

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
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOODS SYSTEMS

MARCH 12, 2025
9:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

SENATE BILL NO. 177, SD1
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 177, SD1. The bill authorizes the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State. It requires the Aquaculture Program to develop a risk-based framework and biocontainment standards for the aquatic livestock assessment and approval process and make appropriations. The Department **supports** this bill.

By implementing more robust assessment processes, SB 177, SD1 promotes responsible and sustainable growth of Hawaii's aquaculture industry which has a rich history and significant potential for expansion. A risk-based framework would help evaluate potential risks associated with the movement of aquatic species and better balance industry growth while minimizing the negative impact on native species and ecosystems.

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



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



WENDY GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
HUI HO'OU LU AINA MAHIAI

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
March 12, 2025
9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

SENATE BILL NO. 177 SD1
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch & Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of Senate Bill No. 177 SD1, which authorizes the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State of Hawaii.

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

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



Benson Medina
Director

Dennis Lin
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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March 7, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

WEDNESDAY, March 12, 2025

9:00 AM

CONFERENCE ROOM 325

TESTIMONY ON SB 177 SD1

Relating to Aquaculture

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee,

I am Benson Medina, Director of the Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai'i. One of the agricultural objectives of this department is to "support research, development, control, and education that improves agricultural production, quality, resilience, and producer viability or reduces the impact of pests or disease on agricultural crops, livestock, forests, or the community."

The County of Hawai'i provides written testimony in **SUPPORT of SB177 SD1**, authorizing the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State and requiring the Aquaculture Program to develop a risk-based framework and biocontainment standards for the aquatic livestock assessment and approval process.

Hawai'i's aquaculture industry is a leader in the U.S and this measure provides important protections for the industry to continue to support economic growth. Hawai'i County is ranked #1 in the State and #2 in the U.S in terms of aquaculture sales, with aquaculturists generating \$69,393,000 in sales in 2022 ([USDA Census of Agriculture, 2022](#)). The 870-acre Hawaii Ocean Science and Technology Park on Hawai'i Island has created more than 600 jobs and has a \$150 million annual economic impact, even withstanding economic shocks from the COVID pandemic ([Civil Beat, 2023](#)). However, processes to import and move aquatic livestock in the State must be put in place to support the longevity of aquaculture operations and biosecurity of aquatic ecosystems.

Disease can devastate aquaculture industries, and a risk-based framework and biocontainment standards are important protections for both aquaculture operations and

March 7, 2025

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aquatic ecosystems. OsHV-1 microvariants, also known as Oyster herpes, devastated the Australian Pacific oyster industry, putting businesses on the brink of collapse and costing the jobs of oyster farm workers ([ABC News, 2016](#)). Currently in Hawai‘i, imported oyster broodstock are certified as disease-free pre-arrival to the islands yet do not undergo post-arrival inspection. The biosecurity processes outlined in SB177 SD1 would not only help prevent disease from entering aquaculture operations in Hawai‘i but also help protect native aquatic species.

Thank you for championing agriculture in Hawai‘i and for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of SB177 SD1**.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benson Medina". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Benson Medina
Director

SB-177-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 6:25:31 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Goeggel	Animal Rights Hawai'i	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB177, if passed, could damage our water systems. Please table it. Mahalo



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March 12, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON SB 177, SD1
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:00 AM

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, 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 SB 177, SD1, which authorizes the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State and requires the Aquaculture Program to develop a risk-based framework and biocontainment standards for the aquatic livestock assessment and approval process.

Hawai'i's aquaculture industry farm gate value is \$89.6M, the second-highest contribution to the economy in diversified agriculture. Hawai'i's favorable climate and geography allow for inherent advantages benefitting aquaculture production.

The Legislature acknowledged the importance of Hawai'i's aquaculture industry by revitalizing the Aquaculture Development Program through Act 63, SLH 2019. However, more investment and research are needed in the aquaculture industry, including research into different types of aquaculture, aquaculture system optimization, and the economic implications of various methods of aquaculture production.

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

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

March 10, 2025

To: Kirstin Kahaloa and the House Committee on AGR

Subject: **SB 177 SD 1**, Relating to Aquaculture

Aloha,

I urge the committee to **vote yes on SB 177 SD 1** since it will positively impact our food system by protecting the delicate ecosystem of Hawaii through authorizing the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State. This does require the Aquaculture Program to develop a biological aquatic risk-based framework and biocontainment standards for the aquatic livestock assessment and approval process. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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

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

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



March 11, 2025

TO: Representative Kirsten Kahaloa, Chair
Representative Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Wednesday, March 12, 2025 @ 9:00 a.m. via videoconference or Room 325

**RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 177 SD 1 RELATING TO AQUACULTURE –
DEVELOP AN ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS TO IMPORT AND MOVE AQUATIC
LIVESTOCK IN THE STATE.**

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Erin Ewald, and I am Director of Regulatory Affairs with Taylor Shellfish Company. Taylor Shellfish strongly supports SB 177: Develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State.

Taylor Shellfish is a fifth-generation aquaculture grower based in Washington State and is the largest producer of farmed shellfish in the United States. Taylor operates a shellfish hatchery and nursery in the NELHA facility. This facility is a major producer of healthy clam seed planted and farmed for human consumption.

Moving shellfish broodstock and seed efficiently between Hawaii and Washington State is vitally important to farming operations. Too often, seed from Washington has been delayed while waiting inspection, missing its connecting flight to Kona. This has resulted in significant costs due to the loss of shellfish seed as a result of desiccation. Developing a safe, robust and effective program to assess and approve aquaculture imports into Hawaii is important to the growth and success of the company and aquaculture industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Erin Ewald", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Erin Ewald
Director of Regulatory Affairs
Taylor Shellfish Company

SB-177-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 6:13:40 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

GREAT IDEA! MAHALO!