

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'ŌIHANA MAHI'AI
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Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

LATE

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
TOURISM

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2025
1:00 p.m.
CONFERENCE ROOM 229

SENATE BILL NO. 129
RELATING TO LABELING REQUIREMENTS

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify to this measure, which prohibits the sale of raw ahi products in retail establishments without a label that states the country where the ahi was landed. The Department of Agriculture offers comments.

Although we support and inspect uniform packaging and labeling and food labeling, we are not sure this is the correct department to best enforce this requirement. We have already inspected the identity of the product, the net quantity in terms of measure and any declaration of the packer or distributor of any package not packed on the premises where sold for consumer packaged goods. This is more of a consumer protection signage requirement and would need retail establishments to provide such signage to their customers for accurate information at point of sale. Other departments that inspect food safety and quality or consumer protection interests may be better suited to perform this task.

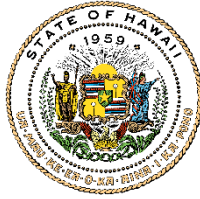


As mentioned on page 1 line 13 there appears to be a gap in federal country of origin labeling requirements for seafood but may be superseded under the “COOL” country of origin labeling USDA requirements. This bill may duplicate work already being done with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) program, 7 CFR Part 60. The Department would defer to have the regulations tightened under the federal program that exists before making the State and retailers take on the burden of the additional cost and labor associated.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony and comments.

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Thursday, January 30, 2025
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 129
RELATING TO LABELING REQUIREMENTS

Senate Bill 129 proposes to prohibit the sale of raw ahi and raw ahi products in retail establishments without a label that states the country where the ahi was landed. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill.**

Today's consumers are increasingly aware of the sourcing of their seafood, with many looking for insight into the quality, safety, and sustainability of products they purchase and consume. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) law (7 CFR Part 60) requires that seafood products be labeled with the country of origin. The COOL requirement does not apply to prepared foods offered for retail sale at food service establishments. This means that prepared products such as poke currently have no labeling requirement. This bill would extend country of origin labeling requirements for certain ahi tuna products at Hawai'i retail establishments, enabling consumers to make informed choices when purchasing seafood.

Yellowfin and bigeye tuna are highly migratory species that are managed at the international, national, and state levels. Internationally, fisheries targeting these species are managed by regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs), which set annual catch quotas for participating countries. Domestically, commercial landings of these species are closely monitored to ensure compliance with quotas established by RFMOs. The largest domestic fishery for ahi in the State, the Hawai'i longline fishery, is closely managed by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) through a limited entry permit system and strict regulations which include mandatory reporting, observer coverage, crew training, gear identification

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

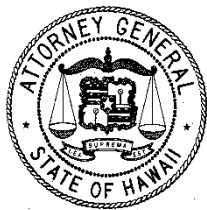
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
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

requirements, special area closures, and other measures to minimize impacts on bycatch and protected species. Fisheries that land tuna in other countries often lack this high level of management oversight.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 129, RELATING TO LABELING REQUIREMENTS.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

DATE: Thursday, January 30, 2025 **TIME:** 1:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 229

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Travis T. Moon or Christopher J.I. Leong, Deputy Attorneys
General

Chair DeCoite and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

This bill proposes to amend section 486-120.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, by adding a country-of-origin labeling requirement for raw ahi, including any raw ahi that has been combined, mixed, marinated, or otherwise prepared for human consumption.

The country-of-origin labeling requirement on page 2, lines 17-21, of the bill may be subject to challenge under the United States Constitution's Supremacy Clause, which provides that the laws of the United States are declared to be supreme to those of the individual states. See U.S. Const. art. VI, cl. 2.

The Federal Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended (7 U.S.C. § 1638, *et seq.*) (federal act), and its corresponding regulation, title 7 Code of Federal Regulations part 60 (federal regulation), require retailers to inform consumers of the country of origin of wild and farm raised fish.

