

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



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

**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEAN M. MATSUKAWA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2025**  
**9:30 AM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill No. 427 relating to biosecurity and does the following: part I: renames the Department of Agriculture 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. The Department supports this bill and offers suggested changes.

The Department appreciates the emphasis on biosecurity as reflected by Part I, renaming the Department of Agriculture and Board of Agriculture to include “and Biosecurity” as part of the respective titles and making the same changes throughout the HRS, including permanent funding of the positions that were created under Act 231, SLH 2024.

Part II of this bill further emphasizes biosecurity by establishing a new position with funding for a Deputy Director of Biosecurity through a new section to Part VI of HRS 150A, further enabling the Department to maintain biosecurity activities. As these activities are often long-term or in perpetuity, the Department suggests that the individual appointed to this position originate from the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, with concurrence by the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity. Additionally, suggest the term for the Deputy Director of Biosecurity be ten (10) years, with reappointment with the approval of the Chairperson and Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity. This will help to maintain the necessary consistency within the biosecurity program and simultaneously ensure the selected individual has the appropriate background to oversee such an important task. To effectuate this, the Department suggests the inclusion of the following language:

**"§150A- Deputy director of biosecurity.** (a) The chairperson shall appoint a person from the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, without regard to chapter 76, a deputy director of biosecurity, with concurrence from the

Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity. The deputy director shall serve for a term of ten (10) years with reappointment with the approval of the Chairperson and Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity. The deputy director shall oversee the biosecurity program established pursuant to this part."

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 30 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;"

On page 35 of the bill regarding the changes to HRS 150A-52, the Department also suggests amending HRS 150A-52(3) to change the term "invasive species" to "pest" as there is no definition in HRS 150A for "invasive species". The suggested change is below:

“(3) Coordinate with partner agencies and organizations to direct the control and eradication of [~~invasive species~~] pests.”

The Department has various suggested changes to HRS 150A-53 for clarity. On Page 36, the Department suggests removing the added language “prohibited or restricted organisms or” to HRS 150A-53 as a prohibited organism cannot be imported into the state and a restricted organism would require a permit prior to importation. If a prohibited organism or restricted organism without a permit were found associated with or within another imported article, the shipment would be quarantined until the organism could be removed.

On page 37, section (a)(7)(B) should be amended to:

“(B) Reporting pests and prohibited or restricted organisms without a permit that are [~~known~~] discovered or suspected to be present in imported products; and”

The changes to this section are needed to clarify that reporting should be only for those organisms that are unintentionally imported as permit conditions already contain a notification clause. Additionally, the change from “known” to “discovered” is necessary because knowingly importing a pest or prohibited or restricted organism without a permit is violation of HRS 150A.

Also on page 37, section (b)(1) should be amended to:

(1) Subpoena any necessary documentation from [~~agricultural commodity~~] importers relating to a [~~known~~]

discovered or suspected infestation of a pest or prohibited  
or restricted organism;

The removal of “agricultural commodity” is necessary to ensure the Department’s ability to obtain documentation on shipments where the infestation is associate with commodities that are not subject to inspections pursuant to HRS 150A-5. The change from “known” to “discovered” is for the aforementioned reason.

Finally, the Department suggests the removal of section (b)(2) as the Department already has this authority in HAR 4-72.

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

### House Committee on AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

9:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

Chelsea Arnott, HISC Coordinator on behalf of  
HISC Co-Chair Sharon Hurd and Co-Chair Dawn N.S. Chang

### In consideration of HOUSE BILL 427 RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

House Bill 427 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 provide critical language that will allow the Department of Agriculture to carry out broader biosecurity actions and address invasive species that do not only impact agriculture. Highlights of this measure include:

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

Under the section 150A "Biosecurity Emergency" is language that *"for the duration of a declared emergency 2) Notwithstanding chapter 194 to the contrary, the Hawaii invasive species council shall report directly to the chairperson; and 3) the governor may transfer moneys to the department from any account within the governor's control"*. The Council is co-chaired by the directors of the departments of Land and Natural Resources and Agriculture and serves the purpose of providing policy level direction and coordination for invasive species prevention and management in Hawaii. Suggested amendment to this language would be to utilize the Council as a statewide coordinating forum: . "2) *Notwithstanding chapter 194 to the contrary, the chairperson shall work with the Hawaii Invasive Species Council*".

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



**COUNTY COUNCIL**

Mel Rapozo, Chair  
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair  
Addison Bulosan  
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.  
Felicia Cowden  
Fern Holland  
Arryl Kaneshiro



**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK**

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk  
Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

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Facsimile: (808) 241-6349  
Email: [cokcouncil@kauai.gov](mailto:cokcouncil@kauai.gov)

**Council Services Division**  
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209  
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766

January 27, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF FERN HOLLAND**  
**COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**ON**  
**HB 427, RELATING TO BIOSECURITY AND**  
**HB 643, RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM**  
**House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems**  
**Wednesday, January 29, 2025**  
**9:30 a.m.**  
**Conference Room 325**  
**Via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 427, Relating to Biosecurity and HB 643, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

Regarding HB 427, it is imperative to support all efforts to enhance biosecurity in Hawai'i. Our state is significantly behind in this area and is recognized as one of the most heavily invaded ecosystems globally. The urgent need for a comprehensive and effective biosecurity system cannot be overstated. For years, I have strongly advocated for strengthening biosecurity measures to safeguard our communities, environment, and way of life. On behalf of Kaua'i and its people, I continue this advocacy today. Investing in biosecurity now will yield long-term cost savings, protect our environment, preserve cultural practices, and honor our history. I urge you to support all measures aimed at establishing and expanding robust biosecurity initiatives for Hawai'i.

Regarding HB 643, Kaua'i is currently facing a severe and rapidly escalating infestation of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles (CRB). This invasive species poses one of the most significant threats we have encountered in recent years. It jeopardizes critical agricultural crops, culturally significant sites, and native plant species, including endemic Loulu (*Pritchardia* palms), Hala (*Pandanus*), and the historical groves along the Royal Coconut Coast. Additionally, CRB threatens the iconic tropical landscape that defines Kaua'i and Hawai'i. The potential economic impact of this infestation on Kaua'i is staggering. To mitigate this crisis, it is essential to implement a unified and comprehensive approach, including immediate eradication efforts, robust biosecurity actions, education, and long-term biological control strategies. We must act decisively and collaboratively to address this pressing issue. I urge you to support the strongest possible version of HB 643, ensuring adequate funding and resources to combat CRB through immediate response measures and sustainable management solutions. Please prioritize and fast-track efforts to protect Kaua'i's environment, cultural heritage, and economy from this invasive threat.



Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee

Re: HB 427, Relating to Biosecurity and HB 643, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros  
Beetle Program

January 27, 2025

Page 2

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 427 and HB 643. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to [cokcouncil@kauai.gov](mailto:cokcouncil@kauai.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "F. Holland", with a stylized flourish at the end.

FERN HOLLAND  
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AAO:mn



House of Representatives  
Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
Wednesday, January 29, 2025  
9:30 AM Conference Room 325  
State Capitol

### **Testimony Providing Comments on HB427**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB427, *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 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.<sup>1</sup>

However, CGAPS is not in support of this bill and is providing comments due to concerns with the following sections:

#### Deputy Director of Biosecurity

One issue of concern is the lack of legislative oversight for the appointment of a new Deputy Director of Biosecurity. Section 8 of HB427 creates within the renamed Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity a Deputy Director of Biosecurity who is appointed by the Chairperson, exempt from Hawaii's Civil Service Law, and receives a salary for first deputies or first assistants to the head of any department. Considering the critical responsibilities of this new Deputy Director, it seems appropriate that each appointee should require the advice and consent of the Senate, consistent with the appointment of other Deputy Directors.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Biosecurity Emergency

Section 11 of HB427 authorizes the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, with the approval of the Governor, 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.<sup>2</sup>

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 section 127A HRS, to allow the appropriate chief executive to manage the resources under their control to address the emergency.

Issue 3: The amendment on page 30, lines 3-5, HB427 requires the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) to “report directly to the chairperson” of the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity for “the duration” of the biosecurity emergency. It is unclear how a Council comprised of the chairs or directors of Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), 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, could “report” to HDOA without any limitation related to the biosecurity emergency or how such reporting would best address the pest emergency.

