

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**FEBRUARY 8, 2023**  
**1:00 PM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE BILL NO. 650**  
**RELATING TO AQUACULTURE**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 650. The bill requires the Department of Agriculture to conduct a feasibility study to identify potential sites on the island of Oahu for an aquaculture park that promotes commercial aquaculture expansion; requires a report to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2024; and appropriates funds. The Department supports this bill.

Dedicated aquaculture parks would be a desirable tool in the State's strategy to grow the aquaculture industry. Successful tenants would help define industry potential and become aspirational examples to potential new operators. The siting of the park(s) must be carefully considered to provide the best chance for productivity and market access.

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.



**SB-650**

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 9:54:25 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/8/2023 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Douglass S. Adams	Testifying for Department of Research and Development, County of Hawaii	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding SB 650, which instructs the Department of Agriculture to conduct a feasibility study to identify potential sites on the island of Oahu for an aquaculture park that promotes commercial aquaculture expansion. We support the purpose of the bill that calls for a feasibility study regarding the siting of an aquacultural park. However, we would ask for consideration of a modification to the bill that includes the neighbor islands in the conduct of the study. Our department is prepared to work with the Department of Agriculture in support of this effort.

very respectfully,

Douglass S Adams

Director, Department of Research and Development

County of Hawaii

**SB-650**

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 8:15:37 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/8/2023 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robert Endreson	Testifying for Kohala Mountain Fish Company	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As one of the largest fish farms in the US as well as being a Certified Processing Facility by the US Dept of Commerce, we have found that the world is in desperate need of reliable, resilient and safe protein that can be easily produced here in Hawaii.

We encourage more Aquaculture development because unlike the mainland US, Hawaii has a 12 month growing cycle and can outperform many aquaculture operations on the mainland with new techniques. It can deliver products to the local markets with a longer shelf life to Hawaii Consumers and can compete with imported products given the high cost of shipping.



Feb 6, 2023

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair, and Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards III, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)  
Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 1:00 PM, Conference Room 224

Re: Senate Bill 650 Relating to Aquaculture

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

The Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association (HAAA) representing aquaculture industry members, researchers, and supporters statewide strongly supports the intent of SB 650 which would require the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to conduct a feasibility study to identify potential sites on the island of Oahu for an aquaculture park that promotes commercial aquaculture expansion, with a report to the Legislature prior to the Regular Session of 2024.

The continuing success of commercial aquaculture development at the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii (NELHA) clearly demonstrates the benefits of the master-permitted aquaculture park concept. It would therefore be beneficial for the continued development of aquaculture on Oahu to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study to identify potential sites on Oahu. This should include an assessment of the existing land use regulatory framework, physical and climatic features such as topography and solar resource, marine and freshwater resources, utility access, biosecurity considerations, and community support.

Since all the diverse technical expertise required to conduct such a comprehensive site assessment study does not appear to currently exist within the DOA, qualified outside consultants should be retained as appropriate to make this a truly meaningful study. The timeframe to conduct such a study would appear to require at least one year.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of the intent of this measure.

Sincerely,

Ron Weidenbach  
HAAA President



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
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February 8, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON SB 650**  
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
1:00 PM

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

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

**The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 650** which would require the Department of Agriculture to conduct a feasibility study to identify potential sites on the island of Oahu for an aquaculture park that promotes commercial aquaculture expansion.

The Legislature has acknowledged the importance of Hawai'i's aquaculture industry and recognizes that supporting local aquacultural production can help the State move toward greater food sustainability and economic diversification. Hawai'i's aquaculture industry continues to be one of the fastest-growing segments of Hawai'i agriculture and has become an important source of seafood and other products for local sale and export. The state currently imports about 63 percent of its seafood driven by high resident and tourist demand.

HFB agrees that a comprehensive feasibility study to identify a potential aquaculture park on Oahu would be an important step in furthering aquaculture on the island with the highest population and biggest demand. Experts in multiple disciplines will be required to ensure that any proposed park will be appropriately sited.

HFB respectfully recommends that the proposed park sites should not displace existing aquaculture operations.

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



2029 Nuuanu Ave. #1510  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817  
February 6, 2023

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

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

**I strongly support the intent of SB 650, "Relating to Aquaculture,"** which would fund a feasibility study to identify potential sites on O'ahu for an aquaculture park.

I have made my living in aquaculture and aquaponics in Hawai'i since the late 1970's. I was a researcher on the first aquaculture-related project at NELHA, a study of *nori* production using cold, nutrient-rich deep ocean water. From that small beginning, with strong State support, NELHA has grown into Hawaii's premier aquaculture site.

When that project ended, I started Hawaii's first intensive commercial seaweed farm in 1983 raising *ogo* in Kahuku, O'ahu with my business partner Richard Spencer. At that time, Kahuku was the center of aquaculture production on O'ahu, with other farms raising marine shrimp and freshwater prawns. Kahuku was an ideal site for aquaculture – the sunniest location on the Windward side with a large area of flat land and access to both fresh and salt water. Unfortunately, the land was eventually sold and most aquafarms, including mine, had to close, significantly reducing O'ahu's aquaculture production. Nevertheless, Honolulu is by far the largest market for seafood in Hawai'i, and has the best infrastructure for exporting seafood products and importing needed supplies including equipment, fertilizer, and feed. A properly sited, well managed aquaculture park on O'ahu should be highly successful, especially if it emulates NELHA in providing water resources, access to electricity, ease of permitting, and farm security. Such a park would be best sited in the sunniest location possible to support algae production, both for human consumption and as feed for organisms higher on the food chain. Like my old site in Kahuku, it should ideally have a large area of flat land with access to both salt and fresh water to support the largest variety of possible crops.

The siting study proposed by SB 650 will require not only knowledge of land management and permitting, but also substantial expertise in biology, water chemistry, engineering, architecture, and facility design as they relate to aquaculture. So far as I know, the Department of Agriculture does not currently have staff who are expert in all these areas. Therefore, I respectfully suggest that SB 650 be amended to require DOA to obtain independent consulting services to perform the bulk of the feasibility study. Further, although SB 650 proposes to fund the study through the 2024-25 fiscal year, it requires the study to be completed before January 2024. Since funding would become available in July 2023 at the earliest, this deadline would leave a maximum of less than six months to complete the requested large, detailed study. A deadline of January 2025 instead of 2024 would be consistent with the proposed funding schedule and would allow enough time for a thorough feasibility study.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important legislation, and for your support of Hawai'i's growing aquaculture industry.

Sincerely,



Frederick M. Mencher