The United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA), provides in the Federal Register (promulgating 7 C.F.R. part 60), that the language of the federal act "is clear" that Congress intended to preempt state law. See Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling of Beef, Pork, Lamb, Chicken, Goat Meat, Wild and Farm-Raised Fish and Shellfish, Perishable Agricultural Commodities, Peanuts, Pecans, Ginseng, and Macadamia Nuts, 74 FR 2658 at 2679, 2701 (January 15, 2009).

A state's country-of-origin labeling requirement that encompasses commodities governed by this federal regulation is preempted. See *id.* at 2701.

As stated above, the federal act and the corresponding federal regulation specifically regulate country-of-origin labeling of wild and farm raised fish offered for sale, and state law on this matter is preempted. See 7 C.F.R. § 60.200. However, country-of-origin labeling requirements for "processed food items," as defined in 7 C.F.R. § 60.119, are allowed. See 7 C.F.R. §§ 60.119 and 60.200(c). Thus, to avoid the Supremacy Clause issue, we recommend the following:

1. Deleting the word "raw" on page 2, line 4;
2. Replacing the word "raw" with "processed" on page 2, lines 16 and 18, of the bill;
3. Revising page 2, lines 19-20, as follows: "~~ahi[, including any raw ahi that has been combined, mixed, marinated, or otherwise prepared for human consumption,] without...~~"
4. Adding a definition of "processed ahi" at page 3, line 8, as follows:
"'Processed ahi' means a retail item derived from ahi that has undergone specific processing resulting in a change in the character of the ahi, or that has been combined with at least one other substantive food component (e.g., breading, tomato sauce), except that the addition of a component (such as water, salt, or sugar) that enhances or represents a further step in the preparation of the product for consumption, would not in itself result in a processed food item."

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.



January 28, 2025

Testimony in Support of SB129

Aloha Chair DeCoite and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Longline Association (HLA) strongly supports SB129. HLA members are comprised of 150 active longline vessels operating out of Honolulu Harbor and the United Fishing Agency (Honolulu Fish Auction). The Hawaii longline fleet is the largest food producer in Hawaii, landing approximately 30 million pounds fish annually. The Hawaii longline fleet, which primarily targets ahi, is also Hawaii's largest fishery, comprising approximately 85% of the State's commercial marine landings. Approximately 80% of our fleet's landings stay in Hawaii with the remainder sold in US mainland markets.

HLA supports SB129 because it would extend existing country of origin labeling for raw ahi sold at retail establishment for products such as poke, sashimi, and sushi. Existing federal and state law already applies to seafood including fish fillets, tuna steaks, and loins as well as fruits, vegetables, and meat. Therefore, retailers already provide country of origin information for much of the seafood they sell so including that information for ahi poke and sashimi should not be onerous.

Ahi poke sold at retail establishments is dominated by previously frozen, carbon monoxide treated fish. However, there is a common misconception that this previously frozen, carbon monoxide treated tuna is derived from Hawaii fisheries, when in fact it is imported from foreign sources. A likely cause for some of this confusion is that retailers often use tricky advertising that mislead consumers into thinking the product is fresh or locally caught such as: "freshly made," and "locally prepared." Moreover, simply using the Hawaiian words "ahi poke" implies locally caught tuna. No ahi landed in Hawaii is being treated with carbon monoxide for commercial sale, whereas Hawaii landed tuna is typically only marketed as "fresh" without any origin information.

While the sale of carbon monoxide treated tuna is prohibited in Japan, European Union, and Australia, among other places, SB129 would not ban it from being sold in Hawaii. Rather, SB129 would provide consumers with more information on where the ahi in their poke comes from, thereby empowering consumers to make more informed choices.

By passing this bill, Hawaii would join Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi in states enacting enhanced seafood country of origin labeling laws to benefit consumers and local seafood producers from impacts of cheaper imports.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of SB129.

