

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



BONNIE KAHAKUI  
ADMINISTRATOR  
DAYNA OMIYA  
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

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

### STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

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### TESTIMONY OF BONNIE KAHAKUI, ADMINISTRATOR STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE  
ON  
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
FEBRUARY 3, 2026, 3:00 PM

SENATE BILL 2781  
RELATING TO LEI

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Senate Bill 2781. 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.

Senate Bill 2781 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.

Senate Bill 2781 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 recommend 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.

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

**TUESDAY FEBRUARY 3, 2026  
3:00 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 225 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2781  
RELATING TO LEI**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify to Senate Bill No. 2781 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.

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.

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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson  
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

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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.



**TESTIMONY OF KE ONE O KĀKUHIHEWA**  
**O'ahu Council of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs**  
**SB2781 – Relating To Lei**

Aloha Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard and members of the committee:

Ke One O Kākuhihewa, the O'ahu Council of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, submits this testimony in strong support of SB2781, which affirms the cultural integrity of lei while supporting local growers, lei makers, and cultural practitioners.

Lei are more than adornment. They carry mana'o, relationships, ceremony, and place. For generations, lei have been made from materials gathered, grown, and prepared with care, and they continue to play an important role in how we honor one another in public and private life. When lei are commercialized in ways that disconnect them from Hawai'i, it diminishes both cultural meaning and local livelihoods.

SB2781 addresses this concern in a thoughtful and phased manner. By establishing clear benchmarks for state purchasing, the bill uses the State's own procurement practices to support lei made from natural materials grown, harvested, and assembled in Hawai'i. This approach strengthens local supply chains, supports small growers and practitioners, and ensures that public ceremonies reflect the values and traditions they are meant to honor.

The bill also provides much needed clarity around labeling. Consumers should be able to trust that terms such as "Hawai'i Grown" and "Hawai'i Made" accurately reflect how and where lei and lei materials are produced. Clear standards protect both buyers and makers and prevent misleading practices that undercut local work while trading on Hawaiian identity.

Ke One O Kākuhihewa supports SB2781 because it balances cultural respect, economic fairness, and transparency. It recognizes that lei are not interchangeable commodities, but expressions of place, practice, and people. By setting clear expectations, this measure helps ensure that lei used and sold in Hawai'i reflect that reality.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony. We respectfully urge your support of SB2781 in recognition of lei as a living cultural practice and an important part of Hawai'i's community and economy.

**SB-2781**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:58:36 AM  
Testimony for GVO on 2/3/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John R. Gordines	Testifying for Tropical Flowers Express	Support	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Dear Senator Jarrett Keohokalole and Committee,

My name is Johnny Gordines owner and farmer of Tropical Flowers Express on Kaua'i. We highly support SB 2781. Its all about import replacement and encouraging our local lei farmers to not just be sustainable but profitable in their operations. lei are a signature expression of Aloha in Hawaii. Thank you for supporting Hawaii ornamental and nursery growers!

Johnny Gordines 808 651-9711



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February 3, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2781**  
RELATING TO LEI

Conference Room 225 & Videoconference  
3:00 PM

Aloha Chair McKelvey, Vice-Chair Gabbard, 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 2781**, 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.

HFB appreciates the phased approach reflected in SB 2781 and believes 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.

SB 2781 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.



**HAWAIIAN  
COUNCIL**

**Hawai‘i State Senate**  
**Committee on Government Affairs**  
SB2781 – Relating to Lei

**RE: Strong support of SB2781**

February 3, 2026

Hawaiian Council writes in **strong support of SB2781** 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. Because of this cultural significance, it is essential that consumers have the opportunity to better understand where their lei come from and how their purchasing choices impact Hawai‘i’s economy.

From the humble lei lā‘ī to the intricate Ni‘ihau shell lei, 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 lei shops that rely on consistent local demand to remain viable. Lei is one of the strongest enduring symbols of Hawai‘i and, to put it simply, what is a lei if it is not grown or made in Hawai‘i nei?

SB2781 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. SB2781 also encourages state tax dollars to stay within the state economy. Last year, it was reported that Honolulu councilmembers spend nearly \$4,500 annually on lei purchases. When multiplied across numerous agencies, schools, and organizations statewide, this represents a significant economic opportunity. Clear labeling ensures that public funds, when possible, can intentionally support local farms and businesses.

For these reasons, Hawaiian Council respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS SB2781**. 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**

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LATE



RE: Strong Support of SB2781 – Relating to Lei  
February 3, 2026

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Zabrina Zablan-Duvauchelle, and I am the founder of The Gay Agenda Collective and Haus of Puas, a queer- and Kanaka-owned business based on the west side of O'ahu. I am writing in strong support of SB2781 and in solidarity with the many cultural practitioners, farmers, and small businesses who depend on a thriving, transparent local lei economy.

Through Haus of Puas, we currently represent and uplift 15 local lei makers, many of whom live and work in Wai'anae, Nānākuli, Kapolei, and 'Ewa. These are artisans who are deeply rooted in their communities. From kupuna, wāhine, and small family-run operations, they have come together to share resources, knowledge, and access to market in a way that is collaborative rather than competitive.

Lei is far more than a product or a commodity. It carries memory, history, and the lineage passed down through generations of makers who have shared their craft.

When consumers are unable to distinguish between locally made lei and imported products, it undermines the cultural, economic, and environmental systems that sustain lei making in Hawai'i. SB2781 is an important step in restoring clarity and integrity to the marketplace by ensuring that consumers, both residents and visitors, can make informed choices that align with their values.

This measure is especially important for small lei makers who rely on local demand to survive. Clear labeling protects their work, honors their skill, and keeps money circulating within Hawai'i's economy instead of flowing out of state. In 2025 alone, our floral shop was able to reinvest more than \$140,000 directly back into local farmers and lei makers, all while strengthening our community. As a business that intentionally sources locally and prioritizes sustainable, culturally grounded practices, we believe SB2781 directly supports the kind of future we want to see for Hawai'i.

On behalf of the 15 lei makers we represent, and the many more we hope to uplift in the future, we respectfully urge the Committee to PASS SB2781. Mahalo for your time, your consideration, and your commitment to protecting Hawai'i's living cultural practices and local economies.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zabrina Zablan-Duvauchelle'.

Zabrina Zablan-Duvauchelle  
Founder & CEO  
The Gay Agenda Collective  
Haus of Puas