

**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**

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on  
CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

**Thursday, February 6, 2025  
2:00 PM**

**State Capitol, VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, Conference Room 329**

**In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 534, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO LABELING REQUIREMENTS**

House Bill 534, House Draft 1, proposes to prohibit the sale of processed ahi in retail establishments without a label that states the country where the ahi was landed. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill and offers the following comments and proposed amendment.**

Today's consumers are increasingly aware of the sourcing of their seafood, with many looking for insight into the quality, safety, and sustainability of products they purchase and consume. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) law (7 CFR Part 60) requires that seafood products be labeled with the country of origin. The COOL requirement does not apply to prepared foods offered for retail sale at food service establishments. This means that prepared products such as poke currently have no labeling requirement. This bill would extend country of origin labeling requirements for certain ahi tuna products at Hawai'i retail establishments, enabling consumers to make informed choices when purchasing seafood.

Yellowfin and bigeye tuna are highly migratory species that are managed at the international, national, and state levels. Internationally, fisheries targeting these species are managed by regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs), which set annual catch quotas for participating countries. Domestically, commercial landings of these species are closely monitored to ensure compliance with quotas established by RFMOs. The largest domestic fishery for ahi in the State, the Hawai'i longline fishery, is closely managed by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) through a limited entry permit system and strict regulations

**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

which include mandatory reporting, observer coverage, crew training, gear identification requirements, special area closures, and other measures to minimize impacts on bycatch and protected species. Fisheries that land tuna in other countries often lack this high level of management oversight.

The Department notes that the apparent original intent of this bill was to extend federal COOL requirements specifically to raw ahi products that would otherwise be excluded from COOL requirements as an ingredient in a “processed food item.”<sup>1,2</sup> By amending the language of the bill to apply to all “processed ahi,” it would inadvertently expand the reach of the bill to non-raw “processed ahi” products such as canned tuna. Therefore, if it is the Legislature’s intent to extend COOL requirements only to raw ahi products, the Department suggests amending the bill language to read (suggested amendments highlighted in yellow):

**"§486- [Processed] Raw processed ahi; labeling requirements; retail establishments. (a) No retail establishment shall keep, offer, display, expose for sale, or solicit for the sale of any [processed ahi] raw ahi product that is an ingredient in a processed food item without a label stating the country in which the ahi was landed.**

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

---

<sup>1</sup> [7 CFR 60.200\(c\)](#). **Exclusions.** A covered commodity is excluded from this subpart if it is an ingredient in a processed food item as defined in [§ 60.119](#).

<sup>2</sup> [7 CFR 60.119](#). *Processed food item* means a retail item derived from fish or shellfish that has undergone specific processing resulting in a change in the character of the covered commodity, or that has been combined with at least one other covered commodity or other substantive food component (e.g., breading, tomato sauce), except that the addition of a component (such as water, salt, or sugar) that enhances or represents a further step in the preparation of the product for consumption, would not in itself result in a processed food item. Specific processing that results in a change in the character of the covered commodity includes cooking (e.g., frying, broiling, grilling, boiling, steaming, baking, roasting), curing (e.g., salt curing, sugar curing, drying), smoking (hot or cold), and restructuring (e.g., emulsifying and extruding, compressing into blocks and cutting into portions). Examples of items excluded include fish sticks, surimi, mussels in tomato sauce, seafood medley, coconut shrimp, soups, stews, and chowders, sauces, pates, smoked salmon, marinated fish fillets, canned tuna, canned sardines, canned salmon, crab salad, shrimp cocktail, gefilte fish, sushi, and breaded shrimp.

**HB-534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:01:10 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>
RICHARD COHEN	State Of Hawaii Dept. of Agriculture	Comments	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am available as the Measurement Standards Branch manager to answer questions for the Dept. of Agriculture.

**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  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD**  
**CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

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

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025**  
**2:00 p.m.**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 329**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 534,HD1**  
**RELATING TO LABELING REQUIREMENTS**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify to this measure, which prohibits the sale of processed ahi in retail establishments without a label that states the country where the ahi was landed. The Department of Agriculture offers comments.

