

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 SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT,
TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS, AND COMMERCE AND
CONSUMER PROTECTION**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025
9:45 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 229 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 427, HD2
RELATING TO BIOSECURITY**

Chairs Gabbard, Lee, and Keohokalole, Vice Chairs Richards, Inouye, and Fukunaga,
and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill No. 427, HD2 relating to biosecurity. This measure does the following: part I: renames the Department of Agriculture (Department) to the "Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity" and renames the Board of Agriculture to the "Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity"; part II: establishes and appropriates funds for a Deputy Director of Biosecurity; part III: changes references to the plant and animal declaration form to the "biosecurity form"; part IV: authorizes and specifies conditions under which the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity may declare a biosecurity emergency, during which the Department and Governor may take certain actions to prevent the establishment or spread of pests and prohibited or restricted organisms, and also broadens the objectives and general actions of the Biosecurity Program; and part V: appropriates funds for positions for the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity; effective 7/1/3000. The Department supports this bill and offers suggested changes.



The Department appreciates the emphasis on biosecurity as reflected by renaming the Department of Agriculture and Board of Agriculture to include “and Biosecurity” as part of their respective titles and making the same throughout the HRS. The Department is also extremely appreciative that this measure seeks to increase positions and funding for biosecurity-related positions, and for the incorporation of prior proposed changes to this measure.

This bill further emphasizes statewide biosecurity by establishing a new position with funding for a Deputy Director of Biosecurity through a new section to HRS 141, further enabling the Department to maintain biosecurity activities. The Department is supportive of this position being appointed by the Governor.

The Department is in strong support of the inclusion of the provision enabling the declaration of a Biosecurity Emergency with concurrence from the Governor. On page 35 of the bill, the Department believes that sections (d)(1)(A) and (d)(1)(B) should be amended as vessels with anti-fouling coatings or who properly manage ballast water would be the preferred vessels for emergency use as the aforementioned mechanisms help to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. Suggested changes are below:

- “(A) [~~Has~~] Does not have an anti-fouling hull coating; and
- (B) [~~Does not d~~] Discharges ballast water, uses [~~fresh~~] seawater for ballasting, or is not equipped with ultraviolet filtration systems for ballast water;”

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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

**Senate Committees on
AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT
TRANSPORTATION & CULTURE & THE ARTS
COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION**

**Tuesday, March 18, 2025; 9:45 am
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Via Videoconference**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 427 HOUSE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO BIOSECURITY**

House Bill 427 House Draft 2 proposes multiple actions to enhance the Department of Agriculture's biosecurity efforts. **The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (Council) supports this measure.** The Council appreciates the efforts of this measure to safeguard Hawai'i from invasive species by strengthening Hawai'i Department of Agriculture's role to address biosecurity by:

- Adding the term "biosecurity" to the Department of Agriculture and "Biosecurity"
- Creating a deputy chairperson of biosecurity
- Renaming the Plant and Animal Declaration Form the Biosecurity Form
- Ability for the Department to declare a biosecurity emergency
- Establishing penalties for violations

The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council was formed with the understanding that invasive species impact every sector and do not abide by landowner boundaries or jurisdictions. Preventing and controlling invasive species requires statewide coordination amongst the state and federal agencies and partner entities. Even with the addition of the term "biosecurity" to the Department of Agriculture, there still needs to be the inclusion of other state agencies in biosecurity efforts that address public health, the environment, and economic drivers beyond agriculture. Biosecurity must be an interagency effort.

The Council recommends the addition of Biosecurity experts to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity and broadening language in lines (1) through (4) to include representatives from the invasive species response, public health, and conservation

community and that the Deputy Chairperson of biosecurity provide an annual report to the Council on the status of biosecurity efforts in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of 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 HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
1151 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 325
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

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

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
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,
TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS,
and
COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Tuesday, March 18, 2025
9:45 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 427, HOUSE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

House Bill 427 House Draft 2 proposes to expand and restructure the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture's (HDOA) biosecurity efforts, including renaming HDOA to add "Biosecurity"; establishing a Deputy Chairperson for Biosecurity; and establishing emergency response authorities. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports the intent of this measure to strengthen Hawaii's biosecurity and offers the following comments.**

The Department supports efforts to strengthen biosecurity and works with partners within a framework recommended by the Interagency Biosecurity Plan to utilize existing resources, networks, and capacities to collectively and efficiently address biosecurity issues. The Biosecurity Plan recognized that one agency cannot do it alone. Effective prevention, management, and mitigation of invasive species impacts requires continuity of attention, responsiveness, and cohesive action across agencies.

