

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
P. O. BOX 3378  
HONOLULU, HI 96801-3378  
[doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov)

WRITTEN  
TESTIMONY  
ONLY

In reply, please refer to:  
File:

**Testimony in SUPPORT of GM525  
Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Deputy to the Chairperson,  
Department of Agriculture, Gubernatorial Nominee, MORRIS ATTA, for a term to  
expire 12-07-2026.**

SENATOR MIKE GABBARD, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Hearing Date: 3/13/2023

Room Number: 224

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** N/A.
- 2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports the nomination of Morris
- 3 Atta for Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture for the State of Hawaii.
- 4
- 5 Mr. Atta's education and career demonstrate a thorough knowledge and application of law to the
- 6 governance of real estate, land use, and the economics of thereof. This foundations of regulatory
- 7 compliance and business management are assets for the position of Deputy Chairperson, which
- 8 often relieves the administrative burden from the Director or Chairperson. In addition, Mr.
- 9 Atta's background in environmental law will help assure that agricultural activities are
- 10 economically productive and environmentally sound.
- 11
- 12 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.
- 13
- 14 **Offered Amendments:** None



**TESTIMONY BY:**  
EDWIN H. SNIFFEN  
DIRECTOR  
  
Deputy Directors  
DREANALEE K. KALILI  
TAMMY L. LEE  
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO  
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

Monday, March 13, 2023  
1:00 P.M.  
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
State Capitol

In consideration of  
**Governor's Message 525**  
Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Deputy to the Chairperson,  
Department of Agriculture, Gubernatorial Nominee, Morris Atta

Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment

---

The Department of Transportation (DOT) **supports** the confirmation of Morris Atta as Deputy to the Chairperson for the Department of Agriculture (DOA).

Mr. Atta received his Juris Doctor from New York University School of Law and his bachelors from Yale University. He has served the Deputy to the Chairperson of (DOA) since 2019, assisting in the oversight of all departmental matters including maintaining operational efficiency, developing new administrative policies, and coordinating legislative proposals.

Prior to serving as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Mr. Atta has served in numerous roles at DOA including the Acting Agricultural Loan Division Administrator, Acting Title VI Nondiscrimination Coordinator, and the Agricultural Land Program Manager. Through these roles, he assisted in the creation and management of agricultural parks and revenue streams to promote the sustainability of the department and agriculture in Hawai'i.

The DOT believes Mr. Atta's commitment and years of experience make him uniquely qualified to assist the Chairperson in leading the DOA.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



UNIVERSITY  
of HAWAII®  
MĀNOA

Ke Kulanui o Hawai'i ma Mānoa

College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources  
Department of Human Nutrition, Food and Animal Sciences

**ctsa** CENTER FOR TROPICAL AND SUBTROPICAL AQUACULTURE

March 10, 2023

Senator Mike Gabbard  
Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
State of Hawai'i

Re: Testimony in support of the confirmation of Morris Atta as Deputy Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture

Dear Senator Gabbard,

I am writing this testimony as the Executive Director of the Center for Tropical and Subtropical Aquaculture (CTSA) in support of Morris Atta's appointment to Deputy Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture.

CTSA is one of five Regional Aquaculture Centers in the United States established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Our program mission is to integrate individual and institutional expertise and resources in support of aquaculture development in Hawaii and the U.S. Affiliated Pacific Islands.

In his role as a member of the CTSA Board since, I have observed Mr. Atta share insightful input and make decisions with the goal of improving our island food security, economy, communities, and livelihoods. His advocacy at the Department of Agriculture is essential to the success of our program, and his decades of experience are an asset to Hawaii's aquaculture industry. This is becoming increasingly important with the growing emphasis on aquaculture at the State level, and its potential to catalyze major economic growth in Hawaii.

I believe that Mr. Atta will make an excellent Deputy Chairperson. He is a key player in the success of aquaculture in the state and is an asset to Hawaii's farming community, both in the water and on land. With a role on the leadership team that will shape the future of agriculture in Hawai'i, Mr. Atta will be able to implement more of his vital work to ensure food security and sustainability for our island home.

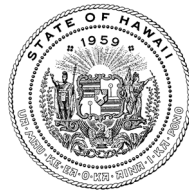
I enthusiastically support his confirmation to this critical government role.

Sincerely,

*Cheng Sheng Lee*

Cheng-Sheng Lee, Ph.D.  
Executive Director, CTSA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



LUIS P. SALAVERIA  
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM  
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND  
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
*Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā*  
P.O. BOX 150  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE  
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION  
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN TESTIMONY BY  
SABRINA NASIR  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE

TO THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 525

**March 13, 2023**  
**1:05 p.m.**  
**Room 224 & Videoconference**

SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRPERSON, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, MORRIS ATTA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 12-07-2026.

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

I strongly support the appointment of Morris Atta to the position of Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture (DOA). I am working with Mr. Atta in my professional capacity as Deputy Director of Finance.

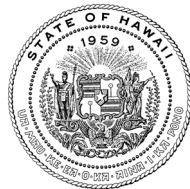
Governor Green's administration shares his priorities of homelessness and housing, the cost of living, climate change, and health care for the people of Hawai'i. We are committed to take action to make the needed changes to move Hawai'i forward.

Mr. Atta is an integral part of a team that is dedicated to achieving the goals of this administration in an honest, transparent, accountable, and responsive manner.