Mahalo,

Eric K. Kingma, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Testimony to the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Thursday, January 30, 2025, 1:00 PM

Testimony in Support of SB 129, Relating to Labeling Requirements

To: The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Chair
The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice-Chair
Members of the Committee

My name is Stefanie Sakamoto, and I am testifying on behalf of Fishing Tales with Mike Sakamoto, a company that was founded by my father in 1985.

We are in strong support of SB 129, Relating to Labeling Requirements. This bill prohibits the sale of raw ahi and raw ahi products in retail establishments without a label that states the country where the ahi was landed.

The philosophy of Fishing Tales with Mike Sakamoto has always been to promote the culture of Hawaii and to share Mike's love for fish and fishing. In recent years, ahi (tuna) has seen a surge in popularity in culinary and online circles, and so it has become trendy to consume, photograph, and post online. This bill, SB 129, seeks simply to provide consumers with necessary information on the geographic origin of the tuna so that people know what they are buying and eating. Hawaii-caught ahi is special, and deserves to be labeled as such.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



January 27, 2025

Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Senator Lyun DeCoite, Chair, Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Date: January 30, 2025

Time: 1pm

Regarding: SB 129 Relating to Labeling Requirements

SUPPORT

HFACT is a not-for-profit, IRS 501c(5) organization, that advocates for small boat commercial, non-commercial, and recreational fishermen throughout Hawaii. HFACT board members sit on a number of federal fisheries management and endangered species advisory committees as well as state marine and coastal zone advisory committees; and HFACT is thoroughly familiar with and participates in ocean and marine resource management in Hawaii and the central Pacific.

There is an opportunity for us, in Hawaii to finally have knowledge of the Country of Origin regarding the ahi that we are buying and eating.

If you are wondering about why it is so important to have this information, the primary answer is the concern for your health. For example, every time we drop off ahi to the United Fishing Agency (auction block), we have to gill and gut the fish and the core temperature of the fish must be below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. This means that as soon as possible after landing the fish, we remove the gills and guts and ice/ brine the fish to get it chilled. This is an imperative practice to insure freshness and prevent bacteria from growing. In contrast to this meticulous handling of the ahi, it is not the same protocol practiced in other countries.

If you have ever seen the small writing on the label below the ahi poke in the market that says " Previously Frozen and Gassed", this means that the tuna you are about to purchase and eat is not fresh caught and has been treated with Carbon Monoxide. Carbon Monoxide will keep that tuna a nice red color, no matter how old it is. If you've ever seen tuna that is not fresh, it turns a grayish brown color and is a sure indication to not eat it. A little known fact about gassed tuna is that the USA is the only country that

Hawai'i Fishermen's Alliance for Conservation and Tradition, Inc.
2015 Leiloke Drive, Honolulu, HI.96822

allows this product to be sold. Even the countries that export this product to us, make it illegal to sell it.

Local caught fresh ahi is a valuable commodity and brings in revenues of over 110 million dollars into our economy. It is the most valuable food resource that the State produces and we need to treasure it and add to it's value by "Buying Local".

HFACT thanks the chair, vice-chair, and committee members for this opportunity to provide comment and to assist in providing food to the people of Hawaii and to assist in the conservation of Hawaii's natural resources.

Sincerely and Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edwin Watamura". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Edwin" being more prominent than the last name "Watamura".

Edwin Watamura
Executive Director.
watafishing @ gmail.com

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 12:30:53 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sean Martin	Testifying for Hawaii Longline Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for SB 129

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 8:07:13 AM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Rohr	Testifying for Forage Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a fisherman and a business owner who sells fish. It is nearly impossible to compete with low priced imported fish with decieving marketing. Most customers I talk to have no idea their fish isn't local. They just look at the price and get what is cheaper.