We appreciate that this measure does not include the movement of the Hawaii Invasive Species Council or a change in its administration. Interruptions in active management can cause setbacks or worsen environmental conditions. The work is continuous because the threats are continuous.

To ensure actions are broadened beyond agriculture as the newly titled Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, the Department recommends HDOA appoint biosecurity-focused board members with expertise in invasive species response, environmental conservation, and public health to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity. To support continuity of actions and statewide coordination, the Department further recommends the Deputy Chairperson of Biosecurity provide an annual update on the status of biosecurity to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



The Senate
Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts
Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Tuesday, March 18, 2025
9:45 AM Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
State Capitol

Testimony Providing Comments on HB427 HD2

Aloha Chairs Gabbard, Lee, and Keohokalole, Vice Chairs Richards, Inouye, and Fukunaga, and Members of the Committees,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB427 HD2, *Relating to Biosecurity*.

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) appreciates the Legislature's continued focus on invasive species. During the 2024 Legislative Session, the Legislature passed Act 231, landmark funding for the Hawaii Department of Agriculture's (HDOA) biosecurity efforts. HB427 HD2 continues this momentum by providing new authorities and much-needed and appreciated funding to HDOA for biosecurity and even proposes renaming HDOA the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. Investing in support of HDOA's efforts to carry out their statutory responsibilities related to invasive species is critically important. After decades of lower funding amounts for HDOA's capacity and invasive species-related activities, we note that HDOA has a lot of work ahead to modernize its invasive species program and we look forward to that progress.¹

We respectfully raise the following issues for the Committees' consideration:

Addition of biosecurity experts to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity

Part I of HB427 HD2 renames HDOA as the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and the Board of Agriculture as the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity. We applaud this expanded focus on broader issues of biosecurity. We believe the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity should reflect this new focus by adding a member from the invasive species response community and the environmental conservation community with biosecurity expertise.

¹ For instance, HDOA's administrative rules relating to invasive species are out of date. HDOA's rules related to noxious weeds and the list of noxious weeds were last updated in 1992. (HAR Ch. 4-68). The list of pests designated for control or eradication was last updated in 2008. (HAR Ch. 4-69A Attachment 1) Section 141-3.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, requires HDOA to develop and implement a control or eradication program for each designated pest, using the best available technology. To date, HDOA has not developed a program for any designated pest.

We respectfully request the Committees amend page 2, lines 3 through 8 to read as follows:

“The majority of the members of the board described in paragraphs (1) through (4) shall be from the agricultural community, ~~or the agricultural support sector[+]~~, the invasive species response community, and the environmental conservation community with demonstrated biosecurity expertise, with at least one member from each such category. The appointment, tenure, and removal of the members and the filling of vacancies on the board shall be as provided in sections 26-34. The governor shall appoint a chairperson of the board from the members.”

Quarantine Authority in HDOAB’s Biosecurity Program

HB427 HD1 deleted the authority for the Hawaii Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (HDOAB) to quarantine a farm, facility, or business known to be infected with a pest or prohibited or restricted organism to prevent the movement of materials to or from the location as part of the biosecurity program under section 150A-53(b) HRS. The Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems made this deletion at the request of HDOA in their written testimony. HDOA indicated that the authority was duplicative of the authority HDOA already has in the recently adopted amendments to chapter 4-72, Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR). We note that the authority in chapter 4-72 allows the Chief of the Plant Quarantine Branch to stop the movement of pest-infested material and require treatment of the area only if the material is for sale to (or otherwise available directly to) the public. The deleted quarantine authority is not duplicative of the authority in chapter 4-72 HAR. HDOA agreed with this analysis during the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs hearing on February 11, 2025. Having the authority to quarantine an area without going through the rule-making process will allow HDOAB to, for instance, quarantine an area of Hawaii Island or Maui if a coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) infestation is found. In that example, the quarantine could apply to prevent the movement of all green waste from a location where CRB is found, not just individual pieces of material that are found to actually have CRB on them. This is a common authority that is utilized by other states to prevent the movement of pests² and granting the authority to HDOAB is critical to stopping the spread of a newly detected pest or the spread of an existing pest in the State.

