

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

January 27, 2025
1:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 & Videoconference

SENATE BILL NO. 765
RELATING TO BEEKEEPING

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 765 which clarifies the registration process for beekeepers with the Department of Agriculture, requires the Department to provide guidance and support to registered beekeepers to help beekeepers adhere to certain industry standards and best management practices, establishes a limitation on liability for any registered beekeeper who follows industry standards and best practices, and appropriates funds.

The Department is in strong support of this bill. The Apiary Program currently oversees the queen honey bee breeding sector, offers biosecurity at our ports of entry against honey bee pests, diseases, and undesired genetics, and offers beekeepers support for hive health, including best management practices. This bill will further enable the Department's ability to safeguard the high valued beekeeping industry through increased organization, outreach, recommendations, guidance activities, and by limiting liability.

The Department highlights a few key points of the bill:



- HRS 142-100 (b) enhances confidentiality, removing the business name and address of the registrants and will encourage participation by the beekeepers. An increase in registrations will achieve the Department's goal to gather more beekeeping data to better understand and protect the industry.
- HRS 142-100 (d) promotes the best management practices and statutory references of best voluntary management practices for a foundation for beekeeping practices and expectations from the State.
- HRS 142-100 (f), in conjunction with (d) above, reduces liability statutorily and will promote a healthier, safer, and thriving beekeeping industry.

The positions specified in Section 2(e) to fulfill the purpose of the bill as described should be changed to (1) Entomologist IV and (2) two PCT IV positions and would be sufficient for the Department to implement the Program as described in the bill.

The Department is requesting an allocation of \$103,000 to fund the Entomologist IV position. Additional allocation would provide the Department with equipment and a vehicle.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



WENDY GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
January 27, 2025
1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

SENATE BILL NO. 765
RELATING TO BEEKEEPING

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of Senate Bill 765, which seeks to establish definitions, characteristics, and best management practices for registered beekeepers in Hawaii. This bill is a critical step in advancing the beekeeping industry, protecting Hawaii's environment, and supporting the essential role of pollinators in agriculture.

The Importance of Defining Registered Beekeepers and Best Practices

Hawaii's beekeeping industry plays a crucial role in pollinating local crops, maintaining ecological balance, and supporting the production of high-quality honey and other hive products. However, the absence of clear

definitions and standards has created challenges for beekeepers and policymakers alike. Senate Bill 765 aims to:

1. **Provide Clear Guidelines for Registration:** Defining the characteristics of registered beekeepers ensures accountability and professionalism within the industry. This clarity will help the state track beekeeping operations, monitor bee health, and address challenges like diseases and pests.
2. **Establish Industry Standards and Best Practices:** Setting clear industry standards ensures that all beekeepers—whether hobbyist or commercial—follow practices that promote healthy bee populations, sustainable apiary management, and environmental stewardship.
3. **Promote Public Safety and Awareness:** Properly defining best management practices minimizes risks to both the public and the environment, particularly in urban and residential areas where beekeeping is becoming more popular.

The Economic and Financial Impact of Hawaii's Beekeeping Industry

Beekeeping is not only an ecological necessity but also an economic driver in Hawaii. The financial impact of the industry is significant, directly benefiting local farmers, beekeepers, and the overall economy.

Pollination Services: Bees are vital to the success of Hawaii's agricultural sector. Approximately 70% of Hawaii's crops rely on pollination, including coffee, macadamia nuts, tropical fruits, and vegetables. It is estimated that honeybees contribute over **\$200 million annually** to Hawaii's agricultural economy through improved crop yields and quality.

Honey Production and Hive Products: Hawaii's beekeepers produce some of the world's highest-quality honey, including specialty products such as macadamia nut blossom honey. The state's unique flora allows for premium honey varieties that fetch high prices on local, national, and international markets.

Job Creation: Beekeeping supports a variety of jobs, from full-time beekeepers and farmworkers to equipment suppliers, honey processors, and agricultural advisors. Expanding and protecting the industry will help sustain these jobs and encourage new employment opportunities.

Tourism and Education: Beekeeping contributes to Hawaii's visitor economy by supporting agritourism initiatives such as honey farm tours and educational workshops. These programs not only provide supplemental income for beekeepers but also raise awareness about the importance of pollinators.