Mr. Atta has been serving as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the DOA since 2019; he has also been the Acting Agricultural Loan Division Administrator during this time. Prior to that, he was the Agricultural Land Program Manager at the DOA and has worked in various State and City positions. He also practiced law in Hawai'i since 1984. His work experience at the DOA will benefit the department and the State; therefore, I support his confirmation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



LUIS P. SALAVERIA  
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM  
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND  
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
*Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā*  
P.O. BOX 150  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE  
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION  
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN TESTIMONY BY  
LUIS P. SALAVERIA  
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE

TO THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 525

**March 13, 2023**  
**1:05 p.m.**  
**Room 224 & Videoconference**

SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRPERSON, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, MORRIS ATTA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 12-07-2026.

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

I strongly support the appointment of Morris Atta to the position of Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture (DOA). I am working with Mr. Atta in my professional capacity as Director of Finance.

Governor Green's administration shares his priorities of homelessness and housing, the cost of living, climate change, and health care for the people of Hawai'i. We are committed to take action to make the needed changes to move Hawai'i forward.

Mr. Atta is an integral part of a team that is dedicated to achieving the goals of this administration in an honest, transparent, accountable, and responsive manner.

Mr. Atta has been serving as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the DOA since 2019; he has also been the Acting Agricultural Loan Division Administrator during this time. Prior to that, he was the Agricultural Land Program Manager at the DOA and has worked in various State and City positions. He also practiced law in Hawai'i since 1984. His work experience at the DOA will benefit the department and the State; therefore, I support his confirmation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

JOVANIE DOMINGO DELA CRUZ  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA  
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 420  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
[www.hawaii.gov/labor](http://www.hawaii.gov/labor)  
Phone: (808) 586-8675 / Fax: (808) 586-8685  
Email: [dlir.ocs@hawaii.gov](mailto:dlir.ocs@hawaii.gov)

IN REPLY, REFER TO:  
**OCS 23.1116**

March 10, 2023

To: The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair,  
The Honorable Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, Vice Chair, and Members  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Date: Monday, March 13, 2023  
Time: 1:05 p.m.  
Place: Conference Room 224, State Capitol & Videoconference

From: Jovanie Domingo dela Cruz, Executive Director  
DLIR – Office of Community Services

Position: Support

**Re: GM 525 – NOMINATION OF MORRIS ATTA**

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

As Executive Director of the Office of Community Services (OCS) in the State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, I am pleased to support the nomination of MORRIS ATTA for confirmation as Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture (HDOA).

I have known Mr. Atta since last year when OCS and HDOA worked together to try to receive an award of potentially \$5 million or more from the US Government for compensation for Hawaii agriculture and food processing workers for Covid-19 related claims. This was a major joint effort between our organizations with a potential for a huge payout.

While OCS and HDOA were ultimately not successful, I was very favorably impressed through the process in observing Mr. Atta's assistance in our efforts. He has a deep knowledge of Hawaii's agriculture, and he consistently displayed great interest and concern for Hawaii's agricultural workers.

Beyond that, Mr. Atta has a wealth of experience at HDOA as Deputy to the Chairperson and in multiple positions in the State Executive and Legislature staff work. I am confident that he is up to the tasks required at HDOA, and that he will make positive contributions to that Department as well as the State government in general.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

March 13, 2023

To: The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair  
The Honorable Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Date: Monday, March 13, 2023

Time: 1:05 p.m.

Place: Conference Room 224 & Videoconference, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

**Re: GM 525; Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture, Gubernatorial Nominee, MORRIS ATTA, for a term to expire 12-07-2026.**

The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations **strongly supports** the confirmation of Morris Atta as Deputy Chairperson to the Department of Agriculture (DOA).

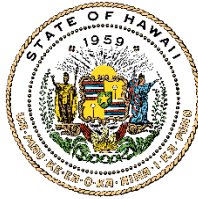
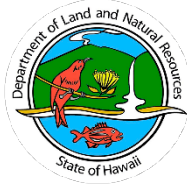
Mr. Atta possesses the knowledge and experience to successfully serve as the Deputy Chair of the DOA. Mr. Atta has served as the Deputy Chair since 2019 where he oversees all departmental matters and strives to maintain operational efficiency, develop new policies, and coordinate the DOA's legislative efforts. In addition, Mr. Atta's legal background has enabled him to serve in numerous roles at DOA, such as the Acting Agricultural Loan Division Administrator, Acting Title VI Nondiscrimination Coordinator, and the Agricultural Land Program Manager. Through these roles, Mr. Atta assisted in the creation and management of agricultural parks and revenue streams that maximized opportunities for exporting and facilitating growth of existing and new agricultural commodities and value-added products.

The DLIR believes Mr. Atta is the right person to support, enhance, promote, and protect Hawaii's agriculture industries.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Governor's Message 525.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'AINA

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'AINA



**STATE OF HAWAII'Ī | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'Ī  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA**

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**DAWN N.S. CHANG**  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT

**LAURA H.E. KAAKUA**  
FIRST DEPUTY

**M. KALEO MANUEL**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES  
ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Monday, March 13, 2023  
1:05 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224**

**In consideration of  
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 525  
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DEPUTY TO  
THE CHAIRPERSON, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, GUBERNATORIAL  
NOMINEE, MORRIS ATTA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 12-07-2026**

Governor's Message 525 proposes to confirm as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture, Gubernatorial Nominee, Morris Atta, for a term to expire 12-07-2026. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure.**

The Department recognizes that Mr. Morris Atta currently serves as Deputy to the Chairperson for the Department of Agriculture, providing exceptional coordination and leadership in the role. He is also the acting Land Program Manager and Agricultural Loan Division Administrator focusing on program administration, budget oversight, policy review, and revenue development for the Department of Agriculture, working on behalf of farmers and ranchers across the state. Mr. Atta's varied professional background includes stints as the Deputy Director, Right-of-Way, for the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation, State Lands Administrator at the Department of Land and Natural Resources Land Division, Research Attorney for the Hawai'i State Senate, and Attorney for his private law practice.