CRB has been in Hawaii for over a decade; LFA and coqui frog have each been established much longer. A “biosecurity emergency” for any of one of those species could go on for years with consecutive declarations, effectively (and possibly inadvertently) removing the authority of the HISC to provide “policy level direction, coordination, and planning among state departments” as required by section 194-2(a) HRS, and removing the autonomy of State entities.

As a final note, the Council 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.

We appreciate the modifications that HDOA is accomplishing by updating its paper declaration form to an electronic format, the inclusion of language regarding outreach and education, and quarantine of infested properties (p. 37-38, except for item (3)), and we support an increase of general funds to rebuild HDOA’s core functions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB427.

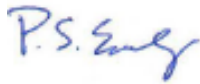
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<sup>2</sup> See Act 99 (H.B. 2120) (2022)

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



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEM

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloe, Chair

Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

**HB427**

RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

Wednesday, January 29, 2025, 9:30AM  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

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

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





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)

January 29, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

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

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference  
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, 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 HB 427**, 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.



House of Representatives  
Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
Wednesday, January 29, 2025  
9:30 AM Conference Room 325  
State Capitol

SUBJECT: Testimony – Providing Comments on HB427 “Relating to Biosecurity”

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

I am writing on behalf of the O‘ahu Invasive Species Committee (OISC) regarding a number of concerns with sections in this bill that would directly impact OISC operations and threaten the success of the current and future responses to invasive species incursion. The concerns and context are outlined below:

1. The potential movement of the Hawai‘i Invasive Species Council (HISC) from the Department of the Land & Natural Resources (DLNR) to the newly named Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DOAB).
2. The lack of confirmation for the proposed Deputy Director of Biosecurity.
3. The procedural conditions for declaring a biosecurity emergency that already exist but have not yet been taken despite sufficient threats from high-impact invasive species.
4. The consolidation of all invasive species management and responsibility into a single Department.

Other portions of this bill OISC strongly supports, including: the transition to an electronic declaration form, support for outreach and education efforts, the ability to quarantine properties infested with high-priority invasive pests, and the increase in general funds to strengthen the core functions of the proposed DOAB. However the detailed concerns below would be extremely problematic for invasive species management and biosecurity across the State.

**1. Potential Movement of the HISC from DLNR to DOAB or the establishment of a new invasive species council under DOAB to replace the current HISC.**

Previous drafts clearly proposed the movement of the HISC from DLNR into DOAB. In this version the language is a bit unclear. The movement to or reestablishment of the HISC under DOAB would jeopardize the current responses on O‘ahu for high-priority pest species like Little Fire Ant (*Wasmannia auropunctata*) and Coqui Frog (*Eleutherodactylus coqui*), among others. HISC under DLNR has been instrumental in coordinating multi-agency response and funding, whether it be organizing Statewide priority-pest workshops, leading and participating in working groups, and securing federal funding sources to fill gaps for agencies who conduct much of the on-the-ground work. Outside of HISC, other DLNR Departments have also helped OISC secure crucial federal funding to expand early-detection and rapid-response to high-priority pests.



During my tenure as Manager, no other State department has ever provided funding to OISC for assistance with shared target species or other high-priority pest species, nor has any other department assisted in securing federal funds to supplement the important work we conduct on the ground for several of the world's 100 worst invasive species (GISD, 2025). However, both HISC and DLNR have helped OISC secure over \$4,989,943 in federal awards from the Department of Defense, the Environmental Protection Agency, the United States Forest Service, and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation since 2021 in order to fund invasive species work for forest health and to supplement the Little Fire Ant and Coqui Frog response on O'ahu.

The landmark Act 231 Biosecurity funds passed during the previous legislative session provided a needed increase in investment for biosecurity. OISC is grateful for the hard work of all the Legislators, Legislative Staff, and Department personnel who made this possible. However, despite being one of three key agencies on O'ahu for Coqui Frogs response and being responsible for 85% of known Little Fire Ant sites island-wide according to the Priority-Pest Interagency MOU, OISC and other statewide participating partner agencies were made ineligible to even apply for these funds through the competitive proposal process. I fear the same outcome if the HISC is moved and facilitated through DOAB, which would jeopardize the important on-the-ground and public awareness progress OISC and other HISC-funded partners have contributed over the years in the absence of other such efforts.

## **2. The lack of confirmation for the proposed Deputy Director of Biosecurity.**

While OISC supports more positions dedicated to bolstering the State's biosecurity efforts, the lack of legislative oversight for the proposed Deputy Director of Biosecurity position is concerning. Given the critical responsibilities associated with this position, Senate confirmation seems necessary and appropriate in order to provide guidance to any appointee and ensure success of the position.

## **3. The procedural conditions for declaring a biosecurity emergency that already exist but have not yet been taken despite sufficient threats from high-impact invasive species.**

The ability to declare an emergency related to invasive species already exists with County Mayors and the Governor under Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 127A after a 2022 revision to include environmental considerations. Species like Little Fire Ant and Coqui Frogs already meet the emergency declaration criteria but a declaration has not yet been pursued. This proposition may also inadvertently remove the authority of the HISC to coordinate between State entities which would be catastrophic for current and future biosecurity efforts and rapid-responses to invasive species threats. HISC autonomy is essential to successful management efforts and collaboration.

## **4. The consolidation of all invasive species management and responsibility into a single Department.**

The urge to consolidate all biosecurity and invasive species management responsibilities under the jurisdiction of a single Department is understandable but there will be substantial unintended consequences in doing so. Looking at invasive species strictly through the lens of agriculture

with threaten the progress made in controlling dangerous forest species that endanger the ecosystem health of our watersheds, climate-change resiliency, and abundant clean drinking water through aquifer recharge. The “invasive species problem” that management-response and biosecurity aims to protect our communities from is far too large for a single Department to oversee.

Coordination between Departments, currently facilitated by HISC under the DLNR, is a system that will be more successful in mitigating the impacts of invasive species. Given the appropriate amount of resources and regulatory authority, this coordinated-system can allow the Department tasked with biosecurity the ability to hyper-focus on prevention and limiting inter/intra island spread of invasive species while allowing other Departments and partner agencies to focus on active management and rapid response so that no entity is stretched too thin for these critically important tasks. The reason this system seems to be failing is not because of a lack of coordination from HISC, but rather limited resources and HISC continues to provide additional resources each year from federal sources. More resources and cooperation from all entities involved in biosecurity and invasive species management will yield increased success in mitigating and protecting the State from this harmful invasive species.

OISC is grateful for the continued support from all State departments, the legislature, and the members of this Committee. Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Nate Dube", written in a cursive style.

Nate Dube, OISC Manager

Testimony of Matson Navigation Company, Inc.  
Comments on HB427  
Before the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems  
January 29, 2025

Dear Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

Matson Navigation Company, Inc. (“Matson”) appreciates the opportunity to share our comments and concerns with HB427 especially with respect to the ability for the Governor to declare a biosecurity emergency and take control of any goods, real property, or watercraft.

As an island state, Hawaii is very dependent upon our commercial harbors to ensure the continued and unimpeded flow of cargo in and out of our State. It is estimated that over 90 percent Hawaii’s imported goods pass through our commercial harbors, including consumer goods, motor vehicles, construction materials, and fuel. Given the critical role of our commercial harbors, it is imperative that the State support safe, dependable, and efficient cargo transportation and handling to service our residents and businesses. The maritime industry is heavily regulated, including with respect to cargo vessels’ discharges incidental to their normal operation, and should not be further burdened with unnecessary additional requirements on cargo operations. The federal government strictly regulates ocean cargo vessels, including through the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act of 2018 (VIDA). Matson strictly complies with environmental regulations, including for invasive species control.

The language on page 29 lines 4 to 17 are overly broad as they allow a biosecurity emergency to be declared if there is the potential to cause economic or environmental loss from a pest or organism. There is no requirement that an organism be a pest as the language says: “pest or organism” (emphasis added). Further, there is no limit on how likely the potential to cause such loss should be before such an emergency can be declared.

Allowing the Governor to requisition and take control of any watercraft, or requisition and take control of the temporary use thereof can have significant adverse impacts on the flow of goods into our State. Requisitioning a vessel is a serious action that usually only occurs when the United States has declared a wartime emergency and needs the vessel to ensure military readiness. (*see* 46 U.S.C. section 56301). The *potential* to experience economic or environmental loss from an organism that is *not* required to be a pest does not appear to rise to the similar level of urgency as a wartime emergency. Matson does appreciate that certain vessels that take precautions to prevent the spread of invasive species appear to be exempted from requisition.