Key Benefits of Senate Bill 765

This bill will provide several critical benefits to Hawaii's agricultural and ecological systems, including:

Protecting Pollinators: Bees are essential for pollinating many of Hawaii's agricultural crops. By promoting best practices, SB 765 helps ensure the health and sustainability of bee populations in the state.

Addressing Pest and Disease Management: Hawaii's bees face significant threats from pests like varroa mites, small hive beetles, and diseases. By establishing clear industry standards, the bill helps ensure that registered beekeepers are equipped to manage these challenges effectively.

Supporting Agricultural Productivity: Healthy and well-managed bee populations directly contribute to Hawaii's food security and agricultural success by improving crop yields and quality.

Encouraging Responsible Beekeeping: The bill ensures that all beekeepers, regardless of experience level, follow practices that prioritize the health of their bees, the safety of their neighbors, and the preservation of Hawaii's unique environment.

Best Management Practices and the Future of Beekeeping

Codifying best management practices will benefit the beekeeping community by:

- Establishing standards for hive placement, maintenance, and colony management.
- Promoting education and training for new and existing beekeepers.
- Encouraging collaboration between beekeepers, agricultural stakeholders, and policymakers.
- Reducing the risk of conflicts between beekeepers and neighboring properties.

By adopting these measures, Hawaii will set a standard for excellence in beekeeping that can serve as a model for other states and territories.

Conclusion

Senate Bill 765 is an essential measure for protecting Hawaii's bees, supporting beekeepers, and ensuring the sustainability of agriculture in the

state. By defining the characteristics of registered beekeepers and establishing best management practices, this bill promotes professionalism, public safety, environmental stewardship, and economic growth.

I respectfully urge the committee to support Senate Bill 765 and advance it into law. This legislation is a critical step toward securing a vibrant and sustainable future for Hawaii's beekeeping industry and the broader agricultural economy.

OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRACTICES

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To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

From: Carlotta Amerino, Director

Date: January 27, 2025, 1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room

Re: Testimony on S.B. No. 765
Relating to Beekeeping

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill, which would amend the registration process for beekeepers. The Office of Information Practices (OIP) takes no position on the beekeeper registration process generally, but has concerns regarding an amendment to subsection 142-100(b), HRS, on bill page 3 that would delete the current requirement that the name and business address of registrants be publicly available, even though such information is required to be disclosed under chapter 92F, HRS, the Uniform Information Practices Act (UIPA).

Section 92F-12(a)(13), HRS, requires that the name and business address of a licensee or permittee be publicly disclosed upon request, without application of the UIPA's exceptions. Since a person's status as a registered beekeeper provides limited immunity against civil liability, it seems likely that a registered beekeeper would be considered a licensee or permittee for the purpose of this section, which means that the UIPA would require that such a person's name and business address be publicly available.

Subsection 142-100(b), HRS, as amended would make beekeeper registration information confidential "subject to the limitations on confidentiality imposed under

chapter 92F,” but the deletion of the current proviso requiring public disclosure of beekeepers’ names and business addresses would not actually have the effect of making that information confidential, as one of the “limitations on confidentiality” under the UIPA is the mandated public disclosure of names and business addresses of government licensees and permittees. The amendment would, however, be likely to cause confusion since those concerned might understandably assume that it meant beekeeper names and business addresses would no longer be available to the public. OIP therefore recommends that the proposed amendment to subsection 142-100(b), HRS, be removed from this bill and the original language (which simply restates what the UIPA requires) be restored.

Thank you for considering OIP’s testimony.

Jan. 27, 2025, 1 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 224 and Videoconference

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Sen. Mike Gabbard, Chair
Sen. Herbert "Tim" Richards, III, Vice-Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii
Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: SB765 — RELATING TO BEEKEEPING

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards and other members of the Committee,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** the liability limitations contained in [SB765](#), which would provide that Hawaii beekeepers who adhere to industry best practices are not liable for injuries caused by their apiaries, except for cases of gross negligence or wanton acts or omissions.

Beekeeping holds great promise for Hawaii's agriculture industry. In Hawai'i County alone, beekeeping is a \$20 million-a-year industry,¹ and Big Island breeders already supply 30% to 35% of all queen bees on the mainland and 75% in Canada,² literally helping feed the world.