Mr. Atta's broad experience in program management and coordination in areas including real property, land use, water, energy, and the environment make him an ideal candidate for the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Governor's Message 525.



JOSH GREEN M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION**

Ka 'Oihana 'Auhau  
P.O. BOX 259

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809  
PHONE NO: (808) 587-1540  
FAX NO: (808) 587-1560

GARY S. SUGANUMA  
DIRECTOR

KRISTEN M.R. SAKAMOTO  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**TESTIMONY OF  
GARY S. SUGANUMA, DIRECTOR OF TAXATION**

**TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

In consideration of G.M. No. 525

Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture, Gubernatorial nominee, Morris Atta

**BEFORE THE:**

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

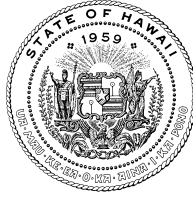
**DATE:** Monday, March 13, 2023  
**TIME:** 1:05 p.m.  
**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 224

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

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of the confirmation of Mr. Morris Atta as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture (AGR).

I believe that Mr. Atta's past leadership roles with AGR, and his experience with other state and county agencies, makes him an excellent candidate for this leadership role at AGR. I believe Mr. Atta is prepared and motivated to take on the challenges of this new role and that he has the experience and leadership abilities to successfully lead AGR.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Governor's Message 525.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

Testimony of  
**Josh Green, M.D.**  
Governor, State of Hawaii

Before the  
**Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment**

Monday, March 13, 2023  
1:05 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Videoconference

In consideration of  
**Governor's Message No. 525**

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

I respectfully request your favorable consideration of Governor's Message No. 525, appointment of Morris Atta to serve as Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture.

Morris's longstanding leadership and work in state government, which spans over two decades, reflect his firm understanding of the role and processes of the executive and legislative branches. Since 2019, Morris has served as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture and during this time Morris has gained relevant experience assisting in the direction and coordination of the operations of the Department of Agriculture and undertaking the responsibilities of the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture in the Chairperson's absence. Morris's experience in strategic planning, his organizational and leadership skills, and knowledge of the operations and management of the Department of Agriculture ensure further stability and continued progress in carrying out the responsibilities of the Department.

Morris's other positions in the Department of Agriculture include Acting Agricultural Loan Division Administrator and Agricultural Land Program Manager. In these positions, Morris assisted in the creation and management of agricultural parks and revenue streams to promote sustainability of the Department of Agriculture and agriculture in the State. Morris's past work as State Lands Administrator and Special

Testimony of Office of the Governor  
Governor's Message No. 525  
March 13, 2023  
Page 2

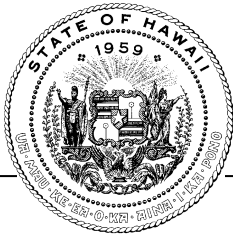
Projects Coordinator of the Department of Land and Natural Resources's Land Division is also invaluable to the knowledge he brings to the Department of Agriculture. Having served as a Research Attorney for several years in the Senate Majority Research Office has provided Morris with experience in legislative drafting, review, analysis, and research.

Morris's understanding of government and its processes and his public policy and legal background are advantageous to the management and operations of the Department of Agriculture.

Morris earned his Juris Doctor from New York University School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from Yale University.

I am confident that Morris Atta's leadership and professional and educational attributes will enable him to continue to serve the State and community well as Deputy to the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture.

Mahalo for your consideration.



**STATE OF HAWAI'I  
OFFICE OF PLANNING  
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SCOTT J. GLENN**  
DIRECTOR

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

Telephone: (808) 587-2846  
Fax: (808) 587-2824  
Web: <https://planning.hawaii.gov/>

Statement of  
**SCOTT GLENN, Director**

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

Monday, March 13, 2023, 1:05 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

in consideration of  
**GM 525**

**Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Deputy to the Chairperson,  
Department of Agriculture, Gubernatorial Nominee, MORRIS ATTA, for a term to expire  
12-07-2026.**

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

I am writing in support of the appointment of Morris Atta to serve as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture. I have had the opportunity to work with Mr. Atta for many years in our previous respective roles.

Mr. Atta has extensive experience in the role as Deputy to the Chairperson, having served in the position since 2019. His brings a thoughtful, deliberative approach to challenging issues. His prior experience in the private sector, at the Department of Land and Natural Resources, and the City and County of Honolulu helps him to bring a holistic perspective to the work of the Department of Agriculture. He advocates for agriculture looking for win-win opportunities. His understanding of land use, business, and natural resource management promotes sound planning for agricultural activities.

For these reasons, I humbly ask for Mr. Atta's confirmation as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2023  
1:06 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**GOVERNORS MESSAGE NO. 525**

Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture, Gubernatorial Nominee, MORRIS ATTA, for a term to expire 12-07-2026.

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

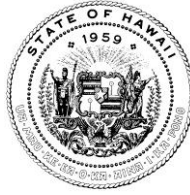
Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Gubernatorial Nominee, Morris Atta as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture (DOA). Morris has experience serving in this position and he possesses a skillset that compliments mine. I look forward to working with Morris – together, we will partner on behalf of the farmers, ranchers and producers to benefit Hawaii agriculture.