Further, this measure encourages interference with interstate commerce as requisitioning a vessel carrying interstate commerce and seizure of such goods for a potential rather than actual economic or environmental loss raises issues of Dormant Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution. Finally, this measure usurps the United States Department of Transportation’s authority to requisition vessels for just compensation. This measure’s lack of language requiring just compensation for a requisitioned vessel also violates the United States Constitution’s Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment.

Thank you for allowing Matson to share our concerns.



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB427, RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

JANUARY 29, 2025

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Agriculture & Food Systems Committee:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** HB427, 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, RELATING TO BIOSECURITY. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at [legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org](mailto:legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org).

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 2:54:59 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Moore	KEALIA RANCH	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We support this bill

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 7:45:46 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
HCN Warrington	Kupuna for the Moopuna	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In **SUPPORT** of **HB427**. Mahalo.



House of Representatives  
Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
Wednesday, January 29, 2025  
9:30 AM Conference Room 325  
State Capitol

**Testimony providing comments on HB427**

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

The Kauai Invasive Species Committee (KISC) appreciates the legislature's focus on biosecurity and invasive species this legislative session. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB427, *Relating to Biosecurity*, which aims to establish new authorities and appropriate additional funds for the renamed Hawaii Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. Please see comments on the following sections:

Part II Section 8 creates within the Department a Deputy Director of Biosecurity. The position is appointed by the chairperson, without regard to Chapter 7 - exempt from Hawaii's Civil Service Law, and receives a salary of first deputies. This leadership position of Deputy Director doesn't appear to be consistent with the appointment of other Deputy Directors and require the advice and confirmation of the Senate.

Part IV Section 11 authorizes the Department, with approval of the Governor, to declare a biosecurity emergency under three possible conditions. Multiple invasive species currently meet the conditions and have been detected in at least one geographical area of Hawaii for over a decade. Ultimately, a continually extended biosecurity emergency declaration could last years.

Under the same section, HB427 also requires the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) to report directly to the chairperson of the Department for the duration of the biosecurity emergency. HISC is a Council composed of the Directors or Chairpersons of the Department of Business, Economic Development, & Tourism (DBEDT), Department of Health (HDOH), Department of Transportation (HDOT), Department of Agriculture (HDOA), Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and the President of the University of Hawaii (UH). How does this Council report to HDOA and what are the limitations?

In Section 13, the expanded language regarding education to our communities and the addition of the quarantine of infested properties helps support the objectives of the Departments biosecurity program.

The increased funding in Section 14 helps support much-needed positions within HDOA.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB427,

Tiffani Keanini  
Manager - Kauai Invasive Species Committee

LARRY JEFTS FARMS, LLC  
PO BOX 27  
KUNIA, HAWAII 96759  
(808) 688-2892

HB427, Relating to Biosecurity  
House AGR Hearing – 9:30 AM  
Wednesday, January 29, 2025

Testimony By: Larry Jeffs  
Position: Support

Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House AGR Committee:

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.

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.

Recent discussions about biosecurity have increased the awareness of the severe damage to agriculture as well as the quality of life of our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.





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Anabella Bruch  
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Maureen Datta  
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Reba Lopez  
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Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

#### 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

The Hawaii 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. **HFUU supports HB427.**

The Hawaii Farmers Union appreciates the proactive steps outlined in HB427 to enhance biosecurity measures. Part IV of the bill, which allows the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to declare a biosecurity emergency, is an essential tool in quickly addressing threats that could devastate our agricultural landscapes and the broader ecosystem. The ability to act swiftly in the face of pest invasions or the spread of restricted organisms will protect Hawaii's unique biodiversity and the livelihoods of local farmers. By empowering the department and the governor to take decisive action, this bill adds a crucial layer of defense and ensures alignment with the broader objectives of the Biosecurity Program.

While we fully support the enhanced roles and objectives outlined, there is some uncertainty about the necessity of renaming the Department of Agriculture to the "Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity." The current name is well recognized and trusted within the community, and a name change might lead to confusion. However, the intention to elevate biosecurity measures is commendable and clearly represented in other viable sections of the bill, such as allocating funds for critical staffing and the establishment of a Deputy Director of Biosecurity. These measures will enhance the department's capacity to address biosecurity threats while ensuring that the necessary expertise is available to oversee and implement policies effectively. By funding these critical positions, the bill supports the foundation necessary for the long-term resilience of agriculture in Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF

Fawn Helekahi-Burns  
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer  
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros  
Mauna Kahālāwai,  
Maui

Kaipo Kekona  
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy  
Molokai

Negus Manna  
Lāna'i

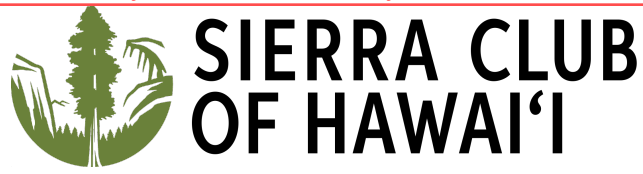
India Clark  
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman  
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich  
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i



## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

January 29, 2025

9:30 AM

Conference Room 325

### In **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS** of **HB427**: RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

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

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427**, which provides substantial funding for much-needed biosecurity positions and rebrands the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. **The Sierra Club greatly appreciates the effort by House members to take on our growing biosecurity challenges, but does note serious concerns with two aspects of this bill that may result in unintended and far-reaching consequences, without the amendments described below.**

For years, if not decades, Department of Agriculture leaders have failed to utilize the department's unique and critical authorities to address the introduction and spread of invasive species across our islands. This lack of regulatory initiative has contributed to multiple waves of invasive species that have already irrevocably and fundamentally impacted our islands. Invasive plants and wildlife have overtaken entire watersheds, not just impacting native ecosystems but also reducing aquifer recharge, increasing our vulnerability to floods and wildfires, and smothering our nearshore reefs and waters with runoff. Parasites and other pests have affected local food production and increased the use of toxic pesticides on farms and in home gardens, risking both public health as well as threatening stream and nearshore species critical to our aquatic ecosystems. Most recently, the years-long delay of regulatory action by the department has led to the establishment of the little fire ant and two-lined spittlebug on Hawai'i Island, the establishment of the coconut rhinoceros beetle on O'ahu, and the ongoing spread of the same across Kaua'i.

The Sierra Club appreciates that this measure would emphasize the department's need to embrace its regulatory role, by renaming the department as the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and establishing a deputy director to be responsible for its biosecurity efforts. The Sierra Club also appreciates the clarification of the department's subpoena and quarantine authorities. Accordingly, the Sierra Club supports these proposed statutory amendments.



# SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

However, given the Department of Agriculture's longstanding inability and/or unwillingness to fulfill its role in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests, the Sierra Club does have serious concerns with two aspects of this bill.

First, the biosecurity emergency provisions under Part IV of this measure would give the newly renamed Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity substantial powers that could inadvertently dismantle our existing biosecurity framework. Allowing the Department to take funds from any executive branch program, and to direct the work of the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council, could lead to an inexperienced and unproven entity draining and mismanaging programs that have demonstrated high levels of effectiveness in their respective roles in invasive species management and eradication. While such powers would be limited to declared biosecurity "emergencies," existing conditions arising from pests such as the little fire ant and coconut rhinoceros beetle could result in the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity immediately declaring and indefinitely continuing a biosecurity emergency, effectively making them permanent. **Such emergency powers provisions would therefore risk making this otherwise transformative measure into one that leads to the further devastation of our islands from invasive pest species. Accordingly, the Sierra Club respectfully but strongly urges removing the provisions found on page 30, lines 3-7, of this bill.**

Second, given the concerns raised regarding the historical and recent actions and inactions of the Department of Agriculture's leadership, we strongly but respectfully urge that there be much stronger accountability mechanisms for any deputy director of biosecurity. **We specifically urge amending the provisions on page 15, lines 7-14, to ensure that the deputy director of biosecurity be subject to the Senate confirmation process, and to additionally report on a quarterly basis to the Board of Agriculture and on an annual basis to the legislature regarding their progress, challenges, and recommendations for the Department's biosecurity program.**

The Sierra Club greatly appreciates the effort put into this potentially transformative measure by its authors, and is hopeful that, with the above amendments, this may mark a shift in the tide in our ongoing defense of our islands and our future generations, from the devastating impacts of invasive pests.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS** HB427. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 6:25:30 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

On behalf of the Green Party of Hawai'i , we **support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments**. 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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department's biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Mahalo nui for your Yes vote on HB427.

