



Legislative Update from...

Senator Mike Gabbard

August 2016

Aloha e Friends,

I'd like to invite you to a meeting to discuss the pueo (*Asio flammeus sandwichensis*), a subspecies of the short-eared owl, in the Ewa/Kapolei region on August 18th from 6pm to 8pm at the [UH West O'ahu](#) Multi-Purpose Room (91-1001 Farrington Hwy). I'll be co-hosting this meeting with Rep. Ty Cullen, the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Over the last several months, members of the community have expressed concern about this endemic species. The purpose of this meeting will be to bring together some experts to discuss the pueo and to get input from the community on possible future action. Parking will be available in the non-permit lot, located on your right as you arrive on campus. We'll have a greeter to direct you to the room.

As always, please feel free to contact me at 586-6830 or email sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov if I can help you or your family in any way. You can also follow me on Twitter @senmikegabbard, Instagram @sengabbard, or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/senmikegabbard>.

COMMITTEE CHAIR

Water, Land & Agriculture

MEMBER

Transportation & Energy

Judiciary and Labor

Higher Education and the Arts

District 20

Kapolei, Makakilo and portions of Ewa, Kalaheo, and Waipahu



Hemp Hemp Hooray!

July 7, 2016 will hopefully be remembered as the day we began moving forward with a new industry. This is because Governor Ige signed [SB 2659](#), a bill I introduced, into law as Act

228. The new law allows a pilot research program for industrial hemp, including its commercial cultivation. If you're not familiar, hemp is a cousin of marijuana, but it **can't** get you high. It's used in over 25,000 products, including food, clothing, fuel, and even medicine. Unfortunately, hemp hasn't been grown in the U.S. until very recently because our federal government includes hemp on the Schedule 1 drug list with drugs like heroin and LSD. We're able to move forward with our program because it will be set up under our Department of Agriculture, which is authorized under the federal Farm Bill. Before long, we'll have local farmers growing this sustainable crop and keeping some of that \$620 million that's going overseas every year to pay for hemp products made in countries, like China and Canada. Let's get this *hempening*!



Sen. Gabbard and his wife, Carol, were invited on board the Indian naval ship SATPURA by Ambassador Venkatesan Ashok, Consul General of India, San Francisco & Commodore Sandeep Mehta, Naval Attache, Embassy of India, Washington, DC. to welcome RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific Exercise) participating navies to Hawai'i on July 10.

Sen. Gabbard gave a welcome speech, representing the state of Hawai'i, and on behalf of his daughter, Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, representing the U.S. Congress, during the India Country reception. Here, he and Carol enjoy gourmet food onboard the ship. Special thanks to Commodore Sandeep Mehta, for his excellent hosting. Sen. Gabbard said, "the samosas and gulab jamuns were awesome!"

Revocable Permit Info Briefing

As Chair of the Water, Land, and Agriculture (WLA) Committee, I held an informational briefing on July 13 on the Report and Recommendations of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Revocable Permit Task Force. Revocable permits (RPs) are short-term leases for state land. An RP for land is a temporary month-to-month permit for up to a year. However, RPs can be extended for multiple years with approval of the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR). As of 2015, the Land Division RP list consisted of 340 permits, containing about 97,650 acres (this is about 152 square miles, more than twice the size of [Ni'ihau](#)) of land and generating about \$2,032,000 in annual rents. As background, it came to light earlier this year that the DLNR's RP program was fraught with inconsistencies and lacked clear, logical protocols and criteria. In response, DLNR convened a Task Force to improve its revocable permit program in February 2016. On May 27, 2016, the Task Force issued its report and recommendations, which were unanimously approved by BLNR on June 24. At the briefing, DLNR reported to the WLA Committee their plans to ensure that RPs going forward will be awarded based on fair reasons, with fair competition, and at a fair price. It's good that the spotlight was shined on the RP program, because it definitely needs work. My hat's off to Suzanne Case and her team for jumping on this and forming the Task Force to improve things. At this point, it's my responsibility as the Chair of the WLA Committee to make sure we see these improvements move forward. And if things don't improve, then the Legislature should step in and pass the appropriate laws to make additional changes.

Governor's Vetoes and Override

On July 11, Governor Ige vetoed seven bills passed by the Legislature in 2016. As reference, 264 bills became law. The Legislature went into Special Session on July 12, July 18, and July 20 to consider overriding his vetoes. In the end, the Legislature chose to override only one, [Senate Bill 2077](#). The override vote was 18-4 in the Senate and 43-3 in the House. I supported the override. SB 2077 is for the purpose of providing benefits to the 1,500 workers of the three Maui state hospitals that are transitioning to privatization under Kaiser Permanente. This transition plan has been in the courts because of a lawsuit filed by [United Public Workers](#). This bill will allow the workers to choose between a lump-sum cash payment and a special employer subsidized early retirement benefit. My thinking in supporting the bill is that it will save the state \$260 million over 10 years by privatizing these hospitals and that this bill is needed to keep the deal from unraveling. Also, it's fair to help these workers who are being privatized against their will.



Sen. Gabbard hugs Nelson Wong from Palama Settlement, while Andrew Yani - Hawaii Nature Center board member, Suzanne Case - Chairperson for the Hawaii DLNR (Department of Land and Natural Resources); and others look on, during a Bill Signing Ceremony at the Hawai'i Nature Center's Rain Pavilion, to recognize the passing of seven water-related bills, on June 30.