Although we support and inspect uniform packaging and labeling and food labeling, we are not sure this is the correct department to best enforce this requirement. We have already inspected the identity of the product, the net quantity in terms of measure and any declaration of the packer or distributor of any package not packed on the premises where sold for consumer packaged goods. This bill designates signage requirements and would need retail establishments to provide such signage to their customers for accurate information at point of sale regarding processed ahi and yellowfin products like poke and sushi. Other departments that inspect food safety and quality or consumer protection interests may be better suited to perform this task. We suggest considering DCCA or DOH as the department to inspect and enforce this bill. Measurement Standards and HRS Chapter 486 does not currently have inspection or



enforcement of raw or processed fish products. We inspect and enforce packaged products labeling such as coffee, macadamia nuts and petroleum gas meters, scales and taximeters for accuracy.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony and comments.



February 4, 2025

**Testimony in Support of HB534**

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

The Hawaii Longline Association (HLA) strongly supports HB534. HLA members are comprised of 150 active longline vessels operating out of Honolulu Harbor and the United Fishing Agency (Honolulu Fish Auction). The Hawaii longline fleet is the largest food producer in Hawaii, landing approximately 30 million pounds fish annually. The Hawaii longline fleet, which primarily targets ahi, is also Hawaii's largest fishery, comprising approximately 85% of the State's commercial marine landings. Approximately 80% of our fleet's landings stay in Hawaii with the remainder sold in US mainland markets.

HLA supports HB534 because it would provide country of origin labeling for raw ahi sold at retail establishment for products such as poke, sashimi, and sushi. Existing federal and state law already applies to seafood including fish fillets, tuna steaks, and loins as well as fruits, vegetables, and meat. Therefore, retailers already provide country of origin information for much of the seafood they sell so including that information for ahi poke and sashimi should not be onerous.

Ahi poke sold at retail establishments is dominated by previously frozen, carbon monoxide treated fish. However, there is a common misconception that this previously frozen, carbon monoxide treated tuna is derived from Hawaii fisheries, when in fact it is imported from foreign sources. A likely cause for some of this confusion is that retailers often use tricky advertising that mislead consumers into thinking the product is fresh or locally caught such as: "freshly made," and "locally prepared." Moreover, simply using the Hawaiian words "ahi poke" implies locally caught tuna. No ahi landed in Hawaii is being treated with carbon monoxide for commercial sale, whereas Hawaii landed tuna is typically only marketed as "fresh" without any origin information.

While the sale of carbon monoxide treated tuna is prohibited in Japan, European Union, and Australia, among other places, HB534 would not ban it from being sold in Hawaii. Rather, HB534 would provide consumers with more information on where the ahi in their poke comes from, thereby empowering consumers to make more informed choices.

By passing this bill, Hawaii would join Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi in states enacting enhanced seafood country of origin labeling laws to benefit consumers and local seafood producers from impacts of cheaper imports.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of HB534.

Mahalo,

Eric K. Kingma, Ph.D.  
Executive Director



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
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 534, HD1**  
RELATING TO LABELING REQUIREMENTS

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 534, HD1**, which prohibits the sale of processed ahi in retail establishments without a label that states the country where the ahi was landed.

Hawai'i is known for its high-quality ahi, which are caught under strict fishery management standards. Imported ahi, often caught under less stringent regulations, is sometimes misleadingly marketed as "Hawaiian" or "local." This measure ensures that consumers can distinguish between authentic Hawai'i-landed ahi and imported products.

Many consumers prefer to buy locally sourced food to support the local economy. Labeling processed ahi by country of origin gives them the necessary information to make informed choices.

We should protect Hawai'i's fishing industry, support local fishermen, and ensure consumer transparency by requiring country-of-origin labeling for processed ahi products.

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



# **FISHING TALES**

with **Mike  
Sakamoto**

Testimony to the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Thursday, February 6, 2025, 2:00 PM

Testimony in Support of HB 534, Relating to Labeling Requirements

To: The Honorable Scot Matayoshi, Chair  
The Honorable Cory Chun, Vice-Chair  
Members of the Committee

My name is Stefanie Sakamoto, and I am testifying on behalf of Fishing Tales with Mike Sakamoto, a company that was founded by my father in 1985.

