

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

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

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CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on  
ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
and  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Friday, March 21, 2025  
1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 56  
SENATE RESOLUTION 40  
URGING THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP A NATIONAL  
BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

Senate Concurrent Resolution 56 and companion Senate Resolution 40 urges the United States government to develop a national biodiversity strategy. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure.**

Much of Hawai'i's unique plants and wildlife are found nowhere else on Earth, and these species and their habitats face tremendous challenges due to habitat loss and the introduction of non-native invasive species. More than half of the native habitats have been lost, and the introduction of non-native plants, animals, and diseases constitutes an ongoing threat to species in restricted ranges. A national biodiversity strategy would support the coordination and planning needed to reduce the threats of these invasive species and identify the need for additional funding and capacity to manage Hawai'i's native species. On a State level, Hawai'i has committed to protecting 30% of our priority watershed forests by 2030 and is undertaking other biodiversity initiatives across habitats from marine to alpine ecosystems. The success of these goals largely depends on support from the federal government in providing funds, staff, and policies to protect native biodiversity.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

March 18, 2025

To: Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Chang, Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, the Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs, and the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Subject: **SR40 and SCR56**, National Biodiversity Strategy

Aloha,

**Please pass SR40 and SCR56**, which will urge the federal government to establish a national biodiversity strategy. This strategy in particular is important to bring to fruition because biodiversity is a priceless aspect to our environments. Protecting biodiversity also protects the various ecosystem services that we as humans rely on to support our societies and economies. Ensuring biodiversity also ensures biosecurity, which secures longevity and presence of living species and processes. Ensuring biodiversity and biosecurity ultimately affects our food system and access to food for agriculture's undeniable connection to the local environment.

Another critical element of this resolution/companion resolution is increasing awareness around biodiversity issues. People cannot act without the proper knowledge or simple awareness that the issue exists. Furthermore, this bill calls upon the general public to provide their input to the development of the strategy. This would engage federal and state agencies, Indigenous communities, communities of color, low-income communities, private landowners, and other stakeholders that can strengthen biodiversity restoration efforts. Extending input to the people who know their local communities best and communities who have generational knowledge on their lands and waters is quintessential in developing an effective yet efficient strategy.

Once the biodiversity is gone, it is gone for good. There are no take backs or returns and therefore it is important to pass this resolution to ultimately protect this country's biodiversity.

Mahalo,  
Jeanette Burdick & the Food+ Policy Team  
#fixourfoodsystem

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**The Food+ Policy internship** develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.