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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 COMMITTEES ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE  
ARTS AND AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**WEDNESDAY APRIL 8, 2026  
1:01 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE NO. SCR 133 / SR 125**

Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Inouye and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution 133 / Senate Resolution 125. The bill requests the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB), to adopt rules to prohibit commercial octopus aquaculture. The DAB provides comments on this measure.

The DAB emphasizes the importance of grounding any aquaculture prohibition in current science, existing state roles, and Hawaii's broader aquaculture policy context. Hawaii's aquaculture sector has developed over five decades under a complex, multi-agency permitting framework, with DAB responsible for sector development and species import biosecurity, and DLNR serving as the primary manager of wild aquatic resources and coastal uses. Any rules on commercial octopus aquaculture should reflect this shared structure rather than implying that DLNR acts alone and should be coordinated with existing aquaculture and biosecurity policies.

In terms of octopus biology and aquaculture technology, research in other jurisdictions indicates that at least one company has reported closing the octopus life cycle in captivity, but there is still no widely accepted, commercially proven model for large-scale production, and concerns remain regarding feed inputs, welfare, and slaughter methods at scale. At the same time, modern land-based recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS) are explicitly engineered to significantly reduce water use and better control effluent through solids capture and waste treatment, although residual waste and sludge streams still require appropriate management. Hawaii's regulatory

Testimony of Sharon Hurd

April 8, 2026

Page 2 of 2

framework already requires aquaculture facilities above 100,000 pounds per year to obtain National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) discharge permits, with stringent water-quality standards and multi-agency review for new sites. Based on current Aquaculture Development Program statistics and facility knowledge, Hawaii does not presently have any operation commercially producing octopus.

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

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  
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Testimony of  
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
Acting Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on  
WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS  
and  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Wednesday, April 8, 2026  
1:01 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of  
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 133  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES,  
IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND  
BIOSECURITY, TO ADOPT RULES TO PROHIBIT COMMERCIAL OCTOPUS  
AQUACULTURE

Senate Concurrent Resolution 133 requests the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department), in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, to adopt rules to prohibit commercial octopus aquaculture. **The Department appreciates the intent of this measure and offers the following comments.**

The Department primarily regulates the wild harvest of aquatic resources, including octopus, from waters surrounding the State to ensure sustainable harvest and preserve ecosystem health. The Department also reviews the environmental impacts of proposed projects that may affect aquatic resources and provides recommendations to permitting agencies. Any future proposed commercial octopus aquaculture project would be subject to these regulatory and review processes.

It is presently difficult to raise octopuses solely in an aquaculture setting due to challenges in closing the lifecycle. Only one species (*Octopus vulgaris*) has been successfully cultured from eggs to adulthood. There is currently only one facility operating in the world that purportedly has fully completed the life cycle of *Octopus vulgaris* (Canary Islands, Spain). Currently, no commercial aquaculture of octopuses is occurring in the United States. If

commercial octopus aquaculture is ever proposed for Hawai'i, this would warrant review of potential environmental implications.

At present, the Department is engaged in multiple rulemaking processes to address present marine resource management priorities. These include regulating the commercial aquarium fishery in Hawai'i, establishing the community-based Ka'ūpūlehu Fishery Management Area, and developing and implementing island-scale and placed based rules on Maui and Hawai'i island through the Holomua Marine Initiative. Other rulemaking priorities in the queue include updating statewide fishing gear regulations, updating statewide rules on the take of regulated species, and developing new rules for anchialine pool ecosystems.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



April 8, 2026

The Honorable Senator Chris Lee, Chair  
Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026

**RE: Testimony in Support of S.R.125/S.C.R.133**, Requesting the Department of Land and Natural Resources, in Consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, to Adopt Rules to **Prohibit Commercial Octopus Aquaculture**.

Dear Chairs Lee and Gabbard:

On behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity and our more than 6,500 members and supporters in the state of Hawaii, thank you for considering our testimony in strong support of S.R.125/S.C.R.133, a resolution to adopt rules to prohibit commercial octopus aquaculture in Hawaii. The Center for Biological Diversity is a leading national 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places since 1989.

With a recent, concerning global rise in interest in growing the commercial octopus farming industry,<sup>1</sup> it is critical to preempt such ventures from taking root in the United States, especially in states like Hawaii where healthy oceans are culturally, economically, and ecologically crucial.

Commercial octopus farming is unsustainable, environmentally destructive, inhumane, and dangerous. Octopus farming can discharge large amounts of dangerous contaminants and pollutants into surrounding marine ecosystems, jeopardizing native wildlife and creating harmful algal blooms and oxygen-depleted “dead zones.” These factory farms also demand large energy and freshwater inputs, which would detract from Hawaii’s sustainability goals. And octopuses require a high-protein diet sourced from wild fish and shellfish, which could substantially increase the burden on marine resources and further deplete fish stocks that the state depends on.

On commercial industrial farms, octopuses are kept in extreme confinement, which is not only inhumane, but also increases the serious risk of parasites and disease spread and mutations. These conditions threaten both the farmed octopuses and existing marine ecosystems. Further, antibiotic use in these facilities risks increasing antibiotic-resistant “superbugs” that threaten human health.