We are in strong support of HB 534, Relating to Labeling Requirements. This bill prohibits the sale of raw ahi and raw ahi products in retail establishments without a label that states the country where the ahi was landed.

The philosophy of Fishing Tales with Mike Sakamoto has always been to promote the culture of Hawaii and to share Mike's love for fish and fishing. In recent years, ahi (tuna) has seen a surge in popularity in culinary and online circles, and so it has become trendy to consume, photograph, and post online. This bill, HB 534, seeks simply to provide consumers with necessary information on the geographic origin of the tuna so that people know what they are buying and eating. Hawaii-caught ahi is special, and deserves to be labeled as such.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**LATE**

**Officers**

Kaipo Kekona  
State President

Anabella Bruch  
Vice-President

Maureen Datta  
Secretary

Reba Lopez  
Treasurer

**Chapter Presidents**

Clarence Baber  
Kohala, Hawai'i

Tony Vera  
East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Andrea Drayer  
Ka'u, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta  
Kona, Hawai'i

Fawn Helekahi-Burns  
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer  
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros  
Mauna Kahālāwai,  
Maui

Kaipo Kekona  
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy  
Moloka'i

Negus Manna  
Lāna'i

India Clark  
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman  
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich  
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the House Consumer Protection & Commerce 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 HB534.**

We support the measure and seek amendments to strengthen the bill's effectiveness. The current definition of "country of origin" is unclear—does it refer to where the fish was caught, landed, or processed? . Additionally, requiring clear distinctions between fresh, previously frozen, and carbon monoxide-treated ahi would ensure truth in advertising and support local fishers who provide truly fresh products.

The bill also lacks an enforcement mechanism making compliance uncertain. Assigning oversight to a department would strengthen implementation. Additionally, it is unclear whether restaurants, poke shops, and delis are included in the labeling requirement. If included, a menu-based disclosure would be more practical than individual package labeling.

HFU is committed to supporting Hawai'i's local food producers and ensuring fair market competition. Without these clarifications, the bill may fall short of these goals.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union



**Testimony to the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair  
Representative Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair**

**Thursday, February 6, 2025, at 2:00PM  
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference**

**LATE**

**RE: HB534 HD1 Relating to Labeling Requirements**

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

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 534 HD1 (HB534 HD1), which prohibits the sale of raw ahi and raw ahi products in retail establishments without a label that states the country where the ahi was landed.

HB534 HD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for 21st Century Agriculture. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

Hawaii's food industry lacks clear frozen ahi labeling, especially in retail stores. Many consumers mistakenly believe they are buying fresh, local tuna, when much of the ahi sold is imported, previously frozen, and treated with carbon monoxide to enhance color. Federal labeling gaps allow retailers to omit this information, causing consumer confusion and unfair competition for local fisheries. Despite Hawaii's \$100 million tuna industry, imported products dominate sales, and many poke and sushi items labeled "prepared fresh" or "locally made" contain foreign, gas-treated fish.

The proposed law would require all raw ahi sold in retail stores—fresh, frozen, mixed, or marinated—to clearly state its country of origin. This ensures transparency, informed choices, and fair competition by distinguishing local from imported ahi. Expanding labeling rules would prevent misleading advertising and build consumer trust in Hawaii's seafood market. The Chamber supports this legislation to protect local fisheries, ensure honest marketing, and help consumers make informed decisions about their food.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill 534 HD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 4:38:31 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>
Tai-ni Hsia	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Dear Honorable Chair Matayoshi, Honorable Vice Chair Chun, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

I write in strong support of HB534. Foreign, frozen, gassed ahi should not be able to be labeled as local. Please pass this bill. I'd like to thank the Honorable Representative Tyson Miayke for sponsoring this bill.

Respectfully,

Tai-ni Hsia

**HB-534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 4:40:01 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>
Nelson	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Foreign imported frozen gassed ahi is terrible. Label it!

