

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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**MORRIS M. ATTA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**FEBRUARY 8, 2023  
11:30 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 489  
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE**

Chairpersons Gates and Holt and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 489. The bill requires the Animal Industry Division of the Department of Agriculture to administer an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State; requires the Animal Industry Division to develop a risk-based framework for the aquatic livestock assessment and approval process and to undertake certain activities to develop and expand the aquaculture industry; and defines aquatic biorisk, aquatic livestock, and biocontainment. The Department supports this bill.

The bill will ensure that aquatic species movement, subject to review, will be administered by staff who are familiar with the aquatic livestock species and will continue to apply a science-based decision-making framework. Plant Quarantine Branch's (PQB) administrative rules regulates incoming animals and organisms by species. This bill references general categories without identifying species. The use of categories rather than species may require rule changes. Additionally, while the measure does not appear to alter the permitting process, if the bill contemplates the



issuance of permits to achieve its intended results, such authority to issue permits must be established. The Department notes that its mission with respect to importation of new species is to prevent and mitigate against the introduction and spread of harmful species and disease. Our support for this measure is premised on the understanding that it will not significantly compromise or impair our ability to do so while seeking to achieve the important objectives of this bill. HDOA is requesting \$900,000 for a two-year project to properly develop the system. The project will include assessing and recategorizing the aquatic livestock on the current Plant Quarantine Branch lists and developing a new risk-based organism assessment process for importation. Subject matter experts will review the process and ensure the approach is realistic and incorporates a broad area of expertise. Concurrently, the Animal Industry Division will review the relevant Hawaii Administrative Rules to provide comment.

As such, the Department supports this measure, provided it does not impact the Department's priorities identified in the Executive Budget request. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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)

February 8, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**TESTIMONY ON HB 489**  
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference  
11:30 AM

Aloha Chairs Gates and Holt, Vice-Chair Kahaloa and Lamosao, 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, with comments, SB 114**, which requires the Animal Industry Division of the Department of Agriculture to administer an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State, requires the Animal Industry Division to develop a risk-based framework for the aquatic livestock assessment and approval process and to undertake certain activities to develop and expand the aquaculture industry, and defines aquatic biorisk, aquatic livestock, and biocontainment.

Hawai'i had an innovative aquaculture development program (ADP) during the 1980s and 1990s, initially under DBEDT, then DLNR, and finally DOA. However, with declining support, ADP lost its critical advocacy role to assist the industry's economic development. ADP was downsized and made a Branch under the Animal Industry Division of the Department of Agriculture and the new mission emphasized product marketing rather than broad-spectrum industry development.

The Legislature acknowledged the importance of Hawai'i's aquaculture industry by revitalizing the Aquaculture Development Program (ADP) through Act 63, SLH 2019, and in SLH 2022 provided funding for 4 positions for ADP. Supporting local aquacultural production can help the State move toward greater food sustainability and there is significant growth potential for the aquaculture industry in Hawai'i.

ADP assists prospective farmers and investors in many ways, including technical assistance, help with site selection and permitting, and perhaps most importantly, providing a strong voice within the government in support of aquaculture as a desirable and appropriate industry for Hawai'i. ADP has played a large part in creating an industry that, starting from almost zero in the 1970s, now generates more than \$70 million annually and is one of the largest sectors of Hawai'i's diversified agriculture.

However, more investment and research into the aquaculture industry is needed, including investment and research into different types of aquaculture, aquaculture system optimization, economic implications of various methods of aquaculture production, and sustainable scaling methods.

The current process may be lengthy, but it is thorough. When considering the risk of introduction and establishment of yet another highly destructive and ecosystem-changing invasive species, disease, or parasite, the prudent approach may be the wiser one.

Currently, HDOA's Plant Industry Division regulates the importation, possession, and transfer of plant, non-domestic animal, and microorganism species, which include micro and macroalgae, used for aquaculture. HRS Chapter 150A and Hawai'i Administrative Rules §4-71 sets forth the framework and permit conditions for allowing the importation of non-domestic animals. Aquatic plant and animal import permits and interisland movement are and have been effectively managed by the Plant Quarantine Branch. The process includes expert reviews, reviews, and public hearings of the Advisory Committee on Plants and Animals, testimony from the applicant along with public testimony, and importantly, review and decision by the Board of Agriculture.

Without explicitly stating it, this bill proposes to circumvent that process, mandatory public involvement, and usurp the authority of the Board of Agriculture in decision-making. This is concerning, especially when the consequences could be so dire. As we all know, preventing new destructive species and threats from entering the State is ***much*** preferable than trying to control them once they're here.

Transferring the assessment and approval process from the Plant Industry Division to the Animal Industry Division could be beneficial and streamline the approval process for importing and moving aquaculture livestock in Hawai'i by placing the responsibilities within the DOA division that ADP is under as long there are protections from unwanted and unmanageable introductions that would threaten the industry and the environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

**HB-489**

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 10:15:47 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/8/2023 11:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Inga Gibson	Animal Welfare Institute	Comments	In Person

Comments:

February 8, 2023

RE: SUGGESTED AMENDMENT TO HB489; Relating to Aquaculture

Dear Chairs Gates and Holt and AGR and ECD Committee Members,

Aquaculture endeavors hold tremendous opportunities for Hawaii, notably, by aquaculturing animals it may relieve pressure on those animals who might otherwise be taken from the wild. With these opportunities also come responsibilities. There is a substantial body of research regarding the need to include aquatic animal care, health and welfare when developing standards for aquaculture operations including but not limited to the holding, propagation and transport/import of aquatic species. Further, the One Health model, a global initiative supported by our current Administration, recognizes the connection between human and animal health and welfare, and our shared environment, in order to achieve healthy outcomes for all.

It is best that these considerations be included in the development stage, rather than after the fact, when changes to standards and procedures would be more difficult to implement or uphold. For these reasons, we respectfully request the Committees include the below amendment to add a new provision to Section 4, that includes aquatic animal health and welfare.

SECTION 4. The animal industry division shall develop an aquatic biorisk-based framework for the assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock. In developing the framework, the animal industry division shall consider:

- (a) Relevant standards established by the United States Department of Agriculture;
- (b) Current aquatic livestock policies and development issues;
- (c) Best practices of aquaculture industry; and
- (d) The protection of indigenous species as defined in section 195D-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

**(e) The health and welfare of aquatic livestock**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and your consideration of this small but significant amendment.

Inga Gibson

On behalf of Animal Welfare Institute

Pono Advocacy, LLC, 808.922.9910

**HB-489**

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 9:22:10 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/8/2023 11:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Regina Gregory	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aquatic species not native to Hawaii should not be imported at all.