In order for us to justify our pricing we have to be able to differentiate our brand. Please pass this bill so we can have better transparency in our food system. Mahalo, Jessica Rohr

LATE

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 7:49:47 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Faun Skyles	Testifying for Farm Link Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senate Committee On Economic Development & Tourism
Hawai'i State Capitol

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee,

Farm Link Hawai'i, a local food hub located in Kalihi, O'ahu, supports SB129, which aligns with our commitment to transparency and a resilient local food system. Requiring clear labeling of raw ahi's country of origin empowers consumers to make informed choices and ensures accountability in seafood sourcing.

Just as we uphold strict integrity standards for local products, this bill prevents misleading claims about "fresh" or "local" ahi. Strengthening transparency benefits Hawai'i's fishers, businesses, and communities. We urge you to support this measure.

Mahalo for your leadership and dedication to Hawai'i's food system.

Sincerely,

Faun A. Skyles
Culinary Director
Farm Link Hawai'i
www.farmlinkhawaii.com

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 1:10:08 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My names is Natia Barber and I was born in Wailuku,Hawaii.

I support SB129, as the transparency in our food should be of the utmost importance. As citizens we hold our trust in that when we are making our own decisions we are doing so in good faith that what we are purchasing what is being advertised. Locally made ahi poke signs, by definition would mean the ahi came from the seas we visit each day on island. However this is not the case, and because of such we are inadvertently are going against our own morals without even knowing so.

Food gives us life, and the life specifically from the sea on our pae aina is something we should root in good faith and good morals. We are given the beautiful opportunity to take from the seas, we should at the very least be truthful of where the origins of said food is coming from. We owe that much respect to that life that feeds us.

I encourage the members of the council to adhere to the transparency of food origins so that we can make our own decisions.

Mahalo nui,

Natia

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 3:13:10 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Philip Fernandez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am resident of Oahu and enjoy eating fresh fish that are caught by local fishermen. Some stores, including Safeway and Foodland, sell tuna from out of the country with no disclosure as to origin. Some of the tuna is "gassed". That is, exposed to carbon monoxide to turn the tuna bright red. The gas binds with the hemoglobin (blood component) and turns it bright red. In fact, this bright red color remains even if the tuna starts to rot. The red color of gassed tuna will remain red after three days, even five days or more.

By the way, this technology is also used for beef that are sold in sealed packages, as those sold at Target. At least Target has a warning label that says that the color of the meat is not indicative of it freshness.

I STRONGLY SUPPORT THIS BILL.

Thank you.

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 3:53:18 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Foreign imported frozen gassed ahi is terrible. Label it!

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 3:57:20 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
gordon piianaia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As consumers we deserve to know where our food is coming from. Especially fish that has a direct impact on our commercial fishermen and our cultural identity. We cannot depend on and look towards the federal government for guidance on our own unique needs as a state. This is comparable to being in Japan and having miso soup that says cooked here, but the miso is made in Brazil. Sure it might be cheaper, but the consumer should have the right to know where their products are coming from. People can always choose to buy a cheaper product that has been frozen and brought in from the other side of the planet, but let them decide for themselves.

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 4:01:43 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lacie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support labeling it. Frozen ahi not from Hawaii should be labeled as such.

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 6:45:57 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenneth kirby	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I whole heartedly support this bill. We need transparency for the fishing industry and for the public who consume the fish.

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 6:54:30 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Uilani Naipo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I appreciate and support this measure.

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:04:06 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lokahi Barbieto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha I am a native Hawaiian fisher man and also have my own catering business that only serves my people of Hawaii fresh island caught fish. Here in Hawaii no should be no reason why we serve fish caught from another ocean. We have the plenty of fresh local caught fish here in our islands to provide for our people. If they are gonna serve this product from another country it should be labeled where from! People are being mislead just because it's cheap. Aloha !

