potential human-to-human transmissions and a possible new pandemic in the future.

We also note the sluggish response of the federal government on this issue at this time, which underscores the importance of proactive action in Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. “Tim” Richards, III, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Friday, February 7, 2025, 2:00pm
Conference Room 225

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and
Members of the Committees,

My name is Scott Enright and I represent Villa Rose and Waialua Eggs. We strongly **SUPPORT**
SB1591, Relating to Avian Influenza.

At this time when the poultry industry needs protection nationwide, the State showing support
for this industry is absolutely necessary.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo,
Scott Enright
President
Scott E. Enright Company LLC



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 7, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON HB 1591
RELATING TO AVIAN INFLUENZA

Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
2:00 PM

Aloha Chairs San Buenaventura and Gabbard, Vice-Chairs Aquino and Richards, 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 HB 1591, which appropriates funds to the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture to prevent, monitor, and respond to avian influenza in Hawai'i. Given the significant threat that avian influenza poses to Hawai'i's poultry industry, food security, and broader agricultural sector, proactive measures are critical to safeguarding the state's economy and public health.

Avian influenza outbreaks have devastated poultry industries worldwide, leading to the culling of millions of birds, supply chain disruptions, and severe economic losses for farmers. Hawai'i's poultry farms, egg producers, and backyard flocks are vulnerable to the disease, which can spread rapidly and result in severe production declines. Any outbreak in Hawai'i could lead to shortages of locally produced eggs, increased reliance on imported products, and higher prices for consumers.

Beyond poultry production, the spread of avian influenza could have far-reaching effects on Hawai'i's agricultural industry. The disease could impact feed suppliers, processing facilities, and other agricultural operations that rely on poultry production. Additionally, if an outbreak were to occur, strict quarantine measures and trade restrictions could disrupt the movement of agricultural goods, harming farmers and ranchers across the state.

Avian influenza also presents serious public health concerns. While transmission to humans is rare, highly pathogenic strains have the potential to cross species barriers,

posing risks to farm workers, veterinarians, and those in close contact with infected birds. Early detection and containment efforts are essential to prevent any potential public health crisis. The World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention emphasize the importance of monitoring avian influenza strains for potential mutations that could lead to human-to-human transmission. Strengthening surveillance and biosecurity measures will help protect both animal and human health in Hawai'i.

Funding for prevention, monitoring, and response efforts will help minimize the risk of an outbreak and ensure rapid containment if avian influenza is detected.

We urge the committee to advance SB 1591 to protect Hawai'i's poultry industry, maintain food security, safeguard public health, and preserve the state's agricultural economy from the devastating effects of avian influenza.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*

Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Agriculture and Environment and Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 7, 2025

TIME: 2pm

RE: SB1591 Relating to Avian Influenza

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA is in support of this measure. As the measure notes enhanced biosecurity will help protect local farms and food production, and increased testing of birds will help better understand the spread of bird flu in Hawaii.

Increasing local food production is a goal we all share. The first step in achieving that goal is protecting the food producers we already have. This measure is an important step to help many of our local agricultural producers continue to provide food for our state.

We urge the Committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



HAWAII VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 61309, Honolulu, Hawaii 96839-1309

February 4, 2025

Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Tim Richards III, Vice Chair

Committee on Health and Human Services
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J. C. Aquino, Vice Chair

RE: SB 1591, Relating to Avian Influenza

Dear Committee on Agriculture and Environment and Committee on Health and Human Services,

On behalf of the Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association, I would like to express our support of SB 1591 and its appropriation of funds to support the Department of Health and Department of Agriculture to prevent, monitor, and respond to avian influenza in Hawaii.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza has already become endemic in the rest of the United States, but is a recently emerging disease in Hawaii. Its spread throughout the United States has already caused widespread economic losses in poultry and dairy operations. This virus is zoonotic and can spread from animals to people. Furthermore, influenza viruses are highly mutable and have potential to evolve into the next human epidemic.