Respectfully requesting your vote to confirm Morris Atta's nomination to serve as my Deputy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



DOUGLAS MURDOCK  
CHIEF INFORMATION  
OFFICER

**OFFICE OF ENTERPRISE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HI 96810-0119  
Ph: (808) 586-6000 | Fax: (808) 586-1922  
ETS.HAWAII.GOV

Testimony of  
DOUGLAS MURDOCK  
Chief Information Officer  
Enterprise Technology Services

Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 525  
NOMINATION OF MORRIS ATTA, DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF  
AGRICULTURE  
Monday, March 13, 2023

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the committee:

I am writing in support of Governor Josh Green's nomination of Morris Atta as Deputy to the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture.

Mr. Atta has served as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture since 2019, assisting in the oversight of all departmental matters including maintaining operational efficiency, developing new administrative policies, and coordinating legislative proposals.

He has also served several important roles at HDOA such as the Acting Agricultural Loan Division Administrator, Acting Title VI Nondiscrimination Coordinator, and the Agricultural Land Program Manager.

He assisted in the creation and management of agricultural parks and revenue streams to promote the sustainability of the Department and Agriculture in Hawai'i and I am pleased to support his confirmation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 10:06:56 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James Kimo Falconer	Testifying for MauiGrown Coffee, Inc	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please consider supporting the Gubernatorial nomination of Mr. Morris Atta for Deputy Chair of the Hawaii Department of Agriculture. In respect of Mr. Atta's long resume working in State agencies, I feel his background will fill a necessary void at this level. He and Sharon Hurd would make a great team.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 10:07:17 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

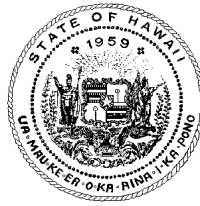
<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alan Gottlieb	Testifying for Ponoholo Ranch Limited	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have worked with Mr. Atta for a number of years. Mr. Atta has been a valuable asset to the Department of Agriculture as he has experience with both DOA and DLNR. This cross-department knowledge is an important skill to have in a time when we should be working together cooperatively to ensure the appropriate management of lands for the benefit of the environment and the community. Mr. Atta is active in engaging with the agricultural community and has a wealth of experience to be able to get things done within the department. We appreciate the work and effort that Mr. Atta has already contributed towards agriculture in Hawaii and we support his confirmation so that he can build upon that work. Please support Morris Atta's Nomination as HDOA Deputy.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**  
**KA 'OIHANA HO'OPALEKANA LEHULEHU**  
1177 Alakea Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**TOMMY JOHNSON**  
DIRECTOR

**Melanie Martin**  
Deputy Director  
Administration

**Michael J. Hoffman**  
Acting Deputy Director  
Corrections

**William Oku**  
Deputy Director  
Law Enforcement

No. \_\_\_\_\_

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR MESSAGE NO. 525  
RELATING TO THE NOMINATION OF MORRIS ATTA  
TO BE THE DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRPERSON, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

By  
Tommy Johnson, Director

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

Monday, March 13, 2023; 1:05 p.m.  
CR 224 & Via Video Conference

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

I submit this testimony in support of the nomination and confirmation of Morris Atta as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Atta almost four (4) decades of work experience in both the private sector and in government. Over the years, he has worked in positions of increased duties and responsibilities. Almost half of his long work history has been with government.

Mr. Atta's in-depth knowledge of the operations, staff, and the challenges facing the department make him the ideal candidate to be the leadership partner with Ms. Sharon Hurd, who has been nominated to be the Chairperson. His uniquely diverse work background will be an asset to the Chairperson and to this this critically important agency.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Governor's Message 525 and Mr. Atta.

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 1:56:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dana Shapiro	Testifying for Hawaii Ulu Producers Cooperative	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear committee chair and members,

I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Hawaii Ulu Cooperative in support of Morris Atta's confirmation as deputy to the chairperson of the Hawaii Department of Agriculture.

Mahalo,

Dana Shapiro

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 10:34:15 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bobby Farias	Testifying for Hawaii Meats LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I **support GM525** for the consideration and confirmation as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture, Gubernatorial Nominee, MORRIS ATTA, for a term to expire 12-07-2026.

I have work with Mr. Atta over the years and have come to know and appreciate Mr. Atta's valuable and dependable support for Local Agriculture. Mr. Atta is always available for the Agriculture community and supports the growth of our Hawaii Agriculture Industry. All Hawaii will benefit from the confirmation of Mr. Atta and we all look forward to working with him for years to come.

I strongly support **GM525**

I appreciate the opportunity to testify,

Bobby Farias

LARRY JEFTS FARMS, LLC  
PO BOX 27  
KUNIA, HAWAII 96759  
(808) 688-2892

GM 525 Gubernatorial Nominee Morris Atta, Deputy to the Chair, Department of Agriculture  
Sen AEN Hearing – 1:05 pm  
Room 224  
Monday, March 13, 2023

Testimony By: Larry Jeffs  
Position: Support

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

I am Larry Jeffs, owner and operator of Larry Jeffs Farms, LLC. We have more than 42 years of Hawaii farm experience on Molokai and Oahu. Our family farms grow about 1 million pounds weekly of import replacement produce. I am a volunteer director and chair of the West Oahu Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). I have been an officer of the Hawaii Farm Bureau for many years.

Morris Atta was first appointed as deputy director in 2019. Before that appointment, he served as the Department of Agriculture's land program administrator. In that capacity, he oversaw the establishment of the land management infrastructure for more effective management of the state's agricultural land assets.

In addition to being an experienced land administrator, he is an attorney with professional experiences that are well suited to move Hawaii's agriculture industry forward. His professional experiences include Emergency Management, Natural Resource Management, Water Resource Management, Policy Analysis, and Renewable Energy.