Green Party of Hawai'i

Susan RobertsEmery

Co chair GPH

Paauilo

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 10:39:36 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edward Johnston	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB427.

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 10:49:37 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kris Bordessa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We live on islands and yet we continue to face the perils of imported invasive species and even disease like avian flu. Biosecurity is crucial to keeping our islands safe and it's ridiculous that a huge ocean between us and the continent doesn't seem to be sufficient to keep out the baddies. Fund and support biosecurity for our islands. Please support HB427.

## **HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 11:09:00 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle Frohlich	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to SB1100/HB 427, which proposes renaming the Department of Agriculture (HDOA) as the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and significantly restructuring its responsibilities. While I support the critical need for robust biosecurity measures to protect Hawai‘i’s ecosystems and agriculture, this measure raises significant concerns about the effectiveness of implementation, accountability, and resource allocation.

The HDOA has a poor track record when it comes to effectively managing invasive species and enforcing existing regulations. For example:

- **Failure to allocate resources efficiently:** Despite receiving funding for biosecurity programs in the past, the HDOA has struggled to adequately allocate these resources to priority areas. Funds are often underutilized or directed away from pressing invasive species issues.
- **Lack of enforcement:** The HDOA has failed to crack down on businesses responsible for transporting invasive species, such as the Little Fire Ant (LFA), interisland. Infested plants are still sold to unsuspecting customers, contributing to the spread of these harmful pests.
- **Difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified staff:** The department has consistently faced challenges in hiring and retaining skilled biosecurity professionals. Adding responsibilities without addressing staffing inefficiencies will exacerbate these issues and reduce program effectiveness.

Rather than giving additional resources to the HDOA, which has demonstrated systemic shortcomings, funds should be directed to organizations with proven success in invasive species management. The Hawai‘i Ant Lab and the Invasive Species Committees, for instance, have accomplished significant progress in invasive species detection, management, and eradication despite operating with far fewer resources. These entities are better equipped and more results-driven, making them a more effective investment.

SB1100/HB 427 proposes transferring the Invasive Species Council and other biosecurity staff to the newly restructured Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. This move is problematic for several reasons:

- **Loss of specialized expertise:** Staff currently working under organizations like the Invasive Species Committees (ISCs) or the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) bring specialized knowledge and field experience. Assimilating them into the HDOA risks diluting their effectiveness by embedding them in a bureaucratic structure that prioritizes agricultural productivity over ecosystem health.
- **Reduced autonomy and collaboration:** Agencies like the ISCs operate with a collaborative, cross-agency approach that has been instrumental in responding quickly to invasive species threats. Folding these efforts into the HDOA risks limiting their ability to operate independently and nimbly, potentially slowing response times and reducing the impact of their work.
- **Shift in priorities:** The HDOA has historically focused on agriculture, not biosecurity. Expanding their mandate without ensuring a cultural and operational shift could mean that biosecurity becomes a secondary priority rather than an integrated focus.

The creation of new roles, such as a Deputy Chairperson for Biosecurity, and additional programs may lead to unnecessary duplication of efforts rather than building on existing frameworks. For example, the Hawai'i Ant Lab and ISCs already manage detection and rapid response for many invasive species. Adding another layer of administration could create inefficiencies and confusion over roles and responsibilities.

The proposed appropriation of funds under SB1100/HB 427 would be better spent bolstering existing programs and partnerships with proven track records. For example:

- Increasing funding for the Hawai'i Ant Lab would allow them to expand their efforts to control LFAs and other harmful pests.
- Supporting the ISCs would enhance community-based invasive species management programs, which are more flexible and responsive than centralized bureaucratic approaches.
- Improving interagency collaboration and streamlining existing efforts would ensure resources are used effectively and efficiently.

While biosecurity is a critical issue for Hawai'i, the approach of SB1100/HB 427 is flawed. The HDOA's history of mismanagement and inefficiency (which have been repeatedly criticized by many of the Senate and House members responsible for introducing this measure) combined with the risks of assimilating effective programs into a centralized bureaucracy, make this measure an unsuitable solution. I urge the committee to reconsider SB1100/HB 427 and focus on strengthening and funding existing programs and partnerships that have demonstrated success in protecting Hawai'i from invasive species. Investing in proven entities like the Hawai'i Ant Lab and the ISCs ensures that biosecurity efforts are effective and accountable.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 12:09:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 12:14:42 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joan Heartfield PhD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dr. Joan Heartfield and I **support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments**. 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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department’s biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427**.

Sincerely, Joan Heartfield, PhD

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 12:18:39 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is Peter Wilson and I **support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments**. 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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department’s biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427**.

Sincerely,  
Peter Wilson

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 12:18:56 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaua Kama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of Hawaii HB427

Date: January 27th 2025

Aloha Chairperson and Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB427, which proposes critical updates to the structure, authority, and funding of the Department of Agriculture to address Hawaii's unique challenges in agriculture and biosecurity. This bill is essential to safeguard our islands' fragile ecosystems, protect local agriculture, and uphold public health and safety.

**Part I – Renaming the Department and Board**

Renaming the Department of Agriculture to the "Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity" recognizes the integral role biosecurity plays in protecting Hawaii's natural resources and economy. As an island state, Hawaii is particularly vulnerable to invasive species, which threaten native ecosystems, agriculture, and water supplies. This renaming signals a commitment to prioritizing biosecurity as a core function of the department.

**Part II – Establishing a Deputy Director of Biosecurity**

Creating a Deputy Director of Biosecurity position ensures focused leadership and expertise to address biosecurity threats effectively. This role will allow for strategic planning, interagency collaboration, and timely responses to emerging threats, such as invasive pests and diseases.

**Part III – Updating the Biosecurity Form**

Changing the "plant and animal declaration form" to the "biosecurity form" reflects the broader scope of biosecurity efforts. It emphasizes the importance of identifying and managing risks beyond plants and animals, including microorganisms and other potential threats.

#### Part IV – Declaring Biosecurity Emergencies

Authorizing the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to declare biosecurity emergencies is a proactive measure to prevent or contain the spread of invasive species and pests. This authority, combined with the Governor's support, ensures swift and decisive action when time is critical to protecting our environment and economy.

#### Part V – Appropriations for Positions and Funding

Adequate funding is essential to ensure the success of Hawaii's biosecurity initiatives. Appropriating funds for additional positions within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity will expand capacity for inspections, monitoring, research, and rapid response. This investment will yield long-term benefits by preventing costly damage from invasive species and supporting sustainable agriculture.

#### Conclusion

HB427 represents a forward-thinking approach to addressing the biosecurity challenges unique to Hawaii. This bill strengthens the state's ability to protect its natural resources, agricultural industries, and public health by providing the necessary tools, leadership, and funding.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB427 to safeguard Hawaii's future for generations to come.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

Kaualilinoe Kama



**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 12:20:05 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bo Breda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is Bo Breda and I **support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments.**

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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department's biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427.**

Sincerely,  
Bo Breda

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 1:08:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy Shaver	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is Christy, and as a long-time Maui resident and advocate for environmental preservation and community resilience, I support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments.

Invasive species such as the little fire ant and coconut rhinoceros beetle are already causing extensive harm to Hawai‘i’s unique ecosystems, agriculture, and local communities. These threats demand bold, transformative changes to our biosecurity strategy to protect our islands and the generations to come.

Unfortunately, the Department of Agriculture has demonstrated an unwillingness and/or inability to act proactively and decisively in fulfilling its biosecurity responsibilities. Renaming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and creating a deputy director position focused on biosecurity could be key steps in emphasizing the urgency of addressing invasive species. Providing additional authority and funding for biosecurity staff positions will also remove barriers that may have contributed to past failures.

I encourage you to consider amendments that strengthen accountability for the department and deputy, ensuring progress and transparency moving forward. These amendments could include:

- Regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public,
- Deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and
- Initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

By enacting HB427 with these amendments, we can take meaningful steps toward safeguarding Hawai‘i’s environment, agriculture, and way of life from the ongoing threats of invasive species.

Mahalo for your consideration and commitment to protecting our islands.

Warm regards,  
Christy





**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 1:12:22 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Uilani Naipo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Department of Agriculture would be supporting a critical function by renaming its Department to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. A new deputy director, staff positions, and authorities focused on the much needed biosecurity functions, is overdue.

