

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

FEBUARY 3, 2025
1:02 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

SENATE BILL NO. 1187
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL BIOSECURITY

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1187. The bill appropriates funding for permanent positions in agricultural biosecurity established in Act 231, SLH 2024.

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture strongly supports this measure. Biosecurity projects helps protect the State's citizens, environment and fauna. Invasive species can have a devastating effect on the State's forests, economy and the health and safety of its citizens. Continued funding for these positions is critical for the important work of biosecurity to continue and to begin reducing invasive species incidents as well as to prevent future pests.

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

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

Senate Committee on AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

**Monday, February 3, 2025
1:02 PM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of HOUSE BILL 1187 RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL BIOSECURITY.

Senate Bill 1187 Appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture (HDOA) for permanent positions in agricultural biosecurity established by Act 231 in 2024. **The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (Council) supports this measure.**

At the Senate's Finance Committee recent Budget hearings the Chair of the Department of Agriculture stated that invasive species was the most significant issue raised by farmers and ranchers and that biosecurity is the focus of the department ([youtube clip for your reference](#) 20 seconds).

In 2024, the State adopted ACT 231 which raised HDOA's biosecurity budget to over \$19M to address various biosecurity matters across Hawaii as well as funding to hire 44 staff in the following positions: plant quarantine inspectors, entomologists, plant pathologists, planners, environmental health specialists, noxious weed specialists and other support staff.

HDOA informs that the quarantine staff will ensure that inspection and quarantine facilities statewide remain effective, ensuring thorough screening of incoming plants, animals, and agricultural products. Environmental health staff will detect, identify, and combat invasive species, minimizing their impact on Hawai'i's environment and agriculture. Additionally, Rapid Response and Eradication Programs will be funded to enhance their capacity to swiftly address and eradicate invasive species outbreaks before they become widespread. [[reference](#)]

The Council supports this bill as, after ACT 231's passage Governor Green stated protecting Hawai'i's natural resources and agricultural heritage is a top priority, and HDOA's Chair stated that ACT 231's historic investment in biosecurity and invasive species programs will significantly enhance our ability to protect Hawai'i's unique ecosystems and vital agricultural resources

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

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov

TO: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbet M. "Tim" Richards III, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor
Rogerene Arce, Director of Agriculture

DATE: February 1, 2025

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF SB1187, RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL BIOSECURITY

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for permanent positions in agricultural biosecurity established by Act 231, SLH 2024.

We **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

1. Hawai'i is the endemic species, meaning found here and no where else, capital of the world. We have the rarest endemic plants, animals, and micro organisms. All of these species are foundational to our ability to live and thrive here in Hawai'i.
2. Due to lack of biosecurity at all levels, we as a government are losing the fight in protecting our endemic environment. Nearly every endemic species in Hawai'i is either endangered, critically endangered, or extinct. Simply put, without these native species which help to sustain a healthy environment, our ability to inhabit these islands become less likely for our future generations.
3. There are many issues in our overall biosecurity systems, but this bill aims to address one of the many gaps, which is the need for increased Plant Quarantine Inspectors. This won't solve all of our biosecurity issues but it is a step in the right direction.

Mahalo for your consideration.



Officers

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Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

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

The Hawai'i 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 SB1187.**

By appropriating funds to the Department of Agriculture for permanent positions in agricultural biosecurity, the bill directly addresses ongoing threats from invasive species and pests that can devastate local crops. These funds will enable the hiring of dedicated experts who can implement effective biosecurity measures to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful organisms. This proactive approach not only safeguards the livelihoods of local farmers but also preserves the biodiversity that is integral to Hawaii's unique ecosystem.

Strengthening agricultural biosecurity is essential for maintaining the viability of Hawaii's agriculture, and ensuring food security and economic stability for the islands. Local farmers face significant challenges from invasive species that can lead to reduced crop yields, increased costs for pest management, and potential market losses due to quarantine restrictions. By supporting SB1187, we enable a coordinated and comprehensive defense strategy that aligns with long-term agricultural development goals.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 3, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 1187
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:02 PM

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

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 1187, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) for permanent positions in agricultural biosecurity established by Act 231, SLH 2024. Strengthening biosecurity is critical to protecting Hawai'i's agricultural industry, environment, and economy from the increasing threat of invasive species.

