

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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEXTER KISHIDA**  
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, APRIL 15, 2024  
2:15 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 225**

**GOVERNORS MESSAGE NO. 694**

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Agriculture, Gubernatorial Nominee, NATHANIEL OSWALD, for a term to expire 06-30-2028.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Gubernatorial Nominee, Nathaniel Oswald, to the Board of Board of Agriculture (BOA), representing the County of Maui. Nathaniel's career focuses on agriculture and his service to the farmers and ranchers of Maui County includes being President of the Molokai Chapter of the Hawaii Farm Bureau, a member of the Maui Economic Development Board, Molokai Irrigation Water Users Advisory Board, a member of the Steering Committee for the County Department of Agriculture as well as being engaged in the business of agriculture as owner of Oswald Nursery Management LLC. His experience as a licensed Hawaii Pesticide Applicator for 10 years adds to his knowledge of agriculture operations and to his qualifications as a BOA member.

Respectfully requesting your consideration to confirm Nathaniel Oswald to serve on the BOA. He brings his perspective of service and agricultural operations from Maui County to the BOA.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support.





P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
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April 15, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON GM 694**

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Agriculture, Gubernatorial Nominee, NATHANIEL OSWALD, for a term to expire 06-30-2028

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
2:15 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 GM 694**, seeking the confirmation of Mr. Nathaniel Oswald to the Board of Agriculture.

Mr. Oswald has been involved in the agricultural industry in Hawai'i for nearly thirty years. His background in agriculture includes extensive experience in crop nursery management. Mr. Oswald has held a myriad of positions in the Agricultural Industry. He is the owner of Oswald Nursery Management, worked for MSP Monsanto, serves as a member of the Molokai Irrigation Water Users Advisory Board, is the President of the Molokai County Farm Bureau, serves as a member of the Maui Economic Development Board, and served on the Steering Committee for the Maui County Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Oswald's profound professional experience is matched by his robust work ethic and a deep-seated commitment to supporting Hawai'i's agricultural community. He understands Hawai'i's diverse agricultural industry, especially those of our growers in the most rural areas, and will be an asset to the Board of Agriculture, Hawai'i's agriculture sector, and the people of Hawai'i.

Please accept our strong support for the nomination of Mr. Nathaniel Oswald to the Board of Agriculture.



*The Molokai Farm Bureau serves as Molokai's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community. We are also an arm of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, organized in 1948 and comprised of 1800 farm families statewide.*

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

April 15, 2024, 2:15pm  
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

**GM 694**

**Consideration and Confirmation to the Board of Agriculture,  
Gubernatorial Nominee, NATHANIEL OSWALD,  
for a term to expire 06-30-2028**

April 10, 2024

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, Senators DeCoite, Rhoads and Awa,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on GM 694, the nomination of Nathaniel (Nate) Oswald to serve on the Hawaii Board of Agriculture. The Molokai Farm Bureau is in **STRONG SUPPORT**.

The Hawaii Board of Agriculture's kuleana is to be the governing body of our state's Department of Agriculture, charged with establishing its broad operating policies. Decisions on adoptions, amendments, repeals or rule changes have profound impacts to our state's diverse ag industry, and economy. We are confident Nate's lifelong experiences in agriculture will bring tangible perspectives as a board member, and invaluable insights as a neighbor island representative for the Maui County seat.

Nate Oswald has been an exemplary leader in the agriculture community:

Nate has been an active member with our Molokai Farm Bureau for over 24 years, and our President for the last 8 years. The amount of time he has served as our President is testament to his leadership. He has managed our organization's affairs extremely well and led our agricultural community through some of the hardest times imaginable during COVID, building partnerships and processes to help both our farmers and the general community when it was needed most.

He also is a Gubernatorial appointee, currently serving as a member of the Molokai Irrigation System Water User's Advisory Board (MISWUAB). The MISWUAB is tasked with the responsibility to act as a liaison between the users and the Department of Agriculture and advise the department on matters of concern to the users of the system. This is the only state irrigation system advisory board of its kind, consisting of 7 user board members. The community supported Nate's nomination, he is a trusted resource. He is currently serving as the Molokai Farm Bureau seat representative.

In November 2020, Maui County residents voted in favor of establishing the first ever County Department of Agriculture. Nate was immediately tapped to serve on the County’s first agriculture advisory group tasked with drafting the initial recommendations and guidance for the establishment of this new department.