² See, e.g., authority granted to the Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture to: “Declare a quarantine against any area, place, nursery, forest, orchard, farm lot, or other boundary of whatever size or description, or any county or counties within this state, ... and prohibit the movement within the state or any part of the state of all plants, plant propagating material, plant products, or other articles or things including soil from quarantined places or areas that are likely to carry dangerous insect pests, pest plants, or plant diseases if the quarantine is determined, after due investigation by the commissioner to be necessary in order to protect the agricultural, horticultural, and silvicultural, or other interests of this state. In such cases, the quarantine may be made absolute, or rules and regulations may be adopted prescribing the method and manner under which the prohibited articles may be moved into or within, sold, or otherwise disposed of in this state[.]” Tenn. Code §43-6-106(9)

We respectfully request the Committees restore HDOAB’s Biosecurity Program quarantine authority in this bill by inserting on page 42, between lines 13 and 14, the following:

"(2) Quarantine any farm, facility, or business that is known to be infested with a pest or prohibited or restricted organism to prevent the movement of materials to or from the location;"

Biosecurity Emergency

Section 13 of HB427 HD2 (beginning p. 33, line 11) authorizes HDOAB, with the Governor’s approval, to declare a “biosecurity emergency” if: (1) there is a new outbreak or occurrence of a pest or harmful organism in the State; (2) there is a pest or harmful organism established in one area of the State that could cause significant economic or environmental loss if the pest or organism expands to other areas; or (3) a pest or harmful organism is or threatens to be beyond the State’s ability to control.

Issue 1: These conditions are currently met for multiple pest species in the State, including little fire ant (LFA), coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB), and coqui frog. We note that HDOA has not sought an emergency designation for these species under the existing chapter 127A Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), which was amended in 2022 to specifically include impacts to the environment.³

Issue 2: The authority to declare an emergency for any invasive species already exists and is well placed with the Governor or the Mayor of a county under chapter 127A HRS, to allow the appropriate chief executive to manage the resources under their control to address the emergency.

Hawaii Invasive Species Council

We strongly support and are grateful for the amendment made by the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems set out on page 34, lines 16-17 of HB427 HD2 related to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC). HISC is a policy-level Council comprised of the chairs or directors of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), the Department of Agriculture (HDOA) Department of Health (HDOH), Department of Transportation (HDOT), Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT), and the President of the University of Hawaii (UH), or their designees. (HRS 194-2). The amendment made in HB427 HD1 prevents HISC from being relegated to an entity that reports to one of its component members (HDOAB) during a declared biosecurity emergency.

As a final note, the HISC is also charged with meeting “no less than twice annually to discuss and assess progress and recommend changes to the invasive species programs based on results of current risk assessments, performance standards, and other relevant data.” (HRS 194-2(d)) Many of the changes proposed in this and similar bills have not been discussed at meetings of the full Council and would likely benefit from those discussions.

³ See Act 99 (H.B. 2120) (2022)

Although this testimony provides comments, CGAPS notes that HDOA receives less than half of a percent of the state budget to support all of its branches and functions. We appreciate and support an increase in funds to rebuild HDOA's core functions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB427 HD2.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Christy Martin".

Christy Martin
CGAPS Program Manager

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephanie Easley".

Stephanie Easley
CGAPS Legal Fellow



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March 18, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

**TESTIMONY ON HB 427, HD2
RELATING TO BIOSECURITY**

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

Aloha Chairs Gabbard, Lee, and Keohokalole, Vice-Chairs Richards, Inouye, and Fukunaga, 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 427, HD2, which renames the Department of Agriculture to the "Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity," renames the Board of Agriculture to the "Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity," establishes and appropriates funds for a Deputy Director of Biosecurity, changes references to the plant and animal declaration form to the "biosecurity form," authorizes and specifies conditions under which the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity may declare a biosecurity emergency, during which the Department and Governor may take certain actions to prevent the establishment or spread of pests and prohibited or restricted organism, broadens the objectives and general actions of the Biosecurity Program, and appropriates funds for positions for the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

Invasive species have become one of the most devastating problems impacting Hawai'i. Many invasive species are damaging Hawai'i's environment and economy. Agriculture has a vested interest in this matter. Agriculture suffers when invasive species are introduced. Every year, numerous new pests are introduced into the State, such as the coqui frog, coffee berry borer, macadamia felted coccid, little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, small hive beetle, and varroa mite, to name a few. Control measures take time to develop, leaving farmers and ranchers at risk. This is inconsistent with the State's goal of increasing self-sufficiency and sustainability.