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:10:31 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jesse white	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a lifelong fisherman seeing the rise of cheap imported fish namely ahi. Which is caught a lot of the time on vessels who don't follow the same laws and regulations as the US and Hawai'i based longline fleet. They use purse seines which indiscriminately trap other ocean mammals and turtles that federally protected. The fish then is either frozen or gassed with carbon monoxide "tailpipe tuna" then frozen and imported to the US. That practice itself is illegal to do in the US however we let other countries do it and we prop them up by importing it cheap. The fishermen lose and the people are eating a degraded product a lot of times falsely advertised too. I know because I worked at restaurants who used this import and I refused to sell it to any of my tables and told them it was previously frozen and cubed imported tuna.

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:32:54 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Nakasato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Fully support this bill as it strives to maintain transparency and allow buyers to make informed decisions on the fish they purchase. There has been to much manipulation of labeling and many have purchased a sub standard product at a high price. This hurts both local fisherman as well as consumers and takes money out of the local economy.

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:33:07 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jason timm	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a consumer of fish, I am in support of SB129 100%. When fish is caught somewhere else, frozen and then sold as local is a disservice to the consumers and a flat out lie. I support bill SB129.

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:51:18 AM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kawai Watanabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stop allowing other countries to continue to poison the people of Hawai'i with treated and gassed fish.

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 10:39:50 AM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kukunaokala Cates	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in support of SB 129. As a local fisherman everyone I talk to wants to buy fresh island caught fish and are willing to pay, but when they go to the store and see what appears to be the same fish with the label "fresh made" it confuses them into thinking that foreign caught, poor quality fish treated with carbon monoxide or chemicals is the same thing just cheaper. This bill will help people know if they are eating fresh local fish or previously frozen foreign fish. Please help local fisherman and the fish buyers of Hawai'i and vote in support of SB 129.

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 11:54:47 AM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rynetta K	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support. We should have truthful labeling of our poke.

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 1:08:14 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Myking	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Should pass it

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 2:11:54 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Clarice OWens	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Comments in Support of Hawaii Seafood Labeling Bill

Dear Hawaii House & Senate,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed legislation to require labeling of Hawaii seafood. This bill represents a critical step toward supporting sustainable fisheries, protecting consumer interests, and strengthening Hawaii's local economy.

1. Ensuring Transparency for Consumers Consumers have a right to know where their seafood comes from and how it has been treated. Currently, misleading practices such as labeling foreign-imported, carbon monoxide-treated tuna as "freshly made" undermine consumer trust and devalue the high-quality, sustainably caught, and untreated seafood from Hawaii's responsible fisheries. This bill will empower consumers to make informed choices by mandating country-of-origin labeling and preventing deceptive marketing practices.

2. Supporting Hawaii's Local Fisheries Hawaii's local fisheries play a vital role in the state's economy, culture, and food security. By requiring clear labeling, this legislation will help vacationers and residents alike identify and support locally caught and untreated tuna, such as the high-quality products landed by the Hawaii Longline Association. This will ensure that dollars spent on seafood remain in Hawaii, benefiting hardworking fishers and their communities.

3. Advancing Public Health The use of questionable treatments like carbon monoxide, synthetic dyes (e.g., Red No. 3 or Red No. 40), and nitrates in imported tuna not only misleads consumers but also poses significant health risks, including increased cancer risk. Hawaii-caught tuna, free from these additives, provides a safer and more nutritious option for consumers. Labeling seafood will allow individuals to make healthier choices and build trust in the food they consume.

4. Highlighting Hawaii's Leadership in Sustainability The United States, guided by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), leads the world in sustainable fisheries management, with 99% of wild-caught American seafood being sustainable by weight. Hawaii's fisheries epitomize this success story. However, over-reliance on foreign imports undermines these achievements. Requiring labeling will highlight Hawaii's contributions to sustainable fishing and incentivize greater support for responsible, local seafood.

5. Addressing Climate Change Through Local Seafood Seafood has a much lower carbon footprint compared to other animal proteins. However, the environmental benefits are diminished when seafood travels an average of 7,000 miles for processing and consumption, as is often the case with imported products. Encouraging the consumption of locally caught seafood will reduce food miles, promote regional food systems, and mitigate climate change impacts.