Please consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward:

- regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public,
- deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes,
- initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Hawai'i deserves this measure with the recommended amendments.

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 1:45:01 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary True	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

My name is Mary True and I **support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments.**

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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department's biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427.**

Sincerely, Mary True

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 1:57:30 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle Espiritu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is Danielle Espiritu, and I support HB427 with a suggestion for amendments. 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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department’s biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427** .

me ke aloha,

Danielle Espiritu

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 3:01:55 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ella Aki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support HB427. Thank you for considering my support of this bill.

Mahalo piha,

Ella H. Aki

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 3:11:51 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is Shay Chan Hodges and I **support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments**. 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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department's biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427**.

Sincerely,  
Shay Chan Hodges

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 3:21:19 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Best	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**We support HB427 with amendments.** 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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department’s biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Mahalo, Bill & Barbara Best, Wailuku

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 3:47:19 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

## Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is Marcia Kemble and I **support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments**. 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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department's biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427**.

Sincerely,  
Marcia Kemble  
Makiki



**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 3:57:04 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 4:26:21 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chai Blair-Stahn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is Chai Blair-Stahn, and I **support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments**. 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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department's biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427**.

Sincerely,  
Chai Blair-Stahn

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:16:59 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Helen Sofaer	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HISC is functioning well and it is critical to keep it well administered. Mahalo!

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:10:26 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Gabrielson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Although I do support additional action to increas biosecurity for our islands, this bill is not the solution. There are two key issues that must be rectified for me to support this bill. The bill needs to have a legistlative confirmation for the Deputy Director of Biosecurity position to support proper oversight and vetting of the position. Additionally, this bill does not clarify how Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) will be administrated. HISC is already underfunded and over tasked with a tramendous amount of vital work protecting our islands and combating the negaitve impacts of invasive species on our islands. Additional biosecurity bills need to support and address the HISC with clarity and assistance to expand their purview.

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 7:59:12 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Sandrich	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments: Aloha, I am a concerned citizen and feel the obligation to testify on HB427. While I am generally in support of bills relating to the advancement of BioSecurity, I feel that HB427 will not be a net positive as it currently is. - I believe HDOA is suffering from leadership issues at the highest levels and does not have the will or ability to complete these new duties if they are to be assigned. While I do know there are folks working at HDOA that are capable and passionate about BioSecurity, I feel that they are hindered by mismanagement from the top down. - I believe BioSecurity is an issue of ecological importance as much as it is an issue of agricultural importance, there needs to be more than a single organization funded to address biosecurity issues. Until HDOA can show progressive and meaningful actions to bolster their abilities to manage such a large amount of funding and responsibility, I don't think we can trust that they are up to the job. I also don't believe that all of this responsibility should be centralized under the HDOA umbrella. Mahalo for your consideration, Matthew Sandrich

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 7:39:24 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Armstrong	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am concerned about the lack of oversight on the appointment of the Deputy Director of Biosecurity. I also am concerned about how the funding would impact the current island specific invasive species councils, which I support and believe and doing a goob job responding the the multitude of invasive pests on the islands

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 7:31:16 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Delgadillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear House Members,

I support HB 427 with amendments. State agencies must be empowered to hold those accountable who bring in invasive species and spread invasive species. Inspections must be increased. Consequences must be increased. Our state agencies have not done enough to preempt the threat of coconut rhino beetles and little fire ants and now they must be reactive which will be much more difficult if not impossible. There will be more threats from different species and our state must get ahead of these threats to prevent a collapse of our agriculture industry.

Mahalo,

Sarah Delgadillo

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 6:50:56 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is Kristen, I'm a Honolulu resident, and I support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments. 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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department's biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427**.

Mahalo,

Kristen Young



**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:22:55 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Candice Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai`i MUST do better protecting our fragile environments and ENFORCING biosecurity measures!

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 1:06:39 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carmela Resuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill that protects our native ecosystems.

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 12:36:14 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie Kuo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Julie Kuo and I am a concerned O‘ahu resident in opposition of **HB427** as written. I am particularly concerned that the bill:

- Lacks legislative oversight for the appointment of a new Deputy Director of Biosecurity;
- Facilitation of HISC being moved from DLNR to DOA; and
- Conditions have already been met for an emergency designation, without formal emergency declarations being made, and the authority to declare an emergency already exists with the Governor or Mayor of a County to allow the appropriate person to manage the resources under their control to mitigate the emergency.

Furthermore, I would like to encourage the involvement and discussion with biosecurity experts under DLNR, HISC, CGAPS, and OISC on the best solution forward, as I've known them to produce reliable and extraordinary results in working with them in the past.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and the opportunity to provide testimony on HB427.

Kind regards,

Julie Kuo

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 12:18:10 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeremy Garrett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Extreme changes in climate, such as drought, wildfires, and invasive species threaten the agricultural industry, and by extension every human on this planet. I strongly support this proposal to emphasize the role of biosecurity within the Department of Agriculture.

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 11:53:12 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrice Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB427 with amendments. THe following amendments will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 10:36:48 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 427, regarding the Hawaii Department of Agriculture's (HDOA) biosecurity efforts. While I appreciate the continued focus on invasive species, certain parts of this bill need further consideration. These considerations include:

With the creation of a Deputy Director of Biosecurity role, Senate confirmation should be a requirement.

HB 427 would allow the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to declare a "biosecurity emergency" for new or spreading pests. However, these conditions already apply to several species like the little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, and coqui frog, and HDOA has not yet sought an emergency designation under existing law. The bill also requires the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) to report directly to HDOA during a biosecurity emergency, which could undermine the Council's autonomy and its role in coordinating efforts among state agencies.

Moving the Hawaii Invasive Species Committee (HISC) from being facilitated by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to being facilitated by the HDOA may not streamline efforts; the current arrangement between DLNR and the various Invasive Species Committees works well. Many of the changes proposed in this bill have not been discussed at meetings of the full Council so a more productive plan could come from those collective discussions.

HDOA's efforts to modernize its programs is commendable, however these concerns need further consideration before HB 427 is passed. For these reasons, I do not support HB 427.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Molly Mamaril

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 10:14:25 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Breanne Fong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is Breanne Fong and I support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments. 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.

Unfortunately, the Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department’s biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable for their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427** .

Sincerely,  
Breanne Fong

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 10:09:19 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dylan davis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

My name is Dylan Davis, a conservationist with close to 10 years of experience in the field, and I am writing to oppose HB427 due to its call for the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the Hawaii Ant Lab to "report directly to the chairperson" of the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DoAB). I believe that the existing entities and their configurations will not be better equipped to handle our existing invasive species issues, much less new ones in the future, under the proposed DoAB.

Firstly, I believe that the Department of Agriculture has an inadequate track record in its response to invasive species concerns in Hawaii to be held responsible for entities as important and complex as the HISC and Hawaii Ant Lab. Their slow responses and lack of transparency when presented with opportunities to collaborate on pressing issues in the past, as well as their refusal to provide financial support to entities already engaging in invasive species control, lead me to believe consolidation under the DoAB would effectively neuter invasive species control efforts across the state. The Department of Agriculture's lack of movement with regards to Act 231 funding expenditure, and its decision to contract Terminix instead of the Ant Lab for Little Fire Ant control, are deeply troubling and indicative to me of both an unfamiliarity with the nature of invasive species control and inadequate leadership.

Secondly, I do not believe that a change in organizational structure would improve state-wide response in any measure comparable to providing additional funding to the existing entities in their current configurations.

Thirdly, I have concerns that a primarily agriculture-focused department will steer focus away from non-agriculture areas, such as forested watersheds, where invasive species impacts can have much longer lasting, wider impacts for the entirety of the state if left unchecked, as opposed to specific industries.

Fourthly, the proposed Deputy Chair of Biosecurity needs to be appointed by senate confirmation. To allow otherwise further increases the risk of politicking standing in the way of invasive species response.

Although attractive in concept, I believe inclusion of HISC and the Hawaii Ant Lab into the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity would be a tremendous step backwards for the state with regards to invasive species control, and that is why I strongly oppose HB427.





**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 10:07:01 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Faccenda	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Aloha, as a botanist actively working with and researching invasive plants in Hawai'i, I am in strong support of increased regulation to strengthen Hawai'i's biosecurity. However, this bill, as currently drafted, makes changes I cannot support.