Your support of Morris Atta's second gubernatorial appointment as Deputy to the Chair of the Department of Agriculture is appreciated. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT  
Monday, March 13, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.

**Ulupono Initiative strongly supports GM 525, Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture, Gubernatorial Nominee, Morris Atta, for a Term to Expire 12-07-2026.**

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**Ulupono strongly supports GM 525**, which submits for consideration and confirmation Morris Atta as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture.

Morris Atta has been serving as the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) Deputy since 2019 and has taken on many important roles over his career, including serving as the HDOA's Land Program Manager and the Acting Agricultural Loan Division Administrator. Mr. Atta's extensive knowledge of land management and his critical work with ag loans provide vital perspectives for serving as the Deputy at HDOA. Land and capital are two of the most important issues facing our local agricultural industry, and having someone well-versed in these subject areas is important for HDOA leadership and for the State as a whole.

Mr. Atta's professional career, coupled with his passion to support local agriculture, will without a doubt provide an impactful voice as Hawai'i looks to expand and enhance our local agricultural industry.

Ulupono humbly asks this committee and the Legislature for their support of the nomination of Morris Atta as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Director of Government Affairs

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*



**Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.**

**COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

**GM525**

Morris Atta

Mondy, March 13, 2023, 1:05 PM  
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

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

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.

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports GM525** for the consideration and confirmation as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture, Gubernatorial Nominee, MORRIS ATTA, for a term to expire 12-07-2026.

Mr. Atta has been a valuable asset to the Department of Agriculture as he has experience with both DOA and DLNR. This cross-department knowledge is an important skill to have in a time when we should be working together cooperatively to ensure the appropriate management of lands for the benefit of the environment and the community. Mr. Atta is active in engaging with the agricultural community and has a wealth of experience to be able to get things done within the department. We appreciate the work and effort that Mr. Atta has already contributed towards agriculture in Hawaii and we support his confirmation so that he can build upon that work.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify.

Nicole Galase  
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council  
Managing Director





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)

March 13, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON GM 525**

Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Deputy to the Chairperson,  
Department of Agriculture, Gubernatorial Nominee, MORRIS ATTA, for a term to expire  
12-07-2026.

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
1:05 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 strongly supports the confirmation of Morris Atta as the Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture.**

HFB has had the opportunity to work with Mr. Atta while he served as the State Lands Administrator at the Department of Land and Natural Resources, as well as during his tenure as Program Manager for the Agricultural Resource Management Division of the Department of Agriculture, and in his current capacity as Deputy Director of that department. We have found him to be exceptionally qualified, dedicated, honest, and fair in his handling of the many complicated issues tackled by these governmental bodies.

As a farmer-based organization, HFB appreciates Mr. Atta's legal knowledge and commitment to appropriately addressing agricultural issues. Because of his extensive background and experience, he recognizes the vital importance of Hawai'i's natural resources along with the need for our state to become more self-sustaining through a healthy agricultural sector. Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers are in many cases the chief stewards of our natural resources, and they rely upon the land, water, and air for their livelihoods. Mr. Atta has a unique understanding of the convergence of these subjects and he will continue to be a valuable member of the decision-making team of professionals that serve the public within the Department of Agriculture.

HBF looks forward to continuing to work with Mr. Atta as Hawai'i's producers strive to move our state closer to food self-sufficiency, ever mindful of the public trust resources we steward and rely upon.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our strong support for Morris Atta.





Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair,  
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair  
Monday, March 13, 2023, 1:05 PM  
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Re: GM 525: Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture, Gubernatorial Nominee, MORRIS ATTA, for a term to expire 12-07-2026.

Dear Honorable Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

The Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association (HAAA)'s Board of Directors, representing aquaculture and aquaponics farmers and researchers Statewide, strongly supports the nomination of Morris Atta for the position of Deputy to the Chairperson for the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (DOA).

Morris is uniquely suited to perform this critical leadership role in agriculture given his working experience in all three branches of government and extensive professional involvement in and passion for Hawaii agriculture. His legislative background as a Senate Majority research attorney included agricultural matters which grounded his grasp of the legal framework for agriculture under State law. He also has extensive administrative experience in managing executive branch agencies in his former positions as the State Lands Administrator and Special Projects Coordinator for the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), as the Deputy Director for Right-of-Way for the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation, and as the Agricultural Land Program Manager for the DOA. Additionally, as a real property attorney for 39 years, he is well versed in dealing with our judicial system and the state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to real property, agriculture, land use, public lands management, native Hawaiian rights, environmental, energy, and natural resources law.

Morris' support for Hawaii's aquaculture and aquaponics industry is clearly demonstrated by his active participation on the Board of Directors of the USDA Center for Tropical and Subtropical Aquaculture (CTSA), hosted by the University of Hawaii Manoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR).

In summary, Morris' passion for agriculture and aquaculture, his legal and managerial expertise, and his collaborative and inclusive leadership style are exactly what Hawaii's agriculture industry and the State of Hawaii need at this critical time, paired with an

increase in DOA budget support and the filling of the DOA's many vacant and critical staff positions, to enable an expansion of sustainable local food production and agricultural exports.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the HAAA Board of Directors in strong support of the nomination of Morris Atta for Deputy to the Chairperson for the Department of Agriculture.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald P. Weidenbach". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ron Weidenbach, President  
Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association

KAPĀPALA RANCH  
98-1900 Mamalahoa Hwy  
Pahala, Hawaii 96777  
[Kapapala.ranch@aol.com](mailto:Kapapala.ranch@aol.com)  
[lanipetrie@aol.com](mailto:lanipetrie@aol.com)

March 12, 2023  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Environment  
Committee Hearing  
March 13, 2023  
1:00 pm

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

Subject: GM525 Hearing for Morris Atta Deputy Chair for HDOA

We **strongly support** Morris Atta to be our next HDOA Deputy Chairman. Governor Green has pledged his support to us for the Act 90 transfers of pasture leases from the DLNR to the HDOA and in doing so has put forth Mr. Atta as his pick to carry forth the transfers. We have worked with Morris for years and his vast knowledge of both the DLNR and the DOA makes him a person with the experience to really get this done.