The legal protections proposed in SB765 would be one step toward making Hawaii a friendlier place for small-scale agriculture and beekeeping in particular, helping hobbyist and commercial beekeepers alike.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

¹ June 20, 2024 meeting of the Leeward Planning Commission. See the [5:29:20 mark](#).

² Ibid.



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January 27, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 765
RELATING TO THE BEEKEEPING

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:00 PM

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

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports the intent of SB 681, which clarifies the registration process for beekeepers with the Department of Agriculture, requires the Department of Agriculture to provide guidance and support to registered beekeepers to help beekeepers adhere to certain industry standards and best management practices, and establishes a limitation on liability for any registered beekeeper who follows industry standards and best practices.

SB 681 represents a valuable opportunity to strengthen Hawaii's beekeeping industry, promote best practices, and ensure that policies do not impose unreasonable restrictions or regulations on our hardworking and important beekeepers.

Beekeeping plays a vital role in Hawaii's agricultural ecosystem. Bees are essential pollinators for many crops, and their health and success are critical to the sustainability of local food production. Additionally, beekeeping contributes to local economies through honey production and related value-added products.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau recognizes the importance of supporting beekeepers in addressing challenges such as pests and diseases, including varroa mites and small hive beetles.

While we support SB 765's intent, we urge the Legislature to ensure that its implementation does not create unreasonable restrictions or regulatory burdens for beekeepers. Specifically:

- **Avoid Overregulation:** The registration process should be straightforward and not overly burdensome, particularly for small-scale or hobbyist beekeepers who contribute significantly to pollination services.
- **Balance Guidance with Flexibility:** Beekeepers operate under diverse conditions, and industry standards should accommodate this diversity. Guidance should serve as a helpful resource rather than a rigid set of requirements.
- **Focus on Collaboration, Not Enforcement:** The emphasis should remain on providing education and support rather than penalizing non-compliance, as many beekeepers are eager to adopt best practices but may lack the resources or knowledge to do so.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau believes SB 765 has the potential to strengthen Hawaii's beekeeping industry, improve pollination for local agriculture, and promote sustainable practices. However, it is essential to strike a balance that supports and guides beekeepers without imposing undue restrictions or regulatory burdens.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our input on this measure.



Testimony of Nathan Trump

Island Harvest Inc.

January 27th, 2025

RE: SB765: RELATING TO BEEKEEPING

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

My name is Nathan Trump, and I am writing on behalf of Island Harvest to support Senate Bill 765 RELATING TO BEEKEEPING. This bill strengthens laws regarding beekeepers in a way that is both supportive of beekeeping and protective of registered beekeepers and the public.

Our macadamia nut farm partners with beekeepers who practice good beekeeping management, promoting the health of our orchards and the health of other bees and native pollinators. Thank you for considering our testimony.

Mahalo,

Nathan Trump

General Manager

Island Harvest Inc.

SB-765

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 12:31:11 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/27/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB 765.

Unlike measures introduced in the past, this bill incentivizes, rather than penalizes beekeepers to register their hives and use best management standards in raising their bees. Many landowners would like to encourage bees on their property, whether for the honey or the pollination benefits. Many have experimented with beekeeping but do not have the knowledge or experience to adequately manage hives.

This bill would fund and require HDOA to establish an apiary program to provide guidance and support to registered beekeepers to help them practice good management. For those that do, the law would place a reasonable limitation on their liability.

Thank you for your support of Hawaii agriculture.

SB-765

Submitted on: 1/26/2025 7:38:35 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/27/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ken Kajihara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I join the introducers in support of SB765. As a lifelong agriculture advocate and former agriculture educator, I believe that this measure will advance this essential profession and provide earnest apiarists with fair protections,

SB 765 Relating to Beekeeping
Testimony in support by David Fuertes

I am a former DOE agriculture teacher at Kohala High School for the past 38 years and presently the Executive Director for an

Aina based 501C3 Nonprofit organization called Kahua Paa Mua. I am in support of SB 765 bill relating to Beekeeping.

Requiring the DOA to provide guidance and support to register Beekeepers will assist them to adhere to certain industry standards for best management practices. Doing this will also decrease liability for Beekeepers who practice best management at their farms.

Bees management are very important to our agriculture industry to increase production and should be taken seriously. Their responsibility as pollinators provides an abundance of our fruits and vegetables. Our state exports "Queen production" to other states to assist them in food production. This fairly new industry adds to an increased economy for Hawaii.

David Fuertes