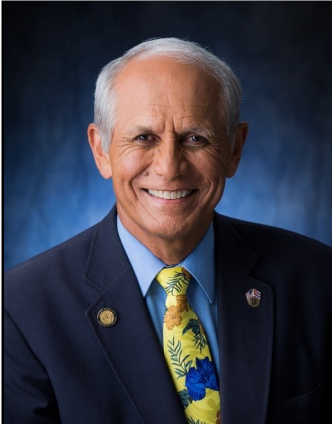


The Senate
STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

Senator Mike Gabbard

Legislative update...



Aloha e Friends,

I hope you and your 'ohana are well. As usual, the session has been running at warp speed with close to 3,000 bills being introduced (1,317 by the Senate and 1,601 by the House). All the bills which passed out of their respective committees will be voted on Third Reading by the entire Senate on **March 7**. The bills that pass Third Reading will then be heard by the respective committees on the House side. At the same time, House bills that pass Third Reading are heard by the Senate. This is called "First Crossover."

I encourage you to visit capitol.hawaii.gov to track the bills you're interested in and weigh in when you can, either by submitting written testimony, or by showing up in person to testify. As always, please feel free to contact me at 586-6830 or 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 www.facebook.com/senmikegabbard.



Sen. Gabbard spoke to cadets from Class 46 of the Hawai'i Youth Challenge Academy O'ahu during a tour of the Hawai'i State Capitol on Feb. 13.

Mike

AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE (AEN) UPDATE

KEY AEN BILLS I INTRODUCED THAT ARE STILL ALIVE AND WILL BE VOTED ON BY THE FULL SENATE MARCH 7 ARE:

AG LOANS [SB 352](#)

It's difficult to get the needed startup funds as a beginning farmer. The Department of Agriculture's (DOA) most productive program to help farmers is their ag loan program. The average loan to farmers is about \$50,000. I'm asking for \$5 million for the ag loan program, and am hoping we'll be able to get as close as possible to that amount.

INDUSTRIAL HEMP [SB 773](#)

Our industrial hemp pilot program, created by a bill I introduced last session, is moving forward. The Request for Proposal (RFP) for the seed production will be out within the week. The DOA is currently working on the "Admin Rules," which will be in place July 1. If SB 773 passes, it will provide funding for the pilot program for the upcoming biennium, create a special fund where the licensing fees could be deposited, and provide funding for a full-time program coordinator position and full-time inspector for the industrial hemp program. This time next year, we'll have farmers around the state growing hemp! Hemp, hemp, hooray!

March 2017
Vol. 11 Issue 3

COMMITTEE CHAIR

- ◆ Agriculture & Environment

VICE CHAIR

- ◆ Water and Land

MEMBER

- ◆ Judiciary & Labor

DISTRICT 20

Kapolei, Makakilo and portions of Ewa, Kalaeloa and Waipahu

NEXT "LISTEN STORY"

My next Listen Story meeting will be held Saturday, May 6th from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. at Kapolei High School Teachers' Lounge, next to the cafeteria. (We skip April due to the numerous hearings and general crazy "busy-ness" that occur during this time.) If you can't make it in May, send me an email, and I'll send you a summary of the meeting.

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AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT (AEN) COMMITTEE UPDATE

INVASIVE SPECIES AUTHORITY [SB 776](#)

Consider these [facts](#): *Red Imported Fire Ants* are predicted to cost Hawai'i \$211 million per year. The *brown tree snake* could cause upward of \$2.14 billion per year in economic damages if it was able to get into the wild here. According to a recent [study](#), *Little Fire Ants* could cost us more than \$6 billion over the next 35 years for Hawai'i Island alone. The good news is that Governor Ige has stepped up on this issue and has launched the *Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan (2017-2027)*. A key component of the plan is the passage of SB 776. The idea with this bill is to create the Hawai'i Invasive Species Authority, attached to DOA, to increase the state's coordination efforts in reducing the threat of invasive species in our islands. The bill would also fund positions and operational expenses for the *Hawai'i Invasive Species Authority* and provide funding for interagency projects and research.