6. Preserving Hawaii's Fishing Communities and Traditions The economic viability of Hawaii's fishing industry is under increasing threat from global market pressures, high operating costs, and competition with low-cost, less-regulated imports. Labeling requirements will help level the playing field for Hawaii's fishers by giving them fair access to local and regional markets while preserving the traditions and livelihoods that define Hawaii's unique maritime heritage.

Conclusion This legislation will address critical issues of transparency, sustainability, public health, and economic equity. By requiring clear labeling of Hawaii seafood, we can ensure that consumers are informed, local fisheries are supported, and Hawaii's leadership in sustainable fishing is recognized and rewarded.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. I urge you to pass this bill and stand in support of Hawaii's fishers, communities, and marine resources.

Sincerely,
Clarice Owens

Healthy Oceans Seafood Company (Pescavore)

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:00:42 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
spencer vanderkamp	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a licensed commercial fisherman since I was 18 years old, born and raised here in Hawaii, I am writing to strongly support SB129 and HB534, to put a stop do the deceptive practices taking place in many stores around Hawaii.

The foreign, carbon monoxide treated poke from Foodland is so bad I cant even eat it without feeling sick. I wouldn't even consider eating poke from Safeway, and if the general public wasn't misled by false advertising, I doubt they would either.

These grocery stores use tricks like calling it locally made, fresh made or loopholes to knowingly deceive the public. Not only does allowing this to transpire support environmentally damaging methods of fishing in countries where labor laws are non-existent, it also damages the reputation of true local, Hawaiin FRESH fish. The words fresh and local are losing their meaning because of selfish practices of these grocery giants.

This has major economic impact as well, hurting the Hawaiian fishing fleet by artificially lowering prices, forcing boat owners to cut cost, hire sojourners and ultimately take jobs away from local Hawaii residents.

This is a bad practice, and should have been stopped years ago.

Thank you for your time.

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 5:40:17 AM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bronsten Kossow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support and support locally sourced product. Mahalo!

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 10:58:37 AM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy Werner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Law makers,

I write in support of increased transparency and honesty towards the consumer. This bill is a no-brainer to me, and I highly support it. Anyone spending their money, especially in these times, should have the right to know where their food comes from. Not only is this the pono thing to do, it also allows for consumers to be more informed in their decision making, and have greater access to supporting local enconomy from the source instead of being mislead into thinking they are.

Mahalo nui,

Christy Werner

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 11:39:46 AM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keke Manera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support SB129 and also think that it's important to keep consumers informed as to where exactly their food is coming from.

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 12:23:22 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Evans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Economic Development and Tourism Committee,

My name is Andrew Evans, I'm born, raised, lived, and work on the Windward side. I'm a conservation professional and volunteer fishmonger working to promote locally-caught, sustainable seafood. I urge you to support SB129.

Although there is necessary work to differentiate most auction fish (landed in Hawaii but neither caught in domestic waters nor with a domestic crew) from actually locally-caught fish, this proposed labelling requirement is an essential step at creating transparency in our lauded seafood culture, and is a necessary step in the motion to promote local seafood.

A suggested edit, beyond labeling imported vs. Hawai'i landed seafood would be to label with the actual source waters of the seafood (where it was caught; which is already documented and submitted with catch reports).

Please support this bill and the continuing efforts to protect and promote our local seafood industry.

Thank you for your time and effort in pursuing this legislation.
Andrew Evans

LATE

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 7:12:03 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brendt Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Brendt Chang and I am a born and raised in Hawaii, and am a local resident who is active within my community.