Invasive species have become one of the most devastating problems impacting Hawai'i. Many invasive species are damaging Hawai'i's environment and economy. Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers face ongoing challenges from invasive pests such as the coconut rhinoceros beetle, little fire ant, coffee berry borer, two-lined spittlebug, macadamia felted coccid, and varroa mite. These pests cause significant damage to crops, increase production costs, and threaten the viability of local agriculture. Once established, invasive species are costly and difficult to control, making prevention and early intervention essential.

Proper funding for DOA is 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. Funding permanent biosecurity positions ensures that DOA has the necessary personnel to conduct critical inspections, enforce quarantine regulations, and implement pest management programs. A well-staffed biosecurity team improves the state's ability to detect and mitigate threats before they cause irreversible harm to Hawai'i's farms and ecosystems.

We request that program funding from HB 2619, CD1, SLH 2024 be included as an amendment to SB 1187 to ensure that biosecurity efforts are fully resourced. In addition to personnel, adequate program funding is necessary to support surveillance, research, and rapid response initiatives. Providing ongoing financial support for biosecurity programs will allow DOA to effectively combat invasive species and protect Hawai'i's agricultural economy.

Prog ID/Org	Position Title/Program Description	Position #	MOF	FTE (P)	FTE (T)	FY 25 \$
AGR 122 EB	Risk Assessment		A			1,000,000
AGR 122 EB	Pest Management Systems Approach		A			1,200,000
AGR 122 EB	Brown Tree Snake Rapid Response		A			1,100,000
AGR 122 EC	Pest Diagnostics		A			500,000
AGR 122 EC	Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Response		A			1,500,000
AGR 122 EA	Green Waste		A			1,000,000
AGR 122 EA	Compost Reimbursement		A			500,000
AGR122	Public Awareness Campaign		A			2,000,000
AGR 122 EB	Little Fire Ants Response		A			2,500,000
AGR 122 EB	Coqui Frog Response		A			100,000
AGR 122 EB	Invasive Species Outreach		A			100,000
AGR 122 EA	Tech Upgrades		A			2,000,000
AGR 122 EB	Import Replacement Fund		A			500,000
AGR 122 EA	Biosecurity Facility Planning		A			1,500,000
AGR 122 EA	Rose-Ringed Parakeet		A			300,000
AGR 122 EC	Two-Lined Spittlebug		A			800,000

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 resources to DOA 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 matter.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

SB1187
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL BIOSECURITY

Monday, February 3, 2025, 1:02 PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB1187** which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for permanent positions in agricultural biosecurity established by Act 231, SLH 2024.

Biosecurity should be a high priority for Hawaii as a remote, island state. In order for the Department of Agriculture to effectively carry out its duties, it needs the funds for permanent positions to attract highly qualified candidates to fill these positions.

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





January 31, 2025

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

Support of SB 1187 (Appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture [DOA] for permanent positions in agricultural biosecurity established by Act 231, Session Laws of Hawaii [SLH] 2024.)

**Monday, February 3, 2025, at 1:02 p.m.,
State Capitol, Conference Room 224, & Videoconference**

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers, and utility companies. LURF’s mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational, and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii’s significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express its **support of SB 1187**, and of the various agricultural stakeholder groups who defend the goals of viable agricultural operations and the conservation and protection of agriculture, including important agricultural lands in Hawaii.

SB 1187. This bill appropriates funds out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii for the support of the 44 full-time equivalent (44.0 FTE) permanent agricultural biosecurity positions established pursuant to Act 231, SLH 2024.

LURF’s Position. In 2024, the Hawaii State Legislature voted unanimously to pass HB 2619 (now Act 231, SLH 2024), which bill was considered critical by the local agriculture industry, and the top priority of the Hawaii Farm Bureau. Invasive species such as insects, disease-bearing organisms, reptiles, weeds, and other pests pose the greatest threat to Hawaii’s economy, tourism, agriculture, the natural environment, native species and the health and lifestyle of Hawaii’s people. In Hawaii, invasive species cause millions of dollars in crop losses, the extinction of native species, the destruction of native wet, moist, and dry land forests, the spread of disease, and the quarantine of exported agricultural crops.