Kapolei Heritage Center Grand Opening

I participated in the Grand Opening of the [Kapolei Heritage Center](#) (KHC) in Kapolei on July 16. This important project, located behind the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands headquarters, was spearheaded by the Kapolei Community Development Corporation (KCDC), which has a mission to foster family and cultural preservation. KHC represents the vision of Kapolei homestead residents. The now completed phase 1 of KHC has a certified kitchen and two classrooms.



The community is looking forward to the other phases which will include a great hall for family events, an art gallery, a storefront for cultural practitioners, offices for community work, and outdoor learning areas.



Mahalo to the KCDC Board, President Joe Kūhiō Lewis, Treasurer Jame Schaedel, Secretary Kanani Sang, Director Kaleo Keawe-Aiko, as well as the original founders, Auntie Shirley Swinney and Auntie Homelani Schaedel for their tireless efforts. KCDC has created a sense of self and place that will help build the community to benefit current and future generations.



Sen. Gabbard presented Honorary Certificates from the Hawaii State Senate to the head coach and players from the 2016 Kapolei High School Baseball Team, in the Senate Chambers on July 12. Kapolei High School won the O'ahu Interscholastic Association Division II title and was runner-up in the Hawai'i High School Athletic Association State Championship (lost to Kamehameha Schools-Hawai'i 5-4 on May 7, 2016). They finished the season with an impressive 15-1 record. Their head coach, Thomas Ebanetz, was named OIA D-II coach of the Year. Congrats to all!

(Pictured L-R: Sen. Gabbard, Corey Slade, Bradyn Yoshida, Landon Kuroda, Mykah Kuratani, Kyler Nakashima, Kamea Wong, Evan Nakamura, Ty-Noah Williams, Isaac Badua, DJ Tapat, and Head Coach -Thomas Ebanetz. *Not pictured*: Tristen Manoha-Diaz, Cobey Fujii, Jacob Filio, Joe Uesato, Andrei Stoyanow, Zachary Collins, Shaden-Micah Ramelb, Joseph Ching, Joshua Wallwork, Adam Berg, and Assistant Coaches : Huey Say, Ronald Young, Jonathon Kaina, Darren Chun, Reid Young.)

Lauhala Weaving Workshop

The [Malama Learning Center](#) is hosting a workshop on lauhala weaving at Kapolei High School from 9am to 12pm on August 13. The beginner's workshop will be led by Nanakuli High and Intermediate school instructor, Lewelynn Kirkland. This will be a hands-on class in basket

weaving and rose-making and is appropriate for those 8 years old and older. You'll learn how to weave a small lauhala basket and how to make lauhala roses to



decorate the box! Cost for the workshop is \$20 per person and \$50 per family (up to 3 people). For more information and to register, please visit

malamalearningcenter.org



It's time to fully exploit hemp production

I co-authored the following article with Vermont hemp farmer, [Doug Fine](#), and Hawai'i Farmers Union United Hemp Chair, [Denise Key](#). It was printed in the Honolulu Star Advertiser on July 17, 2016.

On July 7, Gov. David Ige signed into law what might prove to be the most important piece of economic legislation in the past 50 years. Hawaii now enjoys the best hemp law in the nation.

We who have been active in bringing back hemp to agriculture believe that generations will still be saying mahalo to those who worked, some for decades, to get this law passed. Now it's time to implement it.

The hemp industry is growing 1,000 percent per year in the U.S., despite the "research only" provision for hemp in federal law. No place is more ready to lead hemp's resurgence than the Aloha State. Our year-round cultivation climate, small farmer infrastructure, and bottom line need for a regenerative agriculture economy means we have all the pieces of the puzzle.

And what does the finished puzzle look like? If we properly implement hemp into the islands' soil and finished products, we can move steadily toward food, energy and even industrial independence. Soon we will be printing homes and cars on the island from 3D printers using Hawaii-grown hemp composites and glues.

How do we get there? Thanks to recent friendly federal legislation, individual farmers who are part of state hemp programs are allowed to cultivate for any purpose, in any acreage amount. Farmers are even allowed to market (that is, to sell) the crop as part of the industry's research.

The federal government has had no problem with these policies: hemp has tremendous support on the federal level, thanks in no small part to co-sponsorship of S. 134 and H.R. 525, which calls for full commercial hemp legalization, by U.S. Sens. Mazie Hirono and Brian Schatz, and U.S. Reps. Tulsi Gabbard and Mark Takai.

There is no need for caution. With full commercial legalization around the corner and an industry that today nets a billion dollars annually for Canada, it is imperative that we establish the broadest regulations for our nascent hemp industry so that we are on the leading edge when the industry breaks out. After all, on a level playing field, who can compete with the Hawaii Hemp Brand?

If we allow our farmers, processors and entrepreneurs to launch the industry with the properly wide trajectory, we are setting the stage for a small farmer renaissance, a lucrative cottage industry and a leading nanotechnology research center. Research shows hemp provides the best fiber for clean, powerful next-generation batteries.

Most of all, hemp's return is a key step toward Hawaii's food and energy independence. The seed provides a superfood for humans and livestock, the fiber builds homes and provides energy, and the flower market is a fast-growing nutraceutical industry in itself.

To concerns that it is costly to administer a hemp program because of the current need to test hemp crops (for THC levels), we point out two things: Vermont, a state without a large budget, allows an unlimited (and fast-growing) number of hemp farmers with a comparable registration fee structure to ours. This includes all fees including testing. It's not too burdensome. If they can do it, we can.

There is no need to restrict project applications (some states do, some don't, soon none will): The more Hawaii hemp farmers, the better, from Year 1.

Even a half-million-dollar budget is small change for the billions that are going to come from the hemp economy in Hawaii. Any effort we put toward nurturing hemp is money and time well spent.

The crop is a key part of Hawaii's future.