PESTICIDE REGULATION [SB 778](#)

Going into the session, I was looking for a win-win on the pesticide issue. The federal courts struck down county action on the GMO/pesticide issue and declared that the responsibility for regulation was clearly with the state. SB 778 would provide the DOA with \$3 million to implement the recommendations that came out of the *Pesticide Use Joint Fact Finding Study Group Report* last year. This would enable the DOA to: (1) increase human and environmental safety; (2) further determine the presence of pesticides in people, plants, and animals; (3) achieve the greatest possible transparency and public access to data while respecting information that must legally remain confidential; and (4) advance public understanding of agricultural pesticides. DOA is already working with the Department of Health (DOH) on these areas as it relates to restricted-use pesticides: environmental sampling, interagency response exercises for pesticide incidents; and public education and outreach; so this bill ties in well.

Ag Day at the Capitol



Sen. Gabbard co-sponsored "Ag Day 2017" on Feb. 23. Pictured here with 808 Clean-ups! L-R: Yukashi Smith, Economic Development Specialist; Marci Clingan, Secretary; Fawn Liebengood, Research Statistician III; Sen. Gabbard; and Sharon Hurd, Acting Administrator of Agricultural Development Division.

ary Certificate from the State Senate to David Do, General Manager, and Michael Tsang, Managing Director, in honor of their Grand Opening of *MyGoCenter* in Kapolei. With Kapolei businesses thriving, more and more professionals in our community are working from home. *MyGoCenter* provides an option where people can hold meetings and sit in a comfortable place with wifi... without having to meet at a coffee shop or the mall. *MyGoCenter* is the first community business center in Kapolei that offers professionals an environment that combines all the services of an executive office suite, without the high cost of renting a permanent office.

On February 23, I co-sponsored (along with Senator Riviere and Reps Creagan & DeCoite) "2017 Ag Awareness Day" – or "Ag Day at the Capitol." I visited the numerous educational display booths and spoke with many of the organizations and businesses that were represented, to learn more about agriculture across our state. Now in its 12th year, the event showcases Hawai'i's diverse agricultural industry and the many partnerships that make up this thriving industry!

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Community Business Center Opens in Kapolei

On February 9, I presented an Honor-



Sen. Gabbard presented an honorary certificate for the grand opening of *MyGoCenter* in Kapolei on Feb. 9. Pictured L-R: Juno Tsang, Ji Mi Tsang, Michael Tsang, Mila Tsang, Sabyn Tsang, David Do, Sen. Gabbard.

MOLOKA'I FARM TRIP

On February 28, I had the opportunity to visit several farms on Moloka'i. The agricultural community on the island is strong, thanks to the hard work from our farmers and ranchers and support from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Besides providing monetary support for soil and water conservation in designated areas, the USDA has a *Plant Materials Center* to help farmers and ranchers with new plants, and a field office to give technical assistance on Moloka'i. Tony Ingersoll, Assistant Director of Technology for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, hosted the tour of the following farms:

Kainalu Ranch has been run by owner Kip Dunbar's family for 100 years. The family originally grew pineapple on the 1,200-acre property before switching to raising cattle. Kip wants to work on a market for venison in the future to address Moloka'i's massive deer problem.



Sen. Gabbard took a tour of Kainalu Ranch on Moloka'i on Feb. 28 with owner, Kip Dunbar.



Sen. Gabbard visited J & K Farms in Ho'olehua on Moloka'i on Feb. 28. Pictured left to right: Wally Jennings, Sen. Gabbard, Maigee Chang, John Freeman.

J & K Farm in Ho'olehua, run by John Freeman, covers a 40-acre homestead lot from the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL). The farm grows about 20 acres of papaya and uses biochar, plant-based charcoal, in its farming practices. John teaches farmers how to control their bee pollinators, after he lost crops to poor pollination a few years ago. He also helps teach dozens of homestead families how to farm.

L & R Farms, run by State Rep. Lynn DeCoite and her husband, Russell, is the largest sweet potato farm in Hawai'i, growing the famous Moloka'i purple sweet potato. The farm is on 90-acres of land from the DHHL. Rep. DeCoite is a third-generation homestead farmer and serves as the Vice-Chair of the House Committee on Agriculture.



Sen. Gabbard visited L & R Farms on Moloka'i on Feb. 28. Pictured left to right: Russell DeCoite, Rep. Lynn DeCoite, Sen. Gabbard.