Nate understands both the economic and social mechanics of the ag industry. He recognizes the genuine need to fairly balance Hawaii’s cultural values with the economic contributions of the food and agriculture industries and its impacts to Hawaii’s jobs, wages, and economic output.

According to a recent economic report completed by FeedingTheEconomy.com which measures direct and indirect economic activity surrounding our food and ag industries and captures both upstream and downstream activities, the report reiterates these impacts. We believe this position merits someone who acknowledges the importance of agriculture to Hawaii.

Hawaii Food and Ag Industries:

- Hawaii Total Jobs.....220,039
  - Direct Jobs 120,797
- Total Wages.....\$12.04 Billion
  - Direct Wages \$5.22 Billion
- Total Output.....\$35.20 Billion
  - Direct Output \$15.70 Billion
- Business Taxes.....\$5.61 Billion
- Exports.....\$70.22 Million

Link: <https://feedingtheeconomy.com/>

We are confident Nate’s perspectives will bring a uniquely diverse voice to the table, he truly embodies what it means to be a resource and advocate for agriculture – he walks the walk. We feel these are important tools needed when discussing broad operating policies that will be responsible for Hawaii’s Department of Agriculture and the state of our ag industry, and its ability to contribute to both the well-being of our Hawaii residents and our state’s economy.

We hope you will approve Nathaniel Oswald’s qualified nomination.  
Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

*Dawn Bicoy*

Dawn Bicoy,  
Government Affairs Committee Chair  
Molokai Farm Bureau



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

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND  
ENVIRONMENT

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

**GM694**

Nathaniel Oswald, Board of Agriculture

Monday, April 15, 2:15 PM  
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports GM694** for the consideration and confirmation of Nathaniel Oswald to the Board of Agriculture.

Nathaniel Oswald is active in the agricultural community in a wide variety of ways, which means he can bring a variety of perspectives to the Board of Agriculture. He has held leadership positions in a multitude of agricultural organizations from the Farm Bureau to the Molokai Hunting Club and is a nursery farmer himself. Importantly, Nathaniel will bring the perspective of a Molokai farmer to the Board of Agriculture. This representation is important to ensure that agriculture can thrive across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. 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.

Nicole Galase  
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council  
Managing Director





**MOLOKAI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

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April 14, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

April 15, 2024, 2:15pm

Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

GM 694

Consideration and Confirmation to the Board of Agriculture,  
Gubernatorial Nominee, NATHANIEL OSWALD,  
for a term to expire 06-30-2028

**SUPPORT GM 694**

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, Senators DeCoite, Rhoads and Awa,

As a representative organization of the neighbor-island of Molokai with dozens of members who employ hundreds of our neighbors, friends and families, we are respectfully submitting testimony in **SUPPORT** of GM 694 and ask that you confirm the appointment of Nathaniel "Nate" Oswald to the Board of Agriculture.

Agriculture has historically been the backbone of Molokai's economy and it continues to be a leading economic driver for our island, providing good paying stable jobs for our residents, supporting our local businesses, and infusing much needed capital into our fragile island economy.

Nate's long and diverse agricultural career has helped him develop a unique set of skills that will benefit the Board of Agriculture in its mission to support and promote agriculture throughout the State of Hawaii. His presence will also provide a continuity of representation from the neighbor islands that is critical to making sure all islands have a vested interest in the Hawaii Agricultural Community, and the industry has a vested interest in all islands as well.

Please help us continue to support our Molokai Agricultural Community and the important economic role it plays on our island by confirming Nate to the Board of Agriculture.

Sincerely,

Robert Stephenson, President & CEO

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

GM 694, Gubernatorial Nominee Nathaniel Oswald  
Board of Agriculture  
Senate AEN Hearing  
Monday, April 15, 2024 – 2:15 PM

Testimony By: Larry Jeffs  
Position: Support

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Senate 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, serving as Chair of the West Oahu Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). I have been an officer of the Hawaii Farm Bureau for many years.

Nathaniel Oswald, a Molokai resident, has been an active agricultural community member for more than 25 years. He voluntarily serves as the President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau's Molokai Chapter and is a member of the Molokai Irrigation Water Users Advisory Board. Since 2017, he has owned and operated Oswald Nursery Management, LLC, which focuses on seed production, delivery and hand-off.

His experiences will contribute to the Board of Agriculture's policy discussions about agricultural challenges and the future of agriculture.

