

JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'AINA



BONNIE KAHAKUI
ADMINISTRATOR
DAYNA OMIYA
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I

STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

P.O. Box 119
Honolulu, Hawaii 96810-0119
Tel: (808) 586-0554
email: state.procurement.office@hawaii.gov
<http://spo.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY OF BONNIE KAHAKUI, ADMINISTRATOR STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
February 6, 2026, 9:01 a.m.

HOUSE BILL 2194
RELATING TO LEI

Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 2194. The State Procurement Office (SPO) provides comments on this bill, which affirms the cultural importance of the lei and recommends procurement benchmarks for state agencies, along with labeling standards for lei and lei materials.

House Bill 2194 would require each State Executive agency to ensure that a growing percentage of lei they purchase consists entirely of natural plant and object materials that are grown, harvested, and assembled in Hawai'i, increasing from 30% by 2032 to 50% by 2042, and eventually prohibiting purchases of lei containing materials grown outside the State after 2043. The bill should clearly provide guidance on how agencies would document compliance and track progress towards those benchmarks, and ensure enforcement mechanisms are fair, transparent, and supported by clear regulatory guidance. Strong, precise definitions and clear enforcement procedures will help protect both consumers and legitimate local producers.

House Bill 2194 reflects on the important recognition of the lei as a cultural and economic symbol of Hawai'i. To help the bill achieve its goals in a practical, equitable, and legally consistent way, we respectfully encourage enhancement on:

- Procurement benchmark clarity and reporting pathways;
- Synchronization with Hawai'i's existing procurement laws;
- Support for small local lei producers, including seasonal and supply considerations; and
- Enforcement of the labeling standards.

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

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI A KIA'I MEAOLA
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9560 FAX: (808) 973-9613

SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

LATE

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

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

**FRIDAY FEBRUARY 6, 2026
9:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2194
RELATING TO LEI**

Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify to House Bill No. 2194 Relating to Lei. This bill establishes benchmarks to ensure that a certain percentage of lei purchased by that executive agency consists entirely of natural objects and plant materials grown, harvested and assembled in the State. Establishes labeling requirements for lei and lei materials. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity supports this measure.

The Department agrees that each state executive agency shall ensure the lei's purchased for use in celebrations, ceremonies and regular use shall use all natural objects and plant materials such as leaves, ferns, flowers, vines and seeds that are grown, harvested and assembled in the state. The Department suggests that the percentage allowed by benchmarks within the bill be set to standards that are reasonably attainable by the specific dates allowed and simplified as much as possible to not allow for substitution or fraud. It may be difficult to determine the actual percentages used in production of the product as there is no test or procedure for this currently.

Should the measure be enacted the DAB may need to request additional staffing and resources to effectively carry out the enforcement aspect of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI A KIA'I MEAOLA
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9560 FAX: (808) 973-9613

LATE

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

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

**FRIDAY FEBRUARY 6, 2026
9:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2194
RELATING TO LEI**

Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify to House Bill No. 2194 Relating to Lei. This bill establishes benchmarks to ensure that a certain percentage of lei purchased by that executive agency consists entirely of natural objects and plant materials grown, harvested and assembled in the State. Establishes labeling requirements for lei and lei materials. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity supports this measure.

The Department agrees that each state executive agency shall ensure the lei's purchased for use in celebrations, ceremonies and regular use shall use all natural objects and plant materials such as leaves, ferns, flowers, vines and seeds that are grown, harvested and assembled in the state. The Department suggests that the percentage allowed by benchmarks within the bill be set to standards that are reasonably attainable by the specific dates allowed and simplified as much as possible to not allow for substitution or fraud. It may be difficult to determine the actual percentages used in production of the product as there is no test or procedure for this currently.

Should the measure be enacted the DAB may need to request additional staffing and resources to effectively carry out the enforcement aspect of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**HAWAIIAN
COUNCIL**

Hawai'i State House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

HB2194 – Relating to Lei

RE: Strong support of HB2194

February 6, 2026

Hawaiian Council writes in **strong support of HB2194** to advance consumer education and continued support of Hawai'i's local farmers, cultural practitioners, and small businesses.

Lei is a deeply rooted cultural expression that can represent aloha, celebration, remembrance, and connection to the land. At graduations, birthdays, community events, and Opening Day, lei are a visible and meaningful part of daily life in our islands. Consumers should have the opportunity to understand where their lei come from and how their purchasing choices impact Hawai'i's economy.