Firstly, I am concerned by section 11 (c)(2) which directs the Hawai'i invasive species council (HISC) to report to the chairperson of the department of agriculture and biosecurity (DOAB). While I understand the reasoning of concentrating power to best manage an emergency, I am quite skeptical of the ability of the DOAB to manage such an emergency. For example, last legislative session HDOA was allocated \$10M to manage little fire ant and coconut rhinoceros beetles. As of the writing of this, they have not yet spent a single penny and as such the situation with these pests is deteriorating. The current administration of HDOA, and thus the future administration of DOAB do not seem to possess the skills to manage invasive species at a large scale. This is contrary to HISC which has shown itself to be very effective at managing and eradicating invasive species. I do not believe that requiring HISC to report to the DOAB under a biosecurity emergency would be a net positive to biosecurity in Hawai'i. I strongly suggest removing section 11 (c)(2) or any other language which would give DOAB any control of HISC.

Secondly, I am also concerned with regards to section 8 (a) which exempts the deputy director of biosecurity from chapter 76. I do not see how this exception would be beneficial and why they should be exempt from the provisions which affect most other civil service positions.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion on this bill.

Kevin Faccenda, PhD

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

My name is Kiana Otsuka, and I am a concerned O'ahu resident writing comments on **HB427**, relating to biosecurity. I am particularly concerned that the bill

- Lacks legislative oversight for the appointment of a new Deputy Director of Biosecurity
- Facilitation of HISC being moved from DLNR to DOA
- Conditions have already been met for an emergency designation, without formal emergency declarations being made, and the authority to declare an emergency already exists with the Governor or Mayor of a County to allow the appropriate person to manage the resources under their control to mitigate the emergency.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB427.

Mahalo,

Kiana Otsuka

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 9:44:23 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Datlof	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is Erin and I support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments. 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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department’s biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427** .

Sincerely,

Erin Datlof

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 8:19:11 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liat Portner	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Vice Chair,

I am writing in opposition of HB427. It is concerning that the Deputy Director of Biosecurity would appointed without any legislative oversight. The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council has been a crucial tool for support invasive species management in the state. And while HDOA is expanding its capacity to implement effective biosecurity measures, it is alarming that this bill describes a move to subsume HISC into a newly named "Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity". HDOA is first and foremost focused on the agricultural sector and agricultural lands. HISC functions to support invasive species management outside of agricultural lands, either in natural areas or at connections between urban, suburban, rural and "natural areas" and these will never be top priorities for HDOA. In this light, bolstering HDOA's ability to implement effective biosecurity protocols and HISCs efforts to contain and eradicate incipients across the landscape is more effective management. In this light, these two "prongs" are not in competition but rather, coalesce to be more holistic and effective invasive species management strategy. Just like how they do in New Zealand!

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:55:44 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judith White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this important bill. Mahalo,

Judith White,

Kapaa

While the intent to streamline invasive species responses in Hawaii is commendable, the proposed approach of designating the Department of Agriculture (HDOA) as the lead agency—with the Chair of Biosecurity to be appointed by HDOA and funding decisions left solely to their discretion—is deeply flawed and short-sighted.

Invasive species impact far more than agriculture alone; they threaten Hawaii's environment, public health, and the overall quality of life for residents. HDOA must be adequately funded and empowered to meet its existing mandates and strengthen its regulatory authority. Until the department demonstrates the capacity to prioritize and fully meet these responsibilities, it is unreasonable to expect it to manage the far-reaching and complex issue of invasive species effectively. Without such assurances, we risk ongoing failures to prevent new incursions and to halt the spread of pests already present within the state.

If legislators truly seek to consolidate and enhance invasive species efforts, they must carefully consider the broader, long-term consequences of such a decision. This includes the impacts on all current invasive species initiatives across every island, the sustainable funding levels required to support these efforts, the duration of the state's commitment to this fight, and the criteria by which leadership and priorities are determined.

This is not a task to be rushed or treated as an afterthought. The stakes are far too high.

With respect and aloha.

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 6:57:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I strongly support HB427 that emphasizes the Department of Agriculture's long-neglected biosecurity role, establishing a deputy director of biosecurity to focus on fulfilling this role, and providing the renamed DAB with additional biosecurity tools and funds for much-needed staff positions.

The Department of Agriculture has been unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Enough is enough. We need to protect our precious islands from more harm from invasive species, HB427 will help to do that.

Please pass HB427.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 5:37:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Madison Owens	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is Madison Owens and I **support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments**. 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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department's biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427**.

Sincerely,  
Madison Owens

House of Representatives  
Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
Wednesday, January 29, 2025  
9:30 AM Conference Room 325  
State Capitol

SUBJECT: Testimony – Providing Comments on HB427 “Relating to Biosecurity”

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

I am writing regarding a number of concerns with sections in this bill that would directly impact conservation operations and threaten the success of the current and future responses to invasive species incursion. The concerns and context are outlined below:

1. The potential movement of the Hawai‘i Invasive Species Council (HISC) from the Department of the Land & Natural Resources (DLNR) to the newly named Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DOAB).
2. The lack of confirmation for the proposed Deputy Director of Biosecurity.
3. The procedural conditions for declaring a biosecurity emergency that already exist but have not yet been taken despite sufficient threats from high-impact invasive species.
4. The consolidation of all invasive species management and responsibility into a single Department.

**1. Potential Movement of the HISC from DLNR to DOAB or the establishment of a new invasive species council under DOAB to replace the current HISC.**

Previous drafts clearly proposed the movement of the HISC from DLNR into DOAB. In this version the language is a bit unclear. The movement or reestablishment of the HISC under DOAB would jeopardize the current responses on O‘ahu for high-priority pests species like Little Fire Ant (*Wasmannia auropunctata*) and Coqui Frog (*Eleutherodactylus coqui*), among others. HISC under DLNR has been instrumental in coordinating multi-agency response and funding, whether it be organizing Statewide priority-pest workshops, leading and participating in working groups, and securing federal funding sources to fill gaps for agencies who conduct much of the on-the-ground work. Outside of HISC, other DLNR Departments have also helped secure crucial federal funding to expand early-detection and rapid-response to high-priority invaders.

The landmark Act 231 Biosecurity funds passed during the previous legislative session provided a needed increase in investment for biosecurity and invasive species management. I am grateful for the hard work of all the Legislators, Legislative Staff, and Department personnel who made this possible. However, despite being one of three key agencies on O‘ahu for Coqui Frogs response and being responsible for 85% of known Little Fire Ant sites according to the Priority-Pest Interagency MOU, HISC, non-PCO businesses, and other Statewide participating partner agencies were made ineligible to even apply for these funds through the competitive proposal process. I fear the same outcome if the HISC is moved and facilitated through DOAB,

which would jeopardize the important on-the-ground and public awareness progress the HISCs and HISC-funded partners have contributed over the years in the absence of other such efforts.

## **2. The lack of confirmation for the proposed Deputy Director of Biosecurity.**

While I support more positions dedicated to bolstering the State's biosecurity efforts, the lack of legislative oversight for the proposed Deputy Director of Biosecurity position is concerning. Given the critical responsibilities associated with this position, Senate confirmation seems necessary and appropriate in order to provide guidance to any appointee and ensure success of the position.

## **3. The procedural conditions for declaring a biosecurity emergency that already exist but have not yet been taken despite sufficient threats from high-impact invasive species.**

The ability to declare an emergency related to invasive species already exists with County Mayors and the Governor under Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 127A after a 2022 revision to include environmental considerations. Species like Little Fire Ant and Coqui Frogs already meet the emergency declaration criteria but a declaration has not yet been pursued. This proposition may also inadvertently remove the authority of the HISC to coordinate between State entities which would be catastrophic for current and future biosecurity efforts and rapid-responses to invasive species threats.

## **4. The consolidation of all invasive species management and responsibility into a single Department.**

The urge to consolidate all biosecurity and invasive species management responsibilities under the jurisdiction of a single Department is understandable but there will be substantial unintended consequences in doing so. Looking at invasive species strictly through the lens of agriculture will threaten the progress made in controlling dangerous forest species that endanger the ecosystem health of our watersheds, climate-change resiliency, and abundant clean drinking water through aquifer recharge. The "invasive species problem" that management-response and biosecurity aims to protect our communities from is far too large for a single Department to oversee.

