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Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT AND
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 2025
2:00 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 27

REQUESTING HAWAII'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO PETITION THE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ADDRESS THE LACK OF
PARITY BETWEEN HAWAII AND OTHER STATES AND TERRITORIES
PERTAINING TO THE EXPORT OF AGRICULTURAL GOODS.

Chairs Gabbard and Wakai, Vice Chairs Richards and Chang, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on H.C.R. 27 which requests the Hawai'i congressional delegation to petition the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to address the lack of parity between Hawai'i and other states and territories regarding the export of agricultural goods.

The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture acknowledges the concerns expressed in these resolutions and recognizes the importance of collaborating with the USDA to address the discrepancies in phyto-sanitation requirements facing Hawai'i. Our ultimate goal is to ensure parity with all other states in the union. We value Hawai'i's cut flowers, fruits, vegetables, and other specialty crops as essential niche exports to the Continental U.S. and will continue to support their fair and equitable trade.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these resolutions.



Testimony in Support of HCR27
House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems
Hearing Date: April 11, 2025

To: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. “Tim” Richards, III, Vice Chair
Members, Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Members, Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Leimomi Khan and I am submitting testimony in strong support of **House Concurrent Resolution 27 (HCR27)**, which requests Hawaii's Congressional Delegation to Petition the United States Department Of Agriculture to Address the Lack of Parity Between Hawaii and Other States and Territories Pertaining to the Export Of Agricultural Goods.

As an island state, Hawai‘i faces unique agricultural challenges not experienced by our mainland counterparts. Our producers operate under geographic isolation, higher transportation costs, and infrastructure gaps that directly impact our ability to access national and international markets. Despite these challenges, Hawai‘i’s farmers and ranchers continue to produce high-quality, culturally significant, and globally desirable agricultural products.

One of the most pressing inequities outlined in this resolution is the **requirement for a pest risk analysis by the USDA** before products can be approved for export. While necessary to protect plant health, the current system places Hawai‘i in the **same queue as foreign countries**, many of which are prioritized over our state when it comes to review and approval. This not only delays economic opportunity for local producers, but also fundamentally contradicts the principles of federalism and equity among states.

Hawai‘i, as the 50th state of the Union, should not be placed behind foreign nations in the prioritization of USDA reviews. In alignment with the Administration’s vision of *America First*, we urge that Hawai‘i be given **priority status** in the pest risk analysis process, recognizing that we are not a foreign entity, but an integral part of the United States with a vital role in domestic agricultural production.

The continued treatment of Hawai‘i as if it were outside the Union—in both regulatory processes and federal program access—compounds historical and systemic inequities that harm our agricultural sector. We ask for fairness, equity, and acknowledgment of our state’s contributions and potential.

Passage of HCR27 would be a powerful statement by this Legislature to advocate for federal responsiveness, parity in treatment, and support for local agricultural development. I urge your favorable consideration.

Respectfully, Leimomi Khan