From the humble ti leaf to the delicate Ni'ihiu shell, lei makers have long used the materials around them to create a vast array of lei with different meanings and complexities. Today, Hawai'i is home to about 291 floriculture and nursery operations as well as countless leishopsthat rely on consistent local demand to remain viable. However, approximately 90% of the lei sold in Hawai'i is made with imported flowers. Lei is one of the strongest enduring symbols of Hawai'i and, to put it simply, what is a lei if it is not from Hawai'i nei?

HB2194 provides consumers with accurate information to make informed decisions that align with their values. For residents and visitors alike, the ability to choose a locally-grown or locally-made lei is an easy way to support Hawai'i's economy, appreciate Native Hawaiian culture, and promote sustainable purchasing habits. Hawai'i's floriculture industry is valued at about \$47.1 million, with cut flowers accounting for \$5.6 million. State purchases of lei represents a valuable economic opportunity to support local. Last year, it was reported that Honolulu councilmembers spend nearly \$4,500 annually on lei purchases. Clear labeling ensures that public funds, when possible, can intentionally support Hawai'i farms, businesses, and lei makers.

For these reasons, Hawaiian Council respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS HB2194**. Mahalo for your commitment to supporting Native Hawaiian culture, agriculture, and local lei makers.

Mālama pono,

Madelyn McKeague

Director of Advocacy
Hawaiian Council

HAWAIIANS ADVANCING HAWAII

91-1270 Kinoiki Street, Building 1, Kapolei, HI 96707

info@hawaiiancouncil.org

www.hawaiiancouncil.org

February 6, 2026

House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems
Representative Cory M. Chun, Chair
Representative Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

Friday, February 6, 2026, 9:01 a.m.
Conference Room #325 and via video conference



RE: HB 2194 Relating to Lei

Dear Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch and members of the Committee,

My name is Kiran Polk, and I am the Executive Director & CEO of the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce. The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce is an advocate for businesses in the Kapolei region including Waipahu, Kapolei, 'Ewa Beach, Nānākūli, Wai'anae, and Mākaha. We work on behalf of our members and the broader business community to improve the regional and State economic climate and to help West O'ahu businesses thrive.

The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce **supports HB 2194** because it is a measure that strengthens Hawai'i's local economy by reinforcing demand for locally grown, harvested, and assembled lei—and by extension, the small farms, florists, cultural practitioners, and businesses that rely on this supply chain.

One of our small business members, Haus of Puas, illustrates why this bill matters. Haus of Puas is the first floral and lei shop serving West O'ahu in recent years, and their business model is intentionally rooted in sourcing locally and reinvesting back into Hawai'i's agricultural community. Through their operations, Haus of Puas currently **supports 15 local lei makers and small farms, many of whom are based in Wai'anae, Nānākūli, Kapolei, and 'Ewa. These are small, community-based operations that depend on consistent local demand to remain viable.**

By choosing to source locally, Haus of Puas helps sustain an interconnected ecosystem where small farms, lei makers, and retail businesses support one another. HB 2194 reinforces this model by promoting transparency and encouraging the use of locally made lei, ensuring that demand continues to flow to Hawai'i growers and producers rather than imported products.

From a business perspective, this measure supports more than cultural preservation, it supports economic sustainability. Clear standards and procurement practices help small farms plan, grow, and invest with confidence, while allowing small businesses to compete fairly in the marketplace. **For regions like West O'ahu, where local businesses are closely tied to agricultural producers and cultural practitioners, this kind of policy support is especially meaningful.**

HB 2194 aligns with the Kapolei Chamber's commitment to strengthening small businesses, supporting local agriculture, and keeping economic activity rooted in Hawai'i culture and communities. For these reasons, the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce **supports HB 2037** and respectfully urges the Committee to pass this measure.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,

Kiran Polk
Executive Director & CEO



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 6, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2194
RELATING TO LEI

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:01 AM

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice-Chair Kusch, 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 HB 2194, which requires and establishes benchmarks for each state executive agency to ensure that a certain percentage of lei purchased by that executive agency consists of lei made entirely of natural objects and plant materials grown, harvested, and assembled in the State.

Encouraging the procurement and use of locally grown flowers and lei supports Hawai'i's farmers, strengthens the local floriculture industry, and reinforces the cultural and economic value of Hawai'i-grown agricultural products. HFB appreciates the Legislature's continued leadership in promoting local agriculture and expanding opportunities for Hawai'i growers.

HFB also recognizes that the floriculture and lei industry is a diverse agricultural sector that includes growers, lei makers, wholesalers, and retailers. While increasing the use of locally grown materials is an important goal, production capacity, seasonality, labor availability, and crop-specific constraints can vary across islands and throughout the year. As this policy is implemented, it will be important to ensure that local growers have the time and support needed to scale production sustainably and economically.