As health professionals dedicated to the protection of animal health and welfare, promotion of public health, and advancement of medical knowledge, the Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association strongly supports this legislative response to avian influenza in Hawaii. We also encourage the Department of Health to re-establish its public health veterinarian position to more effectively prevent, monitor, and respond to public health threats such as avian influenza. Re-establishing a public health veterinarian position within the state would align us with other state health departments and multiple federal health agencies that utilize public health veterinarians such as the US Department of Health and Human Services, US Department of Agriculture, Army Veterinary Corps, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Please SUPPORT SB 1591 and support Hawaii's preparation and response to avian influenza within the state. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Please contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jill Yoshicedo", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jill Yoshicedo, DVM
Executive Vice-President
Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association



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Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

The Hawai'i 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 SB1591.**

SB1591 is an essential measure to safeguard Hawaii's agriculture by addressing the threat of avian influenza. Allocating funds to the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture emphasizes a proactive approach, ensuring that Hawaii is equipped to prevent, monitor, and respond effectively to potential outbreaks. By taking these steps, the state can protect its poultry industry. The resources provided by this bill will enhance our ability to implement biosecurity measures, surveillance programs, and rapid response initiatives, all crucial for mitigating the impact of avian influenza.

The bill also underscores the importance of collaboration between state departments, agricultural stakeholders, and health professionals. This cooperative strategy will foster robust communication networks and facilitate the sharing of critical information, thereby reducing response times and enhancing our ability to act swiftly in the event of an outbreak.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

SB-1591

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 11:56:33 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/7/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Toyofuku	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB1591 relating to the Avian Influenza with funds being questionably appropriated to the Department of Health and Department of Agriculture to respond to it. Whether it is the Avian Bird Flu, Swine Flu, Monkey Pox or other viral outbreak being trumpeted by government or media, these hyped and alarming fears are perpetuated onto the public.

Research discloses the collaboration of government, state departments, certain industries and drug companies that immensely benefit financially and profit greatly from the frightened frenzy created. Legislative bills are fast-tracked to appropriate funds to respond. Pharmaceutical drugs, such as the historical Tamiflu, other anti-viral drugs or genetically engineered vaccines are already on stock or quickly developed with allocation of funds to develop questionable solutions.

Instead, the appropriation of funds towards healthier programs to improve our natural immunity, encourage proper diet and healthy lifestyles, while limiting toxic drugs and vaccines would better serve the people of Hawaii.

Do NOT pass SB1591 out of your HHS/AEN Committees.

SB-1591

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 2:30:43 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/7/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Segal Matsunaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My family and I in Waimea on Hawaii Island support SB 1591 RELATING TO AVIAN INFLUENZA. We are concerned that the chaos in the federal government may result in this emerging public health issue being ignored and urge Hawaii to do what is needed to protect our residents.

SB-1591

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 12:10:49 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/7/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Avian influenza poses a severe risk to the survival of our remaining endangered native birds. It is our kuleana to preserve them for future generations.

SB-1591

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 3:33:46 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/7/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lois Crozer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We should have this in the works BEFORE it becomes an big health issue.We can always allocate the money elsewhere if it doesn't.

SB-1591

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:50:13 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/7/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

Avian flu is both a critical public health concern and animal health concern. The damage being done to our poultry industry is astronomical and growing. Potential for animal to human transmission is an every worrying danger. We cannot be unprepared in the face of this health challenge compared to our unreadiness when COVID broke out.

I urge this Committee to SUPPORT this bill!

LATE

SB-1591

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 6:42:07 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/7/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Dieperink	Testifying for Hawaii For Informed Consent	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE SB1591 re. Avian Flu

This bill feels like a set up from our government to again take control of people's lives.

I'm opposed to appropriating funds for this, and oppose testing poultry.

The bill also aims to educate the public on how to stay safe. That part I do agree with, although I don't know if we agree on the means. For example, don't let our government again tell us to stay inside instead of be out in the sun to absorb vitamin D.