**HB-534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 4:41:19 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>
Rynetta K	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I strongly support. We should have truthful labeling of our poke.

**HB-534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 4:42:25 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>
Davina	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I support this bill.

**HB-534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 6:13:45 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>
Andrew Evans	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Matayoshi and Committee,

My name is Andrew Evans, I'm from the Windward Side of O'ahu, work in conservation and volunteer for a local fishmonger who specializes in selling and promoting locally-caught fish to our community. Our business and our built community bring together 30+ local fishermen, local restaurants, and hundreds of customers and their families who are invested in our local economy, local workers, and local food. I urge you to reconsider the recent ammendments to HB534 in favor of implementing its original intention of creating immediate labeling requirements to create transparency within our seafood economy.

I plead with you to restore the original text of HB 534's effective date. Its updated effective date of the year 3000 is an insult to our local fishing community and our local seafood economy. We need to have our concerns heard and treated with seriousness and fairness. Postponing the effective date by 75 years shows no commitment to our local people, our local resources, our local businesses, or our local economy.

I urge you to pass HB534 but in its original text with its original effective date. Its current updated text is weak.

Please reconsider,

Andrew Evans

**HB-534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:36:46 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>
Isabella Brandes	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello, as a constituent, I am writing to oppose the Agriculture Committee's recent update to this bill, changing the effective date from being the moment the bill passed to July 1, 3000. This is a ridiculous, made up date that does not support local fisherman and certainly was not put in place "to encourage further discussion". It sounds like special interest groups getting involved so that this bill has no legs to stand on. I am urging the legislature to return the effective date back to the original -immediate upon passing- date if they truly wish to pass this bill to support local fisherman.

Mahalo for your time,

Isabella Brandes

**HB-534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:34:57 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>
Chris Etzkorn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB534, because it is the right thing to do. Label the food, tell the customer where the food is coming from and then let the customer choose if she wants to buy it or not. That is basically a free market, where consumers have a choice where and what kind of products they want to spend their hard earned money on. It is outrageous that consumers of poke and other ahi products are commonly subjected to misleading advertisements and in-store terminology, such as "prepared fresh", "freshly made", and "locally made", while the ahi used to prepare the poke is foreign-sourced, previously frozen, gas-treated, and imported in pre-cut cubes. This kind of business practice is scandalous and basically nothing else but fraud. So, please stop the fraud. However, how about now and not in the year 3000? I don't think anyone involved in this bill will be ALIVE then. So please, do your job now!

Respectfully,

Chris Etzkorn

**HB-534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 11:07:18 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>
jason helyer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

I support bill HB534. Ensuring that consumers know whether the raw, processed ahi they are purchasing contains fish that was landed in Hawaii is long overdue. The lack of transparency of the origin of fish in raw ahi products sold in Hawaii hurts consumers who end up paying higher prices for low quality ahi. Uninformed consumers and the prevalence of low quality ahi in the market further hurts Hawaii's fishers and the businesses that promote Hawaii caught seafood. Labeling poke or other forms of raw, processed ahi with the country of origin (or even better – the state where the fish was landed!) is one small step towards creating more transparency in fish processing. This bill will allow consumers to make better informed decisions about the food they eat and benefit Hawaii's fishers as well as our island economy.

Clear and accurate labeling of the country of origin for processed raw ahi in Hawaii is needed so that consumers know what they are paying for and putting in their bodies. Not all consumers are well informed about fish processing and how to identify fresh, high quality seafood. Treating fish with carbon monoxide or other concoctions not only preserves the red color but can even transform a brown color associated with lower quality fish to a red color associated with freshness. I am unaware of fish landed in Hawaii being treated with carbon monoxide. Hawaii based fishers that catch ahi for premium markets go to great measures to ensure the fish they bring to market are as fresh and high quality as possible. Additionally, Hawaii fishers are compliant with stricter fishing regulations than some nations that are exporting low quality tuna to Hawaii markets. Hawaii fishers should be rewarded for their efforts to ensure fresh, high quality ahi are available for visitors and residents to enjoy.

