

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR



WENDY GADY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
**AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
HUI HO'OUULU AINA MAHIAI

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
Friday, January 24, 2025  
1:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

SENATE BILL NO. 177  
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards & Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of House Bill No. 177, 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.

**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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**JANUARY 24, 2025  
1:00 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE BILL NO. 177  
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE**

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 177. 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 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 negative impact to native species and ecosystems.

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



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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To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Date: January 24, 2025  
Re: Testimony in Support of SB177: Relating To Aquaculture

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee,

My name is Anna Ezzy and I am an Agriculture Research and Policy Specialist with the County of Hawai'i Department of Research and Development. The County of Hawai'i Department of Research and Development provides written testimony in **SUPPORT of SB177**, 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 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 would not only help prevent disease from entering aquaculture operations in Hawai'i but also protect native aquatic species.

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

Sincerely,  
Anna N. Ezzy  
Agriculture Research and Policy Specialist  
County of Hawai'i Department of Research and Development

**SB-177**

Submitted on: 1/22/2025 4:15:53 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/24/2025 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cathy Goeggel	Testifying for Animal Rights Hawai'i	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am Cathy Goeggel, President of Animal Rights Hawai'i, advocates for animals since 1977.

We strongly oppose SB177. The language is too broad and would put our ocean and lands at risk of bringing in more invasive species. Aquaculture depletes wild populations of wild fish; The number and species to be included is very vague. A \$1million appropriation is not prudent at this time. I urge the committee to table SB177. It lacks the transparency necessary for serious consideration. Mahalo!



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e-mail [info@hfbf.org](mailto:info@hfbf.org); [www.hfbf.org](http://www.hfbf.org)

January 24, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON SB 177**  
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
1:00 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair 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 SB 177**, 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.

**SB-177**

Submitted on: 1/23/2025 11:31:07 AM

Testimony for AEN on 1/24/2025 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ronald Weidenbach	Testifying for Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association (HAAA) with statewide membership supports the intent of SB177 which would transfer the oversight and management of aquaculture import permits from DOA Plant Quarantine to DOA Animal Industries, and place this process under direct veterinary oversight, with the intent being to develop and implement standardized science-based assessment protocols. Such science-based evaluations are increasingly important and necessary as disease, invasive species, and onsite quarantine capacity become increasingly critical and necessary considerations in this permitting process to safeguard the biosecurity of the environment and existing aquaculture industry operations from external biological risks. If this transfer of responsibility will keep this process science-based and timely, and if the prior approvals and permits of existing operations are transferred from Plant Quarantine to Animal Industries and remain in effect, then this transfer of authority to Animal Industries would seemingly be an improvement over the current process. The essential element to this transfer and assessment process is to ensure a science-based review process and veterinary oversight which already exists in Animal Industries.



January 23, 2025

**TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

SB177, Relating to Aquaculture

**BEFORE THE:**

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

**BY:**

Shrimp Improvement Systems Hawaii, LLC

**DATE:** January 24, 2025 at 1:00pm

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 224

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to **SUPPORT SB177**, relating to aquaculture.

Shrimp Improvement Systems (SIS) is the world's leading provider of shrimp broodstock and has been at the forefront of genetic improvement and Specific Pathogen Free (SPF) *Penaeus vannamei*. During and post pandemic years, Shrimp Improvement Systems Hawaii (SISH) have faced logistic and inflation issues, and countless other roadblocks that have created challenging times for our business.

We hereby earnestly request that our Post Larvae (PL) shrimp that we import from our SIS Florida facility be inspected on Hawaii Island instead of needing to be inspected on Oahu prior to making its way to Hawaii Island.

Below are some of the key reasons for this request:

1. To reduce overall transit time and reduce shipping mortality loss.

Currently, total transit from Miami Florida airport to our SISH facility is 54 hours, where the mortality rate is around 35%. Below is one shipment sample:

001-90243263 MIA-HNL cargo accepted at 12:16pm on 10/28/2024;



173-34940216 HNL-KOA cargo delivered at 12:36 pm on 10/30/2024.

Accepted

14 Pieces



American Airlines

Dropped off in MIA on 10/28/2024 at 12:16 PM

2852»

Station	Milestone	Pcs	Weight	Flight#	Flight Date	Org	Dest
HNL	Departed	14	880.00 Lbs	HA248	10/30/2024 11:13	HNL	KOA
KOA	Arrived	14	880.00 Lbs	HA248	10/30/2024 11:49	HNL	KOA
KOA	Delivered	14	880.00 Lbs	HA248	10/30/2024 12:36	HNL	KOA

If shipment inspections can be done on Hawaii Island, the overall transit time would reduce by 20 hours from 54 hours to 34 hours. The shorter overall transit mortality rate would be anticipated to be reduced by 25% from 35% to less than 10%.

- To reduce our PL shipping cost.

If the shipments could be cleared on Hawaii Island, we estimate to reduce our PL shipping cost by a minimum of 40%, going from \$190/box down to \$131/box.

- Kona Airport runway rehabilitation project makes logistics even worse and this will last until 2026.

Aloha Air Cargo tender time has moved earlier in Oahu due to the Kona airport runway closure, resulting in our shipment missing the tender time and leaving our shipment stranded in Oahu until the next day.

- Biosecurity at both SIS Florida and SIS Hawaii Facilities.

SIS Florida is registered and operating under Florida’s comprehensive Aquaculture Best Management Practices (BMPs).

SIS Hawaii is certified with Hawaii’s stringent aquaculture regulations under the Shrimp Health Certification Program (SHCP).

SIS Florida and SIS Hawaii are both certified as a Registered Aquaculture Export Facility (RAEF) by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).



SIS Florida and SIS Hawaii are both Specific Pathogen Free (SPF) *Penaeus vannamei* facilities.

5. SIS Hawaii facility is certified with the US Fish & Wildlife Service Permit for import/export wildlife and/or wildlife products.

We genuinely thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for your consideration in this crucial matter that would support Shrimp Improvement Systems in our continued aquaculture business in the State of Hawaii.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jaime Masukawa'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jaime Masukawa

General Manager

Shrimp Improvement Systems Hawaii LLC

**SB-177**

Submitted on: 1/23/2025 9:58:00 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/24/2025 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cecilia Viljoen	Testifying for KPFHC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this change because the present permit situation is dire and negatively impacts aquaculture businesses. The process takes too long and by the time the permit is in place, the market demand or farm situation has changed. A faster method will be conducive to good practises and it will be good to have a team that can set permit conditions and control measures in place.



*Restore the Commons*

Friday, January 24, 2025, 1:00 pm

Committee on Agriculture and the Environment  
SENATE BILL 177 – RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Position: Support

Me ke Aloha, Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Ricahrds, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and the Environment:

SB 177 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.

This thoughtful bill is an essential step forward in expanding the aquaculture industries in Hawaii, while protecting against invasive species and protecting industry species in transit through relatively precarious environments.

Please provide appropriate funding to achieve the purposes of this bill. We have seen other cases where such protections were supported without adequate funding, delaying implementation of important measures to accomplish our goals.

Mahalo for the opportunity to address this issue,

/s/ Charley Ice, Hoa'āina; and Co-chair of the Food Security and Agriculture Committee of the Environmental Caucus; former Chair of O'ahu Democratic Party Region 5 ('Aiea-Pearl City); retired Hydrologist. Commission on Water Resource Management (25 years) and Planner at DHHL (10 years)