The **Moloka'i Livestock Cooperative (MLC)**, run by Jack Spruance, is the island's only slaughterhouse, providing local and neighbor island vendors with grass-fed, hormone-free beef. MLC operates on a small scale, processing about 800 animals a year, compared to mainland facilities that process 3,000 to 5,000 per day. The smaller operation allows MLC to provide high-quality meat with the highest USDA Food Service Inspection Service standards. With a massive deer population of about 60,000 on Moloka'i, Jack is looking into producing deer sausage at MLC.

Hikiola Cooperative in Ho'olehua, run by Tina Tamanaha, provides critical support for farmers and ranchers on Moloka'i as an agricultural supplier. The cooperative was formed in 1976 by homestead farmers who anticipated the end of pineapple production on Moloka'i and began farming their own homesteads. Hikiola provides supplies for farmers, including fencing, irrigation equipment, fertilizers, etc., and eases the startup process for small farmers through their supply services.



Sen. Gabbard takes a closer look at the tea plants of Anakahi LLC on Feb. 28. Pictured left to right: Sen. Gabbard, Adolph Helm.

Anakahi LLC, run by Adolph Helm and his son, Kanoho, is a 35-acre homestead farm focusing on growing tea plants, such as mamaki and lemongrass. Anakahi i also grows mango, 'awa, bananas, kalo, and 'ulu. Besides farming, Adolph has taken part in conservation efforts for Hawai'i's native owl, the pueo, by creating a pueo sanctuary on his property.

We wrapped up the Moloka'i tour at the **NRCS Ho'olehua Field Office and Plant Materials Center**. Under the management of Kawika



Sen. Gabbard visited the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Ho'olehua Field Office and Plant Materials Center on Feb. 28. Pictured left to right: Tony Ingersoll, Morgan Pua'a, Sen. Gabbard, Wally Jennings, Maigee Chang, Ann English, Keni Reyes, Kawika Duvauchelle, Kristin Coehlo, Kawila Pua'a.

Duvauchelle, the office is responsible for the entire Pacific Island region, the focus of which is to develop, test, and transfer plant science technology to farmers and ranchers. The office also operates the 80-acre Plant Materials Center and offers a seed storage unit, a field planting program, demonstration planting, and harvest/seed cleaning technique instruction. With a staff of five workers, the NRCS Ho'olehua Field Office gives invaluable support to Hawai'i's farmers and agricultural industry.

LEGISLATIVE HONOREE

HONORING AND CONGRATULATING “AUNTIE DEBS”

"The surest way to be happy is to seek happiness for others."

— Martin Luther King Jr.



Sen. Gabbard honored “Auntie Debs” on the Senate Floor with an Honorary Certificate on Feb. 22. Pictured L-R: Carmelo Santiago-Lopez, Jessica Santiago-Lopez, Jack Gaidos, Debs’s father, Mitch Dudoit, Debs’s husband, Debs Dudoit, Sen. Gabbard, and U’i Kuie’e.

I honored Debs Dudoit, or “Auntie Debs” as the old-timers call her, with an Honorary Certificate from the Hawai'i State Senate on February 22. Debs has a big heart and it shows. Each Christmas (and other holidays as well), she brings home-cooked food, prepared with warm aloha, to the U.S. Vets Center at Barbers Point.

This tradition began over 10 years ago when Auntie Debs visited her nephew at the shelter each month, bringing plates of pasta for him and a few friends. Now, she and her husband and friends bring enough food for over 70 Vets, along with gifts and a live band!

What keeps her coming back every year to serve the Vets? Debs says she does it from her heart — she loves seeing the smiles on their faces, not to mention all the hugs and kisses she gets. This special lady has even received three marriage proposals! Jack Gaidos, Debs’s dad, who’s also a veteran, loves joining the parties as well... especially when he gets to swap war stories with the guys.

As Debs Dudoit insists on not taking all the credit, I’d be remiss not to mention her other friends and groups that have helped over the years, such as Ulu Crowell, U’i Kuie’e, and Ron and Momi Szypulski. For the past seven years, Deb’s friends, Vietnam veteran Carmelo Santiago-Lopez and his wife Jessica, have also been cooking and serving meals to the Vets. It was a real pleasure to meet and honor Debs and her husband, father, and friends. Their efforts to bring love and caring to those who might otherwise be forgotten, is inspiring. Their selfless acts of aloha bring a smile to our faces and warm our hearts. Mahalo, Auntie Debs, for sharing your aloha and making a difference in the lives of so many.