Your support of Nathaniel Oswald's nomination to the Board of Agriculture is appreciated. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



# HAWAII CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

In Support of GM694  
Relating to the Nomination of Nathaniel Oswald to the Board of Agriculture

Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment

Date: Monday, April 15, 2024  
Time: 2:15 PM  
Place: Conference Room 225

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

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association (HCIA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony **in support** of Nathaniel Oswald's nomination to the Board of Agriculture. Mr. Oswald will bring a wealth of experience to the role, with nearly 25 years in the industry including eight as the President of the Molokai Farm Bureau. We are particularly supportive of having his neighbor island knowledge and insight to help inform the Board.

Mr. Oswald is a well-respected advocate for agriculture. He understands the nuances and interplay between the economic and social impacts of our industry. We believe his work history and personal characteristics will make him an asset on the Board of Agriculture.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of Nathaniel Oswald

*The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association is a Hawaii-based non-profit organization that promotes modern agriculture to help farmers and communities succeed. Through education, collaboration, and advocacy, we work to ensure a safe and sustainable food supply, support responsible farming practices, and build a healthy economy.*



**GM-694**

Submitted on: 4/10/2024 4:45:25 PM

Testimony for AEN on 4/15/2024 2:15:00 PM

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

Comments:

Support Mr. Oswald for a seat on the Board of Agriculture. Thank you.

**GM-694**

Submitted on: 4/10/2024 3:21:46 PM

Testimony for AEN on 4/15/2024 2:15:00 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-694**

Submitted on: 4/10/2024 5:42:41 PM

Testimony for AEN on 4/15/2024 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael Muszynski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the nomination of Nathaniel Oswald in this role. His experience and knowledge will be very helpful to the Board as it deals with complex agricultural issues in our state.

**GM-694**

Submitted on: 4/10/2024 8:31:35 PM

Testimony for AEN on 4/15/2024 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
alex redeker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha honorable members,

I am submitting written testimony in support of Mr. Oswald for the Board of Agriculture. I have worked with him on various projects in relationships to invasive species, food securities as well as farming. It's extremely rare to find somebody who is not driven by money but driven by doing the right thing for the betterment of all. He is an extremely gifted and talented farmer, who listens to all sides before making a decision. Through all of his involvement within the community, it has always been a positive experience and I feel that he would be an asset to the board of agriculture. I know there is extremely difficult things facing hawaii's agriculture and if he has sworn in, I promise you, it will not be something you regret.

Thank you very much for your time and I look foward to Mr. Oswald helping move hawaii's agriculture foward into the 21st century.

**GM-694**

Submitted on: 4/11/2024 12:39:40 PM

Testimony for AEN on 4/15/2024 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Denise Nocon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the nomination of Nathaniel Oswald for this role. His knowledge and experience will be helpful to the Board of Agriculture.

**GM-694**

Submitted on: 4/13/2024 11:49:27 PM

Testimony for AEN on 4/15/2024 2:15:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support Nate Oswald to be confirmed to serve on the State Board of Agriculture. He has the agricultural experience and passion for farming that will make him a valuable asset to the Board, the Department, and the community.

Thank you.

**GM-694**

Submitted on: 4/12/2024 2:29:26 PM

Testimony for AEN on 4/15/2024 2:15:00 PM

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

Comments:

Nathaniel Oswald is an ideal candidate for the position. He started working for Ag companies in Iowa when he wa 14 y/o, doing day labor jobs and has moved up in his profession to his current business. His ability to learn the science of agriculture was by listening to and observing the geneticists, agronomists and hands-on workers. His company does business with US and foreign companies, local, state and federal agencies to assure quality products using proper safeguards. His commitment to Molokai and protecting its resources of people and environment is evident in his numerous civic contributions.

Thank you

**GM-694**

Submitted on: 4/12/2024 12:48:59 PM

Testimony for AEN on 4/15/2024 2:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Vicki Oswald	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Nathan Oswald moved to Molokai over 24 years ago. He married a local woman and together have 4 children, all of which are still in Hawaii. Nathaniel was the only Station Manager for Monsanto (now Bayer) without a college degree. His embracing the Hawaiian culture, along with his agricultural knowledge and civic activities, were the main reason for his position. He has continued his appreciation and understands the great potential Hawaii can obtain. His civic activities have increased as he knows he has been blessed with a spirit of community. His knowledge of what it may take and working with a diverse group of like-minded people would only benefit the Aloha State.