Proper resources, authorities, and funding for HDOA are critical for protecting Hawai'i's environment and economy and the health and lifestyle of its people through the support of invasive species prevention, control, research, outreach, and planning. HDOA's Biosecurity Program is essential to fully execute a comprehensive strategy to address the increasing number of invasive species entering the State. This measure will provide the tools and resources to HDOA to help prevent new invasive species from entering Hawai'i and to control and hopefully eradicate invasive species already established in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS
Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

HB427 HD2
RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

Tuesday, march 18, 2025, 9:45AM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committees,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB427 HD2.**

Biosecurity should be a high priority for Hawaii as a remote, island state. This bill demonstrates biosecurity as a high priority and designates the Department of Agriculture to take the lead in managing biosecurity for the state. Biosecurity measures are vital for protecting Hawaii's landscape and agricultural operations.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director





TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB427 HD2, RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS, AND COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committees:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** HB427 HD2, RELATING TO BIOSECURITY. Pursuant to the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, the Party supports funding efforts to combat invasive species that threaten agricultural production in Hawai'i.

Hawaii's future depends on a robust and resilient agricultural sector. This bill represents a critical step in this direction. By strengthening biosecurity measures, including enhanced emergency powers, expanded response capabilities, and increased funding for plant pest control, we can safeguard our agricultural resources from invasive species. This, coupled with a commitment to sustainable and ethical agricultural practices, will ensure a stable and secure food supply for our residents while preserving our unique environment for generations to come.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of HB427 HD2, RELATING TO BIOSECURITY. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org.

LARRY JEFTS FARMS, LLC
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HB427hd2, Relating to Biosecurity
Senate AEN/TCA/CPN Hearing – 9:45 AM
Tuesday, March 18, 2025

Testimony By: Larry Jeffs
Position: Support

Chairs Gabbard, Lee, and Keohokalole, Vice Chairs Richards, Inouye, and Fukunaga and Members of the Senate AEN/TCA/CPN Committees:

I am Larry Jeffs, owner and operator of Larry Jeffs Farms, LLC. We have more than 42 years of Hawaii farm experience on Molokai and Oahu. Our family farms grow about 1 million pounds weekly of import replacement produce. I am a volunteer director, serving as Chair of the West Oahu Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). I have also served as an officer of the Hawaii Farm Bureau for many years.

There is an urgency and heightened awareness of the severe damage to agriculture caused by invasive species and the quality of life of our communities.

We appreciate this comprehensive measure to strengthen Hawaii's capacity to control and eradicate harmful invasive species infestations and prevent the entry of other harmful invasive species.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

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Hilo, HI 96720
(808) 933-3340
www.biisc.org



March 17, 2025

Hearing: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment, Senate Committee on Transportation & Culture & the Arts, and Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection

RE: HB427 HD2

Aloha Chairs Gabbard, Lee, and Keohokalole, Vice Chairs Richards, Inouye, and Fukunaga, and Members of the Committees,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB427 HD2, which renames HDOA as the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and appoints a Deputy chairperson focused on biosecurity. We support these efforts to raise the issue of biosecurity to prominence, and the continued commitment of funding and support from the legislature to do so.

We would like to request an amendment to recognize that issues of biosecurity in Hawai'i stretch far past island borders and into our landscapes: the addition of members from the invasive species response community and the environmental conservation community added to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity, as laid out in Section 1. Adding these perspectives will help contribute to a more comprehensive view of the biosecurity problems facing our state.

Thank you all for your continued focus on invasive species and biosecurity.

Mahalo for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Franny Kinslow Brewer'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Franny Kinslow Brewer
Program Manager
Big Island Invasive Species Committee



**TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI, PRESIDENT
RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
MARCH 12, 2025
HB 427, HD2 RELATING TO BIOSECURITY**

Aloha, Chair Gabbard, Chair Lee, Chair Keohokalole, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment, Senate Committee on Transportation & Culture & The Arts, and the Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection. I am Tina Yamaki, President of the Retail Merchants of Hawaii and I appreciate this opportunity to testify.

The Retail Merchants of Hawaii was founded in 1901 and is a statewide, not for profit trade organization committed to supporting the growth and development of the retail industry in Hawaii. Our membership includes small mom & pop stores, large box stores, resellers, luxury retail, department stores, shopping malls, on-line sellers, local, national, and international retailers, chains, and everyone in between.

This measure Part I: Renames the Department of Agriculture to the "Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity;" Renames the Board of Agriculture to the "Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity;" Part II: Establishes and appropriates funds for a Deputy Director of Biosecurity; Part III: Changes references to the plant and animal declaration form to the "biosecurity form;" Part IV: Authorizes and specifies conditions under which the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity may declare a biosecurity emergency, during which the Department and Governor may take certain actions to prevent the establishment or spread of pests and prohibited or restricted organisms. Broadens the objectives and general actions of the Biosecurity Program; Part V: Appropriates funds for positions for the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity; and is Effective 7/1/3000.