We appreciate the phased approach reflected in HB 2194 and believe that gradual implementation is key to allowing the industry to adjust, invest, and respond to increased demand. Continued collaboration with stakeholders across the supply chain will help ensure that the policy strengthens local agriculture while remaining workable for the businesses responsible for sourcing, assembling, and delivering lei for state use.

HB 2194 also includes provisions related to transparency in sourcing. As with any procurement or labeling requirement, HFB encourages approaches that are practical, clearly defined, and workable for growers, lei makers, and vendors across the supply chain.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Officers
Kaipo Kekona
State President



Christian Zuckerman
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents
Kelii Gannet
Kohala, Hawai'i

East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Ka'ū, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawai'i

Gina Lind
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahālāwai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Moloka'i

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Rachel LaDrig
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports HB2194.**

Imported plant materials are frequently marketed with Hawaiian imagery and language, misleading consumers and siphoning revenue away from local family farmers; this bill provides the "Hawaii Grown" and "Hawaii Made" labeling protections necessary to ensure economic integrity.

By mandating state agencies to prioritize locally harvested materials, we reduce the risk of invasive species introductions associated with high-volume floral imports while securing a stable, taxpayer-funded market for rural floriculture producers.

This legislation transforms state procurement from a passive expense into an active investment in Hawaii's agricultural self-sufficiency.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heaivilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

HB-2194

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:25:38 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cedric Duarte	Kalihi Palama Hawaiian Civic Club	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting Testimony in Support of HB2194 (companion SB 2781) with Amendment, Relating to Lei

Rep Cory Chun, Chair Rep Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair Members

Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Hearing: Feb 6, 9:01 a.m.

Aloha,

The Kalihi Palama HCC supports HB2194 with an amendment.

Purpose and Intent of the Bill

HB2194 recognizes the lei as a deeply cherished cultural symbol and an integral part of Hawai‘i’s identity, traditions, and daily life. The bill would:

1. Require state executive agencies to ensure that a portion of the lei they purchase is made entirely from natural, locally grown, harvested, and assembled materials; and
2. Establish clear labeling requirements for lei and lei materials sold in Hawai‘i, ensuring authenticity and preventing misleading claims such as “Hawaii Made” when the materials or assembly do not originate in the State.

Supportive Reasons**1. Protection and Preservation of Cultural Integrity**

The lei is a sacred Hawaiian practice rooted in aloha and respect.

Lei are worn and presented at life milestones, ceremonies, hula, graduations, births, funerals, and community gatherings. Ensuring that lei purchased with public funds are locally made honors this cultural practice rather than commodifying it with imported or manufactured components.

2. Support for Local Growers, Lei Makers, and Cultural Practitioners

Imported and manufactured lei materials undermine local growers and traditions. HB2194 will promote local plants, retain economic value, and support practitioners.

3. Consumer Transparency and Market Integrity

Clear labeling requirements will prevent consumer deception and protect both purchasers and authentic local artisans.

4. Environmental and Sustainability Benefits

Using local, natural materials supports sustainability, reduces imports, and aligns with mālama ʻāina values.

5. Practical Concern: Capacity of Local Floriculture

Currently, local flower farmers may struggle to meet statewide demand for lei.

This is due to farm decline, rising costs, pests, and limited infrastructure, creating challenges for growers and the public.

6. Request for Information and Suggested Amendment

In light of these concerns, we respectfully ask the Legislature to consider any existing studies, assessments, or data by the Dept of Agriculture or the University of Hawaii that have already examined the following:

- The number and distribution of flower farms in Hawaiʻi;
- The types and volume of lei materials currently produced locally, and
- The capacity of local floriculture to meet public and private demand.

If no such study exists, we strongly urge amending the bill to require the Department of Agriculture to conduct a statewide study. At a minimum, it should evaluate the number and distribution of flower and lei-material farms, production capacity, barriers for local growers, and resources needed to support floriculture and lei giving.

- The current number and geographic distribution of flower and lei-material farms;
- Production capacity relative to demand;
- Barriers faced by local growers; and
- The resources, incentives, and infrastructure needed to sustainably support the local floriculture industry and the cultural practice of lei giving.

Such a requirement would provide the data necessary to ensure that future policy decisions are grounded in agricultural reality, economic feasibility, and cultural responsibility.

7. Conclusion

HB2194 and SB2781 address commercial pressures that threaten the authentic cultural significance of lei in Hawai‘i. Our main recommendation is for the Legislature to ensure authentic, locally made lei by first evaluating local floriculture capacity before implementing new mandates.

- Uphold Native Hawaiian cultural practices,
- Bolster local growers and artisans,
- Enhance transparency in the marketplace, and
- Support sustainable, ‘āina-based economic practices.