Please support this bill. Consumers deserve to know what they are eating and our fishers deserve better.

Jason Helyer

**HB-534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 11:38:51 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>
Uilani Naipo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: I support this measure.

**HB-534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:52:19 AM

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>
Lauren Pierce	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Lauren and I **support** this bill to require the labeling of where fish are landed. I would like to support local fishers and families by buying locally-sourced fish and to promote seafood traceability and sustainability practices.

**HB-534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 11:33:32 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aaron Magee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.B. 534, H.D. 1  
RELATING TO LABELING REQUIREMENTS**

Aloha Chair Members of the Committee,

My name is Aaron Magee, and I am writing in strong support of H.B. 534, H.D. 1, which seeks to establish clear labeling requirements for processed ahi sold in Hawaii's retail establishments.

Hawaii's tuna fisheries are a cornerstone of our local economy, contributing over \$100 million annually in dockside value. However, consumers remain largely unaware that a significant portion of ahi sold in retail markets—often labeled with misleading terms like "freshly made" or "locally prepared"—is actually foreign-sourced, previously frozen, and chemically treated. This not only deceives customers but also undermines the hardworking local fishers who operate sustainably in Hawaiian waters.

By requiring country-of-origin labeling for processed ahi, this bill promotes transparency, empowers consumers to make informed choices, and supports Hawaii's fishing industry. Proper labeling ensures that customers are no longer misled into believing they are purchasing locally caught ahi when, in reality, they may be consuming an imported product that has been treated with carbon monoxide to enhance its appearance.

Moreover, clear labeling aligns with Hawaii's values of sustainability and food sovereignty. Informed consumers can help drive demand for locally sourced products, reducing reliance on imports and strengthening our island economy. Transparency in food sourcing is not just good policy—it's a matter of fairness, honesty, and consumer protection.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to pass H.B. 534, H.D. 1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**Sincerely,**

Aaron Magee

Aaron3324@gmail.com

(808)366-8364

**LATE**

**HB-534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 9:02:51 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>
Ulana Kalahiki-Anthony	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha I am Ulana Kalāhiki-Anthony and I am currently the only female in Hawai'i's longline fleet. After reading through the bill HB 543. I've come to the conclusion that I cannot support this bill, unless it is put into effect as soon as possible pushing off this bill to July 1, 3000 Would be detrimental to Hawai'i's fishery. That is 975 years or 37 generations from now. By then it'll be too late. I believe by the year 3000 100% of Hawaii's fish will be imported and Hawaii will no longer have a fishery if this bill isn't put into effect sooner. If we look at the last 975 in Hawaii it encompasses Hawaii being settled, the invasions oh Pa'ao, the introduction to the kapu system and gods, the ali'i system, the Kamehameha dynasty, introduction of Christianity, the end of the kapu system and old religion, hawaiian language becoming a written language, the formation of the Hawaiian Kingdom, universal literacy, the illegal overthrow, Hawaiian language banned, sovereignty reinstated, and then removed again, the hawaiian renaissance. A lot can happen in 900 years. Both good and bad. What side of history will you be on?

**LATE**

**HB-534-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 10:26:54 AM

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>
Richie Mitchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support HB534. As a local fisherman here in Hawaii, I feel that the people here deserve the right to correct labeling of ahi sold here. It's misleading to label it as "local," when the fish are not from local waters. It's been very eye opening to have these videos being posted showing the process of ahi loins being gassed. As someone who constantly cuts ahi, I can tell the difference, but locals who don't, have no idea what that ahi loin has gone through before it's gotten to their tables. Locals have been sold this lesser quality fish for so long without labeling, that it ruins the fish market for us local fishermen. People are so accustomed to the color of gassed fish, that when they see a true locally caught fish, they question the quality of our meat. It also taints the fact that real fresh caught fish can last longer than the processed and gassed fish from other countries. This bill will not only help locals make informed decisions and allows them to make the decision on what to feed their families. This bill will also help the local fishermen sell their catch.