It has been 20 years since the law was enacted and 14 years since we recieved a letter from HDOA saying that they would be our new land agent. This has been an arduous and unresolved process which has left people's lives and land-based decisions in limbo. We have shown our dedication to managing these ranch lands and our ability to grow a high-quality protein source of food. We also contribute to protecting the public's interest in access, gamebird hunting, wildfire mitigation, invasive weed control, and certain native species habitat.

Kapāpala Ranch was founded in 1860 by King Kamehameha IV for the purpose of providing food for trade in a quickly growing and demographically changing population. **Today Ranchers are an important economic contributor in the state including the Farm to School lunch program of which Kapāpala's production is equivalent to one million school lunches.**

Very Sincerely,

Lani C. Petrie





Testimony of  
**SHAN S. TSUTSUI**  
Chief Operating Officer, Mahi Pono, LLC

Before the  
**Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment**

Monday, March 13, 2023  
1:05 PM  
State Capitol Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

**In support of  
Governor's Message 525**

Good afternoon, Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment.

I strongly support Governor's Message 525, the appointment and confirmation of Morris Atta as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Atta is an invaluable presence within the Department of Agriculture, serving as the Deputy to the Chairperson since 2019. He has significant experience at all levels of land management issues that affect Hawaii, from his time as a state lands administrator at the Department of Land and Natural Resources to agricultural land program manager and agricultural loan division administrator at the Department of Agriculture.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.



### Officers

Kaipō Kekona  
State President

Anabella Bruch  
Vice-President

Maureen Datta  
Secretary

Reba Lopez  
Treasurer

### Chapter Presidents

Madeline Ross  
Kohala, Hawai'i

Odysseus Yacalis  
East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Andrea Drayer  
Ka'u, Hawai'i

Chantal Chung  
Kona, Hawai'i

Fawn Helekahi-Burns  
Hana, Maui

Reba Lopez  
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros  
Mauna Kahalawai,  
Maui

Kaipō Kekona  
Lahaina, Maui

Rufina Kaauwai  
Molokai

Negus Manna  
Lāna'i

Brynn Foster  
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman  
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich  
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Ray Maki  
Kauai

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

The Hawaii Farmers Union United (HFUU) 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 strongly supports GM501.**

We are honored to provide our testimony in support of Morris Atta's reappointment as Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture on behalf of the Hawaii Farmers Union United. Mr. Atta has been serving in this important position since 2019, and his extensive experience in promoting sustainable agriculture and supporting local farmers make him an excellent candidate for continuing in this role.

During his tenure as Deputy to the Chairperson, Mr. Atta has demonstrated his commitment to finding solutions that benefit all stakeholders in the local agricultural industry. His collaborative approach and deep understanding of the needs of our farmers have been invaluable to our efforts to build a more resilient and sustainable food system in Hawaii. We believe that his leadership and expertise will continue to be essential to the Department of Agriculture, and we wholeheartedly endorse his reappointment. We look forward to continuing to work with Mr. Atta to promote sustainable agriculture and support the success of our local farmers.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipō Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/9/2023 3:41:20 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lon Paresa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Morris Atta as Deputy to the Chair of Agriculture. Mahalo.

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/9/2023 4:25:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
William Oku	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Sen. Gabbard, Vice Chair Sen. Richards III, and members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

I support the consideration and confirmation of Morris Atta to serve as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/9/2023 10:28:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
VINCENT KIMURA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honored to know Morris for many years, in this time I've come to know him as a highly intelligent and empathetic leader who strives to do what's right for the people of Hawai'i. I strongly support his nomination and I encourage we all support his efforts to support farmers and ranchers and protect the state's agricultural lands.

Mahalo - Vincent

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 8:12:36 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Audrey Hidano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I respectfully submit testimony in SUPPORT of GM525 relating to Gubernatorial Nominee Morris Atta for Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture. Mr. Atta is an integral part of a team that is dedicated to achieving the goals of the administration.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of Governor's Message 525.

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 8:22:48 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jesse K. Souki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the confirmation of Morris Atta as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture. His career in land use and public lands management will serve the Agency and people of Hawai'i well. Thank you for your consideration.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

**GM 525 - Support**

Monday, March 13, 2023

1:05 PM

Conference Room 224

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

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

My name is Scott Enright and I am writing in strong support of Morris Atta's nomination for Deputy to the Chairperson at the Hawaii Department Of Agriculture (HDOA). During my tenure at HDOA, I hired Mr. Atta to run the department's Land Division and he did a superb job. I have also worked extensively with Mr. Atta during his time working as Deputy in the office of the Chairperson for the HDOA and he has shown himself to be an excellent and capable public servant and a wonderful individual. Again, I express strong support for this nomination.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Enright". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Scott Enright

Testimony of Isaac Maeda, DVM

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

MARCH 13, 2023  
1:05 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

GM 525

SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS DEPUTY TO THE  
CHAIRPERSON, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE,  
MORRIS ATTA

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

I support Morris Atta's nomination for Deputy to the Chairperson of the  
Department of Agriculture.