I support HB129 that requires truth in labeling with respect to ahi. In Hawaii, ahi is consumed in large volumes by the public as poke or derivatives of poke. Thousands of pounds of raw tuna are consumed in Hawaii, as poke or sashimi on a daily basis. When poke is sold to the public it is often labeled as AHI and that name in itself implies it is locally caught tuna. As a consumer, I would like to know that the ahi I am consuming comes from local landed sources and hasn't been manipulated with carbon monoxide for color treatment, or has been caught in a Third World Country. As an educated person to Third World food handling processes, I would not purchase the ahi if I knew it came from that source and was gassed. The State of Hawaii has stringent HACAP rules and procedures which protects the consumers and assures us that the ahi has been properly handled and has an accountability record. It doesn't matter if the frozen imported tuna passes FDA requirements, in Third World Countries all it takes is an envelope handed to the right person along with the shipment to get it passed through to unsuspecting consumers.

The State of Hawaii Government has a duty to protect consumers from purchasing products that are 1) not what they think it is and 2) not from the source they believe it is.

Please support SB 129 to start a Truth in Labeling movement within Hawaii's seafood industry to protect Hawaii's public consumers or at least make them aware, so they can make an educated decision for themselves.

Aloha and Mahalo for your consideration.

LATE

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 8:10:10 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joshua DeMello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

I support this bill but would like to suggest adding language that would also prohibit imported tuna from being labeled as ahi as well as consider expanding this measure to all imported fish. Ahi is a native Hawaiian word that refers to yellowfin and bigeye tuna and has inherent value due to the high quality and freshness due to those fish being caught in Hawaii under strict regulations.

The legislature should consider protecting that value the way France does with champagne and Japan does with Wagyu beef. Fishing and fish, particularly the names of our fish like ahi, mahimahi, opakapaka, etc., are part of the fabric of Hawaii and Hawaiia. culture that provides the identity and brand of the islands. Allowing fish of questionable quality and freshness to co-opt the name and thus the value, diminishes the reputation of our fresh caught fish and Hawaii itself. Worse yet, this lower quality fish is culturally appropriating our native culture all in the name of higher profits. A rose by any other name may smell as sweet, but does a skunk with the name of rose smell as sweet?

Please vote yes on this bill and encourage your fellow senators to pass it through the next committee and the floor. Also please consider adding the above request to add protections for Hawaiian fish names to protect the integrity of our culture, resources, and state.

Mahalo

Joshua DeMello

Kaneohe, O'ahu

LATE

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 9:51:51 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee,

I am writing in support of SB129 Relating to Labeling Requirements. Clear labeling of raw ahi's country of origin empowers Hawai'i consumers to make informed decisions while supporting our local fishing industry. By promoting integrity in sourcing local products, this bill guarantees accountability in seafood labeling, preventing misleading claims about ahi being "fresh" or "local." Strengthening transparency ultimately benefits consumers, local fishers, and businesses.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Molly Mamaril

SB-129

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 9:28:06 AM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cody Ana-Solomon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. I am writing to respectfully urge your administration to support and prioritize legislation requiring clear country-of-origin labeling on food products sold in Hawaii.

As a resident of our beautiful aina, I am deeply concerned about transparency in our food supply. Knowing where our food comes from empowers consumers to make informed choices for the health and well-being of their families. Additionally, it promotes local agriculture and supports Hawaiian farmers by encouraging consumers to choose homegrown products when possible.

Country-of-origin labeling serves several key purposes:

1. Consumer Rights and Transparency:

Shoppers deserve to know where their food is sourced to make decisions that align with their values, such as prioritizing sustainability or supporting local economies.

2. Health and Safety:

Different countries have varying food safety regulations. Labeling allows consumers to choose products from regions they trust.

3. Support for Local Farmers:

Highlighting local and U.S.-grown products encourages residents to buy local, strengthening Hawaii's agricultural sector and reducing dependence on imports.

4. Environmental Impact:

Choosing local products helps reduce the carbon footprint associated with food transportation.

Â that by implementing clear country-of-origin labeling requirements, we can foster a healthier, more transparent, and sustainable food system in Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue. I would be grateful for your leadership in ensuring that Hawaii residents have the information they need to make informed choices about the food they purchase and consume.

Sincerely,

[Cody Ana-Solomon]

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