By its passage of HB 2619 in 2024, the Legislature appropriated nearly \$20 million toward the battle against invasive species, providing the DOA support to fight those threats to the State's fragile environment and to help the local agricultural industries, however, a line-item reduction of the appropriation issued by the State Administration reduced said appropriation to \$10 million. HB 2619 designates the DOA as the lead agency in the work to combat invasive species and requires it to coordinate the State's invasive pest control and biosecurity efforts.

The public's health and welfare would benefit by continued and further funding of these biosecurity programs, including the 44 full-time (44.0 FTE) permanent agricultural biosecurity positions established by Act 231, SLH 2024, and identified in this bill.

This measure is also consistent with the underlying intent and objectives of the IAL laws (Hawaii Revised Statutes [HRS], Sections 205-41 to 52), which were enacted to fulfill the mandate in Article XI, Section 3 of the Hawaii State Constitution, "to conserve and protect agricultural lands, promote diversified agriculture, increase agricultural self-sufficiency and assure the availability of agriculturally suitable lands." As noted in HRS Section 205-41, the intent of Act 183 (2005) was to develop agricultural incentive programs to promote agricultural viability, sustained growth of the agricultural industry, and the long-term use and protection of important agricultural lands for agricultural use. Passage of the long-awaited IAL legislation would be pointless without funding for the implementation of programs and positions within the DOA's biosecurity program.

By recognizing the significance of and need to improve and protect the local agriculture industry, establish programs, and fund positions which help to support the growth and maintenance of agriculture in the State, this bill significantly helps to promote economically viable agriculture and food self-sufficiency in Hawaii.

For the above reasons, LURF **supports SB 1187** and respectfully urges your favorable consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding this matter.



EAST OAHU COUNTY FARM BUREAU

910 CALIFORNIA AVE., WAHIAWA, HI 96786

February 2, 2025

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair, and Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards III, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Environment
State Capitol, 415 S. Beretania St.
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

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

The East O'ahu County Farm Bureau, which represents approximately 420 farmers and supporters of agriculture from Waimanalo to Kahuku, **strongly supports SB 1187**, "Relating to Agricultural Biosecurity," which would provide funding for the 44 full-time equivalent agricultural biosecurity positions established by Act 231 (2024).

Invasive pests are a major threat to Hawai'i's agriculture industry. Recently, the coconut rhinoceros beetle has devastated coconut palms on O'ahu. Invasive species such as the little fire ant, rose-ringed parakeet, and many others threaten our crops, our workers, and our livelihoods. Hawai'i depends on food and other goods shipped from the U.S. mainland and elsewhere in the world, and any of these shipments can contain another pest, weed, or pathogen. The biosecurity positions that would be funded by SB 1187 would add greatly to HDOA's ability to inspect incoming shipments, identify potential threats, and reduce the risk that new pests and crop or livestock diseases will enter the State. We therefore respectfully urge your Committee to pass SB 1187.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter of great importance to Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers.

Sincerely,

Frederick M. Mencher
for Grant Hamachi, President
East O'ahu County Farm Bureau



The Senate
Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Monday, February 3, 2025
1:02 pm Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
State Capitol

Testimony in Support of SB 1187

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

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is **in support of SB 1187** *Relating to Agricultural Biosecurity*. This bill provides the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) with appropriations to support 44 full-time employee (FTE) positions pursuant to Act 231, Session Laws of Hawaii 2024.

HDOA receives less than half of a percent of the state budget to support all of its branches and functions. The appropriation of funds for the positions listed in SB 1187 would support three of HDOA's core biosecurity functions: the inspection of domestic goods, inspection and actions to prevent or reduce inter-and intrastate movement of pests, and pesticide regulation. Mahalo for the opportunity to support the bill and for consideration of our testimony.

Aloha,

Christy Martin
CGAPS Program Manager

Stephanie Easley
CGAPS Legal Fellow

SB-1187

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 3:32:41 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa M Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB 1187 RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL BIOSECURITY.

Mahalo,

Theresa Thompson

SB-1187

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 5:13:04 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support

SB-1187

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 5:40:47 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melanie Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill to support the establishment and hiring of biosecurity staff to prevent the entry of plants and animals that may introduce disease that may harm Hawaii's animal and livestock

SB-1187

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 10:02:14 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

I **strongly** support this measure.

SB-1187

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 12:12:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this measure.