Morris has extensive and varied experience in the Department of Agriculture  
especially pertaining to land and finances. His prior experiences in the private sector  
and the Department of Land and natural resources also gives him a unique perspective  
on land issues and topics. Morris is diligent, logical and hard working. He is a reliable  
resource, willing to help and effective dealing with challenging situations. Morris will  
serve well as Deputy to the Chairperson

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you my testimony.

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 6:14:41 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Woody Child	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Morris Atta as Deputy to the Chair, Dept. Of Agriculture.

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 4:38:20 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 8:20:07 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Megan Blazak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the President, Vice President, and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

I share this testimony in strong support of Morris Atta and the Governor's nomination for Mr. Atta for the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture. Mr. Atta has an impressive skillset and many decades of experience working on agricultural, land use, and related issues in Hawaii. He is duly qualified to serve as Deputy Director and will bring his talents, knowledge, and relationships to bear in his position to advocate for the benefits of Hawaii's family farmers and working lands.

For these reasons, I support the nomination of Mr. Atta for the Deputy Direction Position.

Mahalo,

Megan Blazak, MBA

Hilo, HI



**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 9:30:25 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 12:49:29 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Aileen K . F. Yeh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am strongly in support of. Morris Atta. He is a great fit to the position and has been of great support to Hawaii and the agricultural industry. Very strongly in favor.

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 6:57:55 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Curt Otaguro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the nomination of Mr. Morris Atta to serve as Deputy Director for the Department of Agriculture. I have had the honor and privilege to work with Mr. Atta over the past 4 years and has proven to be an asset to the State and a productive member of the Cabinet. He is extremely talented and knowledgeable in several subject matter areas including but not limited to agriculture, land transfer, and general government operations. He is a team player that will continue to serve us well as a Deputy Director. I urge the Senate to confirm Mr. Atta. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 8:36:04 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeri and Jason Moniz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

[COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT](#)

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

**GM525**

Morris Atta

Monday, March 13, 2023, 1:00 PM

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

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

We are Jeri and Jason Moniz, beef cattle producers in Hamakua on the Island of Hawaii and we **support GM525** for the consideration and confirmation of MORRIS ATTA as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture. Mr. Atta has been a valuable asset to the Department of Agriculture and has gained valuable experiences with both DOA and DLNR. This cross-department knowledge is an important skill to have in a time when we should be working together cooperatively to ensure the appropriate management of lands for the benefit of the agriculture and the environment. We appreciate the work and effort that Mr. Atta has already

contributed towards agriculture in Hawaii and we support his confirmation so that he can build upon that work.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify.

TESTIMONY OF  
KEITH A. REGAN

TO THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2023, 1:05 P.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

GM525

Honorable Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment, I am providing testimony in support of GM525, the confirmation of Morris Atta as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture.

I have had the opportunity to work and know Mr. Atta for the past four years through our positions with the State. The COVID-19 pandemic allowed us to work closely to support the State's overall response to the crisis. Morris has always been a reliable, knowledgeable, and dedicated public servant committed to supporting the overall mission of the various State departments he has worked, including his service as the Deputy to the Chairperson under Governor Ige's administration.

Mr. Atta's long history of public service, combined with his legal background, will continue to be an asset to the department and the Chairperson. I am confident that he will provide expert guidance and support in his position as Deputy and will play a vital role in the future success of the agriculture industry throughout Hawaii.

For these reasons, I humbly ask you to please support the confirmation of Morris Atta as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture.

Sincerely,

Keith A. Regan  
Honolulu, Hawaii

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 11:13:22 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Diane Ley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Honorable Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards and Committee Members,**

**It is my pleasure to offer my support of Morris Atta to serve as the Deputy to the Chairperson to the Hawai`i State Board of Agriculture.**

**Mr. Atta has the capabilities and diverse background necessary to fulfill and exceed in the role of the Deputy to the Chairperson.**

**Mahalo for your consideration.**

**Diane Ley**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF  
MEOH-LENG SILLIMAN  
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 525

Monday, March 13, 2023  
1:05 p.m  
Conference Room 224

SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRPERSON,  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, MORRIS ATTA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE AT  
NOON ON 12-07-2026.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support for the confirmation of Morris Atta as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture.

The department's mission is to further expand the role of Hawaii's agricultural industry to benefit the well-being of our island society by diversifying the economy, protecting resources important for agricultural production, and gaining greater self-sufficiency in food production. Morris has been in service at the Department of Agriculture since 2019 in various capacities and is currently serving as the deputy. He has direct experience in ensuring the economical and productive management of State-owned agricultural lands by promoting and supporting effective planning, acquisition, disposition, development, and use of the State's agricultural land resources. His experience in land use and management in both the private and government sectors, coupled with his familiarity with state laws, rules, policies and procedures review and compliance, makes him well-qualified for this appointment.

I respectfully request your support in confirming the appointment of Morris Atta as the Deputy to the Chairperson, Department of Agriculture.



Testimony of  
CHRIS J. SADAYASU  
to the  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Monday, March 13, 2023  
1:05 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of  
GM 525

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

I support the appointment of Morris Atta to serve as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture.

As a longtime government employee, Mr. Atta has a diverse background in working for the State of Hawai'i and the City and County of Honolulu. He has served in multiple leadership roles within the Department of Agriculture and also has a background in law.

I respectfully ask for Mr. Atta's confirmation as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture. I look forward to collaborating with him to fulfill our departments' respective missions.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 12:59:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Janet Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I strongly support the confirmation of Morris Atta as Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture.