However, thoughtful implementation requires an understanding of current agricultural capacity.

By first determining if relevant studies exist, or requiring one if needed, the Legislature can ensure mandates on local lei materials are achievable and supportive of both cultural practitioners and farmers.

Mahalo nui loa for advancing policies that honor Hawai‘i’s people, culture, and ‘āina.

Thank you,

Cedric Duarte, President

Kalihi Palama Hawaiian Civic Club

HB-2194

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:29:46 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leimomi Fisher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure as a Native Hawaiian & practitioner of making lei. It is really sad & frustrating to see more & more lei being sold in stores coming from Columbia, Micronesia, etc., and of course that means that people are buying more non-local lei. The State should prioritize lei materials and makers in Hawai'i first & foremost. Please **PASS** this bill!!

HB-2194

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:21:43 PM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicholas Lee	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. My name is Nicholas Lee and I am the controller for Cindy's Lei & Flower Shoppe. I have spent the majority of my life in Honolulu, spent half my childhood growing up in the lei shop and worked there as adult for more than 11 years. I have first-hand experience with the inventory, storage and merchandising of both domestic and imported floriculture - particularly lei, cut flowers and arranged floral work - along with beginner to intermediary experience with farming. On a daily basis I also work with brokers and vendors that have first-hand procurement experience with imported floriculture.

I do not support HB2194 and oppose it because I believe that if a phased ban is put into effect without demonstrating a recovery as well as a growth trend in domestic agriculture, especially for Honolulu County, this bill put into law would harm the lei + domestic floriculture industry without presenting a significant benefit / offset competition for domestic floral farms, merchandisers and designers. According to DBEDT economic industry reports, the flower industry's annualized market capitalization was \$70M+ in the 1990s. Within the past few years as a snapshot of where we are now, DBEDT's figure for annualized market capitalization was \$40M+. Industry entrepreneurs, principals, talent and laborers are aging out; creating a phased ban will not help alleviate the challenge of the shrinking floral and lei industry.

At present, the demand for local floriculture in Honolulu County is saturated. Having had consistent and open communication with our domestic floral vendors (e.g. A&K Nursery, Inc., Uilani Farms, the Pretty Plumeria, homeowners that are Pikake and Ohai Ali'i growers, Tropical Cut Flower brokers, etc) and our diverse customer base, we assert that because of consumer tastes, imported lei and floriculture does not compete against local product, especially during 'graduation season' (roughly the last week of April thru mid-June). The demand of the lei industry is great enough to accommodate the supply of both the domestic market and import market (from Thailand, South America, etc). Moreover, the alleviation of price pressures from imported product as part of a bundle of goods sold to the consumer that is often event specific does provide savings to the local HNL County to Hawaii County resident.

Protectionism can be an effective strategy, but only within the context of a non-saturated market. In this case, a phased ban of imported lei and floriculture will be regressive to Hawaii's economy (GDP). The vast majority of commercial farms' and hobbyist growers' (that farm in a household yard setting) principals are above 60 years old without a succession plan, nor a steady supply of

farmhands outside of their own household. Back in the 80s-90s when A&K Nursery, Inc. boasted roughly 200 farm hands that were dedicated to Orchid production, at that time a phased ban / limit on the import of Thailand Orchids (Dendrobium, Oncidium, Mokara, etc) could have been effective in protecting the domestic agriculture sector as well as its workforce. Without access to imported Orchid product, local agriculture would effectively be purchased at scale by larger domestic wholesale entities. The trickle-down effect of this would be inflationary due to a finite domestic supply as well as the high cost of farming in the state of Hawaii (primarily due to high cost of real estate, transportation costs to Hawaii, high cost of utilities electric and water and the challenge of labor shortages in the agriculture sector across HNL County and Hawaii County).

I hope you will deeply consider the adverse consequences of passing HB2194 and that other action items can be created in the form of stimulus (e.g. grants, subsidies) to local growers, pest/plant disease management, good regulation and deregulation (simplification and expediting permitting processes), advocacy of sustainable growing (e.g. promoting water catchment, prevention of contaminant-filled runoff). Local growers must be supported without implementing regressive legislation that will do more harm than good.

Mahalo nui for your consideration.

Mahalo,
Nick

HB-2194

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 7:59:00 AM
Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong Comment by Johnnie-Mae L. Perry

1. Financial incentive for flora growers/farmers - lei materials
2. UHM test the "yellow" plumeria to prevent bruise NOT modify the "smell" Example used by hula dancers
3. 12/31/30 - 50% or more
4. A lot of TALK about supporting local and yet the SOH does not