While RMH supports initiatives that protect Hawaii's unique ecosystem from invasive species, **we are concerned about the potential delays this bill may impose on the timely receipt of goods for retailers.** Specifically, requiring additional inspections of shipping containers raises significant concerns about supply chain disruptions.

Currently, businesses rely on timely shipments to maintain inventory, meet customer demands, and sustain economic activity. If additional inspections result in extended delays - potentially from a few days to weeks or even a month - this would create severe challenges for retailers, especially small businesses that operate on tight margins. Such delays could lead to product shortages, increased costs, and ultimately higher prices for consumers in an already high-cost market.

RMH respectfully requests that the Committee consider provisions to mitigate delays, such as:

- Establishing clear timelines for inspections to prevent indefinite delays.
- Implementing risk-based assessments that prioritize high-risk imports while expediting clearance for low-risk goods.
- Increasing inspection capacity by allocating resources for additional inspectors and efficient inspection procedures.

We urge the Committee to carefully consider the economic implications of this bill and work toward a balanced approach that strengthens Hawaii's biosecurity while ensuring businesses can continue to receive their goods in a timely manner.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

HB-427-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 3:42:28 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2025 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Kwan	Testifying for Carol Kwan Consulting LLC	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB 427. It's not appropriate to reward incompetency with more responsibilities.

Although there are many capable, dedicated employees at the lower levels of HDOA, its leadership for over a decade has failed to do what was needed to stop Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle and Little Fire Ant from spreading. And no, it's not due to lack of communication among all of the different parties involved in fighting invasive species. The problem is that those in charge do not listen to the experts at the lower levels.

This bill seems to be nothing more than HDOA trying to make the excuse that it didn't take appropriate action because it didn't have all of the responsibilities and associated budget under its department. And that couldn't be further from the truth. It lacked the will to make the tough decisions that would have upset some people/businesses, and as a result these decisions are now costing the public and private sector many millions of dollars.

I am a Certified Arborist with my own small consulting business working in the landscaping industry.

Mahalo,

Carol Kwan

HB-427-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 11:31:04 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2025 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chuck Chimera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Chair Lee, Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chairs, and Committee Members,

My name is Chuck Chimera, and I am a resident of Honokaa on the Big Island. I am writing to express my strong support for HB427 HD2, which renames the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, establishes a Deputy Director of Biosecurity, and strengthens our state’s biosecurity program.

As a resident of the Big Island, I have witnessed firsthand the devastating impacts of invasive species on our environment, agriculture, and way of life. From the coqui frog’s relentless spread to the destruction caused by little fire ants and the threat of coconut rhinoceros beetles, our island’s ecosystems and farms are under constant siege. These invasive species not only harm our native plants and wildlife but also threaten our food security, economy, and cultural practices.

HB427 HD2 is a critical step forward in addressing these challenges. By renaming the department to include “biosecurity,” this bill sends a clear message that protecting Hawaii from invasive species is a top priority. The establishment of a Deputy Director of Biosecurity will provide much-needed leadership and coordination to ensure that our biosecurity efforts are proactive, efficient, and effective.

I particularly support the provisions in Part IV of the bill, which authorize the declaration of a biosecurity emergency. Invasive species move quickly, and our response must be equally swift. This measure will allow the department and the governor to take immediate action to prevent the establishment or spread of pests and prohibited organisms, safeguarding our islands from further harm.

Additionally, the bill’s focus on public education and collaboration with federal and international partners is essential. As a community member, I know that awareness and prevention are key to stopping the introduction of new invasive species. By empowering residents to report pests and understand the risks, we can build a stronger line of defense for our islands.

Finally, I appreciate the appropriation of funds for additional positions within the department. These resources are vital to expanding our capacity for pest control, inspections, and research. Investing in biosecurity is an investment in Hawaii’s future—our environment, our agriculture, and our communities depend on it.

In conclusion, I urge you to pass HB427 HD2. This bill represents a meaningful commitment to protecting Hawaii from the growing threat of invasive species. As a resident of the Big Island, I am deeply grateful for your leadership on this issue and your dedication to preserving our islands for generations to come.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important legislation.

Respectfully,
Chuck Chimera
Honokaa

HB-427-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 10:32:33 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2025 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcia Kemble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Committee Chair and Committee members,

I strongly support HB427. Invasive species like the little fire ant and coconut rhinoceros beetle are already causing serious harm to Hawai‘i’s environment, agriculture, and communities, and we must make major transformative shifts in our biosecurity strategy to mitigate the impacts of these and other invasive pests on our islands and future generations.

Mahalo,
Marcia Kemble
Makiki

HB-427-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 7:32:57 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2025 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good idea. Makes sense. Mahalo!