Over the past several years, I have had the honor of working with Morris Atta in his capacity as DOA Deputy Director and Land Program Manager. In addition to his calm and caring demeanor, his breadth and depth of knowledge is unsurpassed. He is a conscientious and tireless worker who has been instrumental in assisting the Chairperson with the many duties assigned to him while supporting agricultural producers and others in understanding the operations of, and working with the agency. Mr. Atta is an invaluable asset to the Department and to the State's goal of increasing food self-sufficiency.

Thank you for your consideration of his confirmation.

**GM-525**

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 1:02:28 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2023 1:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jayson Watts	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good afternoon, Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment.

I write to express my support for Morris Atta's appointment and confirmation as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha,

Jayson Watts



**GORDON M. ARAKAKI**

Attorney at Law, LLLC  
94-1176 Polinahe Place  
Waipahu, Hawaii 96797  
Cell: (808) 542-1542  
E-mail: [gordonarakaki@hawaiiantel.net](mailto:gordonarakaki@hawaiiantel.net)

Hearing Date: Monday, March 13, 2023

Time: 1:05 PM

Place: Senate Conference Room 224

The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

The Honorable Senator Herbert M. “Tim” Richards III, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Subject: **GM 525** – Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture, Gubernatorial Nominee, **Morris Atta**, for a term to expire 12-07-2026.

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Committee:

I strongly and whole-heartedly support the confirmation of **Morris Atta** as the Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture.

Many others will speak to Morris’s outstanding work as a leader, administrator, and attorney. It is his personal qualities that I will speak to. As good as Morris is as a servant-leader, problem-solver, and lawyer, I believe that he is an even better person. And *that* will make him an excellent Deputy Director.

I have known Morris since we studied for (and passed!) the Hawaii State Bar examination in 1984. Over the years—working in private practice, for HART, the Dept. of Land and Natural Resources, the Dept. of Agriculture, and more, as well as enjoying music, conversation, and wine—I’ve seen Morris demonstrate his deep understanding of and appreciation for what makes Hawaii a very special place, and he conveys that understanding and appreciation to all. It frames his life and his work.

Personally and professionally, I cannot think of anyone better to help carry out the mission of the Department of Agriculture to “further expand the role of Hawaii’s agricultural industry to benefit the well-being of our island society by diversifying the economy, protecting resources important for agricultural production, and gaining greater self-sufficiency in food and renewable energy production.”

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly by phone at (808) 542-1542 or by e-mail at [gordonarakaki@hawaiiantel.net](mailto:gordonarakaki@hawaiiantel.net).

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Gordon M. Arakaki

Rae Gee  
Email: [raegee2012@gmail.com](mailto:raegee2012@gmail.com)

March 12, 2023

The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
and Committee Members  
Committee on Agriculture and the Environment  
The Senate  
Hawaii State Legislature  
State Capitol Room 224 and Videoconference  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Subject: Testimony for the Governor's Message No. 525, Confirmation of the  
Gubernatorial Nominee, Morris Atta , Deputy to the Chairperson,  
Department of Agriculture, for a term to expire on December 7, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Gabbard and Committee Members:

My name is Rae Gee, and I am a civil service employee from the State Department of Agriculture, submitting testimony in support of Mr. Morris Atta as the Gubernatorial nominee submitted for consideration and confirmation as the Chairperson, of the Department of Agriculture. (HDOA). My apologies for not being present at the meeting to provide my testimony.

I'm a Planner V in the HDOA Chairperson's Office and Mr. Atta is my boss as the interim Deputy. I'm a new employee and have only been working at the HDOA for a month. I'm fortunate to be a part of the Chairperson's Office and work with the interim Chair, Deputy and Chief Planner.

I have known Mr. Atta for years as we both served long ago as members of the Board of Trustees for the Young Buddhist Association (YBA) in Nuuanu, Oahu. Since those years, Mr. Atta has become an experienced Land Administrator, with a long history of working with the government administration, with strong skills in Agriculture, Land Use, Public Lands Administration, Emergency Management, Water Resource Management, to name a few of his expertise.

Mr. Atta has a wealth of knowledge and experience as the interim Deputy, and was the past HDOA Agricultural Land Program Administrator, he has the knowledge in overseeing the State's Important Agricultural Lands (IAL) program, my first project in which I am learning from the Chief Planner, my supervisor, and Mr. Atta. Mr. Atta represented HDOA and worked with the State Department of Taxation and stakeholders to identify incentives for agriculture and to prepare a report to the Legislature which included recommendations and the rationale for the IAL incentives, a description of the process, and the IAL program.

Mr. Atta has knowledge and understanding of the State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), programs and policies and has worked as a former DLNR State Land Administrator/Special Projects Coordinator. Mr. Atta's understanding of land management, dam safety, mineral and water rights, and Native Hawaiian Rights has been beneficial for collaborative projects like the IAL program for both Departments.

Rae Gee  
Email: [raegee2012@gmail.com](mailto:raegee2012@gmail.com)

Lastly, what most qualifies Mr. Atta for the Deputy to the Chairperson position is his positive disposition at the workplace. Not only is he knowledgeable in land matters but has excellent people skills in communication with staff, he is approachable and easy to work with. What I most remember years ago from our YBA Board meetings was that Mr. Atta's demeanor always encouraged collaboration, participation and cooperation among the members. When disputes between board members arises, Mr. Atta showed empathy and compassion to both sides representing opposing issues. I've seen Mr. Atta facilitate a meeting- of-the-minds between board members on opposite sides of the issue. Mr. Atta is an expert in facilitating an agreement between two parties and would be most helpful in management of HDOA staff, should the need arise.

I humbly ask for your assistance in confirming Mr. Atta as the Deputy to the Chairperson of the HDOA. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,  
Signed  
Rae Gee