Coordination between Departments, currently facilitated by HISC under the DLNR, is a system that will be more successful in mitigating the impacts of invasive species. Given the appropriate amount of resources and regulatory authority, this coordinated-system can allow the Department tasked with biosecurity the ability to hyper-focus on prevention and limiting inter/intra island spread of invasive species while allowing other Departments and partner agencies to focus on active management and rapid response so that no entity is stretched too thin for these critically important tasks. The reason this system seems to be failing is not because of a lack of coordination from HISC, but rather limited resources and HISC continues to provide additional resources each year from federal sources. More resources and cooperation from all entities involved in biosecurity and invasive species management will yield increased success in mitigating and protecting the State from this harmful invasive species.

I am grateful for the continued support from all State departments, the legislature, and the members of this Committee. Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Timothy Sullivan  
16c Puu Hina Street  
Hilo, HI, 96720

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:30:42 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy Tsuneyoshi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee,

Regarding HB427, I have concerns about consolidating all invasive species work into one agency (like putting all of your eggs into one basket). HISC has been doing great work under DLNR supporting the State's ISCs with funding for on the ground work protecting our watersheds from incipient pests. Secured, dedicated funding is needed for organizations like the Invasive Species Committees, Hawaii Ant Lab, and Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle response team that are doing what they can with limited resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 427.

Amy Tsuneyoshi

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:44:35 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Kim N Kozuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Please support HB427 to help protect Hawaii's agricultural industry. The murder of Cranston Pia has finally brought to light the issues we deal with on a daily basis. Traditionally HPD hasn't placed priority on agricultural crime, instead focusing on violent or drug related crime. This tragedy highlights how Ag crime is directly related to drugs and violence. Producers are told they need video evidence. Good luck patrolling massive acreage. To place that burden on producers is out of touch with reality. Farmers and ranchers have to provide their own security and are still have a duty to retreat. This MUST change.

Biosecurity in the State is a joke. Hawaii needs to step up and properly fund the Department of Agriculture, bring back jobs that have been erased, put in infrastructure to do proper livestock inspections etc. They do so much with so little. This is especially true for Animal Industry.

The Dept. of Law Enforcement is a strong start. We need to educate everyone INCLUDING PROSECUTORS on our agricultural laws AND HAVE JUDGES ENFORCE THEM!!! When prosecutors and judges can't get their act together to go after unlicensed slop feeders (pig farmers), airlines that continually allow animals to enter WITHOUT PERMITS etc., and you only have ONE staff member at HDOA to deal with it, Hawaii's support for AG is only lip service. These laws are the beginning of much needed change. PLEASE PASS ALL 4 BILLS.

From a farmer and rancher, this is the support we really need to be successful.

Mahalo,

Kim N. Kozuma DVM

2 Girls Farm LLC

Testimony for HB427

To whom it may concern,

Although I support increased biosecurity in the state, I am worried that consolidating invasive species problems under one entity will limit each island's ability to respond promptly. I worry that by placing all invasive species management under the scope of the Department of Agriculture (DOA) focus will be pulled away from our wildland and community areas where species invasion is already occurring. I understand there will be a council to advise but, no one person will fully grasp the effort that is needed per island to battle the invasive species issues. Nor will a council person be able to plan and implement management strategies between state departments.

Each island should have an entity or secured a partnership to implement management on the ground for existing invasions and treat new invasions per island. If the DOA takes charge of this problem, they will need to secure staff in multiple departments to act as liaisons. Or fund partnerships with organizations like the invasive species committees for the implementation of invasive species management.

The way this is set up, they can identify a problem and where it is but are not required to allocate the resources that are needed to implement and design management strategies. It cannot be assumed that departments like Land and Natural Resources, State parks, or residential communities that suffer from invasions like Little Fire Ant or coconut rhinoceros beetle will have the resources to tackle these problems without additional help. I think this bill may be a step in the right direction as far as prevention which is desperately needed but may hinder future efforts.

Sincerely,

Jenna Masters

Concerned Oahu Citizen

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:13:23 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Wat	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha nui kākou,

I am extremely grateful for the increased attention, support, and funding being directed towards biosecurity. Hawai'i has an extremely diverse and unique ecosystem that contributes to community health, food systems, economy (including but far beyond tourism) and is essential for cultural practice.

I have two concerns with the bill as written.

First, it seems like the Deputy Director of Biosecurity would be directly appointed by the Chairperson. I feel like a role this significant should have legislative oversight.

Second, HDOA currently has their plates very full trying to live up to the biosecurity expectations clarified last legislative session. If HDOA is the right home for HISC that will still be true 5 years from now... and should be addressed then.

While I support many other aspects of the bill (eg, electronic biosecurity forms, the creation of a biosecurity lead in HDOA, farm business quarantines), I do not support this bill while HDOA is burdened by HISC administration and the biosecurity officer hiring has no legislative oversight.

Mahalo nui,

- Joe



**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:30:52 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane Beachy	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm writing in opposition to HB427, which proposes moving HISC under the newly renamed Hawaii Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. While I'm strongly in favor of improved biosecurity measures for Hawaii, this particular bill places all our eggs in one basket, and sadly, HDOA does not have a good track record in recent years of providing the protection our State deserves. The bill lacks legislative oversight for the appointment of a new Deputy Director of Biosecurity. It moves HISC from DLNR (where it has been very successful) to HDOA. It provides confusing and duplicate rules for declaring a biosecurity emergency.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jane Reppun Beachy

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Elizabeth Speith, and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony **in support of HB427**, which reinforces Hawai'i's biosecurity efforts and provides critical resources for invasive species management. The bill's investment in dedicated biosecurity leadership and staffing within HDOA is a much-needed step forward.

However, I offer three key recommendations:

1. **Legislative Oversight for the Deputy Director of Biosecurity** – Given the critical role this position will play, I urge the committee to **require legislative confirmation** to ensure transparency and accountability in the selection process. Biosecurity leadership should have clear oversight to maintain public trust and effectiveness.
2. **Codifying Multi-Agency Collaboration** – I recommend **explicitly codifying multi-agency coordination** in the bill's language. Strengthening HDOA's biosecurity capacity should **complement -not replace-** existing cooperative frameworks that have proven successful. I have seen on the ground evidence on my home island of Maui of how well collaboration can work to address invasive species, such as the response to and potential eradication of coconut rhinoceros beetle detection that involved multiple agencies of the state, county, the Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC), and private industry. I think we should celebrate these successful collaborations.
3. **Authority to Declare a Biosecurity Emergency** – I strongly **support the Department's ability to declare a biosecurity emergency**, as outlined in the bill. Timely response is critical when addressing high-impact invasive species threats, and granting this authority ensures that action can be taken quickly to prevent further ecological and economic harm.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. I appreciate your commitment to protecting Hawai'i from invasive species threats.

Elizabeth Speith

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:32:31 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Koa Grabar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of HB427.

I support a general biosecurity package to protect Hawai‘i’s ecosystems, agriculture, and cultural resources from invasive species. However, I share concerns raised by C-GAPS regarding the lack of legislative confirmation for the proposed Deputy Director of Biosecurity and the confusing language surrounding HISC administration. Addressing these issues will strengthen the bill and ensure Hawai‘i’s biosecurity efforts are transparent, effective, and well-coordinated. Overall, this bill is necessary to help protect Hawaii's fragile ecosystems.

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:40:18 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jean Fujikawa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a concerned O‘ahu resident submitting comments on HB427 relating to biosecurity. While I appreciate that steps are being taken to improve our biosecurity, I am concerned that the bill:

- Lacks legislative oversight for the appointment of a new Deputy Director of Biosecurity
- Moves the HISC from DLNR to DOA, and
- Emergency declarations authority already exists with the Governor or Mayor of a County to allow the appropriate person to manage the resources under their control to mitigate the emergency.

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:52:41 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Leonberger	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems, My name is Laura Leonberger and I support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments. 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. I was horrified to see the damage caused by these pests on a trip to Oahu in November. We must stop this infestation now! Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department’s biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role. I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity. Accordingly, I urge you to PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427. Sincerely, Laura Leonberger

Dear Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the on Agriculture & Food Systems,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB427, a bill that proposes renaming the Department of Agriculture to the "Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity," establishing a Deputy Director of Biosecurity, and enhancing the State's ability to address invasive species through strengthened measures and resources.

While I express tentative support for the goals of this bill, I urge the Committee to prioritize and preserve the autonomy and collaborative model of the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC). The HISC has consistently demonstrated its value as a coordinating entity, leveraging partnerships across state departments, federal agencies, county governments, private sector stakeholders, and community organizations to address Hawaii's unique and evolving biosecurity challenges.

**Key Points of Consideration:**

**1. Preservation of HISC Autonomy**

The HISC's independence has allowed it to maintain a strategic, policy-level perspective on invasive species issues while fostering innovation and cross-sector collaboration. Its role as a unifying body should not be overshadowed or diminished by structural changes proposed in HB427.

**2. Collaborative Framework**

One of Hawaii's strengths in mitigating invasive species is the ability to align resources and expertise across various agencies and organizations. The HISC exemplifies this collaborative approach by facilitating interagency coordination, community engagement, and the integration of scientific advancements into practice. HB427 should reinforce, not fragment, these efforts.

**3. Proven Track Record of Adaptation and Innovation**

HISC has a demonstrated history of effectively addressing emerging invasive species threats through early detection, rapid response, and public education initiatives. This adaptability must be preserved to ensure that Hawaii remains at the forefront of biosecurity innovation.

**Recommendations for HB427:**

- Clarify how the HISC's role and decision-making authority will align with the proposed changes to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity.
- Maintain the HISC's ability to operate independently and provide policy direction without unnecessary administrative constraints.
- Strengthen provisions that support multi-agency collaboration and the engagement of local communities and private organizations in invasive species control and prevention.

By integrating these considerations, HB427 can build upon Hawaii's existing biosecurity infrastructure while avoiding unintended disruptions to proven systems like the HISC.

Mahalo for your attention to this critical issue and for considering this testimony. I am confident that, with thoughtful amendments, HB427 can enhance Hawaii's capacity to protect its natural resources, economy, and communities from the devastating impacts of invasive species.

Sincerely,

Chuck Chimera

Honokaa, HI

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 12:45:45 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Avalon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is Avalon Paradea and I support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments. 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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department’s biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427** .

Mahalo,  
Avalon Paradea



## **HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 1:26:14 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chris Frohlich	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB427, which proposes renaming the Department of Agriculture (HDOA) to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and significantly restructuring its responsibilities. While I acknowledge the urgent need for effective biosecurity measures to safeguard Hawai‘i’s ecosystems and agricultural industry, this measure raises substantial concerns regarding implementation effectiveness, accountability, and resource allocation.

### **1. Ineffectiveness and Mismanagement by the HDOA**

The HDOA has a documented history of mismanagement regarding invasive species and regulatory enforcement. Recent critiques highlight:

- **Inefficient Resource Allocation:** Despite receiving funding for biosecurity initiatives, the HDOA has repeatedly failed to allocate these resources effectively, often underutilizing funds or misdirecting them away from critical invasive species concerns.
- **Inadequate Enforcement:** The HDOA has not sufficiently penalized businesses that transport invasive species, such as the Little Fire Ant (LFA), interisland. Infested plants continue to be sold, exacerbating the spread of these harmful pests.
- **Staffing Challenges:** The department has struggled to hire and retain qualified biosecurity professionals. Expanding responsibilities without addressing these staffing inefficiencies will only worsen the situation and diminish program effectiveness.

Instead of funneling additional resources into an agency with systemic shortcomings, funds should be redirected to organizations with proven success, such as the Hawai‘i Ant Lab and Invasive Species Committees (ISCs). These entities have demonstrated significant achievements in invasive species management, operating with far fewer resources and a greater results-oriented focus.

### **2. Concerns About Staff Assimilation**

HB427 proposes moving the Invasive Species Council and biosecurity staff into the restructured HDOA, which raises several issues:

- **Loss of Specialized Expertise:** Staff with specialized knowledge and field experience from organizations like the ISCs and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) risk losing their effectiveness when assimilated into a bureaucratic structure that historically prioritizes agricultural productivity over ecosystem health.
- **Reduced Autonomy and Collaboration:** The collaborative nature of agencies like the ISCs has been crucial for rapid responses to invasive species threats. Integrating these efforts into the HDOA could hinder their agility and collaborative spirit, leading to slower response times and diminished impact.
- **Shifts in Priorities:** The HDOA has traditionally focused on agriculture rather than biosecurity. Without a fundamental cultural shift, biosecurity could become a secondary concern rather than an integrated priority.

### 3. Potential for Duplication and Inefficiency

Creating new roles, such as a Deputy Chairperson for Biosecurity, may lead to unnecessary duplication of efforts instead of enhancing existing frameworks. The Hawai'i Ant Lab and ISCs already manage detection and rapid response for many invasive species. Adding another administrative layer may create confusion over roles and responsibilities, ultimately undermining effectiveness.

### 4. Better Use of Funds

The proposed funding under HB427 would be better utilized to strengthen existing programs and partnerships with proven success. For instance:

- Increasing funding for the Hawai'i Ant Lab would enhance their control efforts against LFAs and other invasive ants.
- Supporting the ISCs would elevate community-based management programs, which are more adaptable and responsive than centralized bureaucratic approaches.
- Streamlining interagency collaboration and refining current efforts would ensure that resources are utilized efficiently and effectively.

### Conclusion

While biosecurity remains a critical issue for Hawai'i, the approach outlined in HB427 is fundamentally flawed. The HDOA's history of inefficiency and mismanagement, coupled with the risks of assimilating effective programs into a centralized bureaucracy, render this measure an unsuitable solution. I urge the committee to reconsider HB427 and focus on fortifying and funding existing programs and partnerships that have a track record of success in invasive species management. By investing in proven entities like the Hawai'i Ant Lab and ISCs, we can ensure that our biosecurity efforts are both effective and accountable.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 1:33:44 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
McKenzie Wildey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure.

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 3:46:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kallie Barnes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is [Your name] and I support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments. 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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department’s biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427** .

Sincerely,

Kallie Barnes

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 3:53:10 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hideki Kimukai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is Hideki Kimukai and I **support HB427 with a friendly suggestion for amendments**. 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.

Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department's biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.

I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.

Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427**.

Sincerely,  
Hideki Kimukai

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 7:16:44 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaleiheana-a-Pohaku Stormcrow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

*My name is Kaleiheana Stormcrow, and I am writing in **support of HB427**, with a friendly suggestion for amendments. 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.*

*Unfortunately, Department of Agriculture leadership has made it abundantly clear that they are unwilling and/or unable to act decisively and proactively in fulfilling their biosecurity responsibilities, and protecting our islands from the devastating impacts of invasive species. Re-naming the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and providing for a new deputy director to focus on the department’s biosecurity functions, may help to emphasize the pressing need for it to do its part in our all-hands-on-deck fight against invasive pests. The additional authorities and funding for staff positions may also remove any excuses the department may have for its past failures to uphold its biosecurity role.*

*I do urge you to consider amendments that will better ensure the department and deputy are held accountable to their responsibilities going forward, such as regular reporting requirements to the Board of Agriculture and the public, deadlines for invasive species action plans with clear benchmarks for actions and outcomes, and initial and biannual confirmation hearings for the appointed deputy of biosecurity.*

*Accordingly, I urge you to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS HB427** .*

*Mahalo for your consideration!*

*Kaleiheana Stormcrow, Mountain View*

**HB-427**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:51:49 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Kane	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly oppose HB427 "Relating To Biosecurity"

The consolidation of all invasive species management and responsibility into a single Department (HDOA) that to date has done very little to curb the spread of new and incipient pests, allow for the willful spread of harmful pests, and fail to enact any inerisland biosecurity measures severely undermines the work of far smaller entities that have done enormous ammounts of collaborative work to control invasive species.

HDOA has never provided funding or assistance, or collaborative data sharing with any other entity on shared target pests. While HISC and DLNR help to secure funding, expand early detection and rapid response, and organize state-wide working groups. The move of HISC would remove the authority of HISC to coordinate between state entities- a catastrophic move for current and future biosecurity.

HRS chapter 127A was revised in 2022 to allow County Mayors and state Governor the ability to declare an emergency related to invasive species. Little Fire And and Coqui frog on Oahu already meet the criteria yet a declaration has not been persued. Additionally, HDOA has yet to spend the money allocated to them last legislative session, higlighting their negligence, inability and inability to lead such a major consolidation of efforts. Aside from HDOA, other entities collaborate and rally community support but lack critical funding.

Please do not support this bill or put more power intothe hands of of an HDOA leader who does not care.