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<sup>1</sup> Compassion in World Farming. (2025). *Threat of octopus farming and carnivorous aquaculture expansion*. <https://www.ciwf.org/media-news/press-releases-and-media-statements/threat-of-octopus-farming-carnivorous-aquaculture-expansion-exposed/>



Other states like California<sup>2</sup> and Washington<sup>3</sup> have already passed similar legislation to ban commercial octopus aquaculture. We kindly ask Hawaii to follow their lead to protect the incredible, biodiverse oceans surrounding your state.

Thank you again for considering the Center for Biological Diversity's testimony in support of S.R.125/S.C.R.133. By adopting rules to prohibit commercial octopus aquaculture, Hawaii can better safeguard its environment, wildlife, and public health.

Sincerely,

Leah Kelly, MPPA  
Food and Agriculture Policy Specialist  
Center for Biological Diversity  
[lkelly@biologicaldiversity.org](mailto:lkelly@biologicaldiversity.org)

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<sup>2</sup> Rust, S. (2024). *Newsom signs bill to ban octopus farming in California*. Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2024-09-29/newsom-signs-bill-to-ban-octopus-farming-in-california>

<sup>3</sup> Briscoe, K. (2024). *Lawmakers pass legislation that would prohibit octopus farming in Washington*. Lynwood Times. <https://lynnwoodtimes.com/2024/03/07/octopus-farming-240307/>

**SR-125**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 7:49:18 AM

Testimony for WLA on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Giulia Malerbi	Testifying for Aquatic Life Institute	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of SR125 / SCR133**

*Submitted by Giulia Malerbi on behalf of Aquatic Life Institute*

Aquatic Life Institute respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of SR125 and SCR133, which request the prohibition of commercial octopus aquaculture in Hawai‘i.

The development of a commercial octopus aquaculture industry would place significant and unnecessary pressure on Hawai‘i’s already limited land and coastal resources. Both land-based and open-circuit systems are resource-intensive, requiring substantial energy inputs, large volumes of seawater extraction and discharge, and generating concentrated organic waste, including nutrient-rich effluents and animal mortalities. These outputs pose clear risks to water quality, coastal ecosystem integrity, and existing waste management systems, as reflected in [environmental concerns raised by authorities evaluating proposed octopus farming projects](#), including issues related to waste discharge, chemical use, and ecosystem impacts.

Beyond these direct impacts, octopus aquaculture introduces broader ecological risks that are particularly concerning in Hawai‘i’s sensitive marine environment. Pathogen spillover, pollution, and the potential escape of farmed or non-native individuals could disrupt nearshore ecosystems, with cascading effects on biodiversity and ecosystem stability. These risks are not theoretical; they are [well-documented challenges associated with aquaculture expansion globally](#). [Evidence from proposed commercial-scale projects further highlights these risks](#), including disease outbreaks, antibiotic use, waste generation, and potential contamination affecting both ecosystems and surrounding communities.

Importantly, such disruptions would also affect the communities and sectors that rely on healthy marine ecosystems. Fishers dependent on resilient reef systems could face declining resources and increased ecological uncertainty. In this context, the introduction of a novel and high-risk aquaculture industry is incompatible with the long-term stewardship of Hawai‘i’s coastal and marine environments.

Given the early stage of octopus aquaculture development globally, Hawai‘i has a critical opportunity to take a precautionary and forward-looking approach. Preventing the establishment of this industry avoids locking in environmental harms and aligns with broader efforts to protect marine ecosystems and ensure sustainable use of ocean resources.

For these reasons, Aquatic Life Institute strongly supports SR125 and SCR133 and urges the adoption of rules prohibiting commercial octopus aquaculture in the State of Hawai'i.

Respectfully submitted,  
Giulia Malerbi  
Head of Global Policy  
On behalf of Aquatic Life Institute



# Animal Welfare Institute

1951–2026 • Celebrating 75 Years

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April 7, 2026

The Honorable Senator Chris Lee, Chair  
Committee on Water, Land, Culture, and the Arts

The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026

**RE: Testimony in Support of SR125/SCR133**, Requesting the Department of Land and Natural Resources, in Consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, to Adopt Rules to **Prohibit Commercial Octopus Aquaculture**

Dear Chairs Lee and Gabbard and Members of the Committees:

On behalf of the Animal Welfare Institute and our members and supporters in the state of Hawaii, thank you for considering our testimony in strong support of Senate Resolution 125 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 133, which requests the Department of Land and Natural Resources, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, to adopt rules to prohibit commercial octopus aquaculture. Octopus aquaculture raises serious animal welfare concerns because the conditions of intensive farming are fundamentally at odds with the biological and behavioral needs of octopuses.

### **Octopuses are especially poorly suited to intensive farming**

Octopuses are among the most cognitively and behaviorally complex invertebrates. They are naturally solitary animals with strong drives to explore, hunt, manipulate their surroundings, and seek shelter. Their advanced nervous system and behavioral flexibility are exactly the traits that make commercial farming so concerning for this species. Plans described by Nueva Pescanova, one of the first companies pursuing commercial octopus farming, include housing 10-15 octopuses together in compact tanks under near-continuous artificial light.<sup>i</sup> For a naturally solitary species, forced group housing creates a substantial risk of chronic stress, illness, aggression, injury, and cannibalism.<sup>ii</sup>

### **Octopus welfare harms are structural, not just operational**

These are not simply husbandry challenges that can be solved through routine management. The welfare concerns arise from a basic conflict between the needs of the octopuses and the demands of intensive commercial production. The industry's repeated difficulties also suggest that the husbandry and welfare problems are far from resolved. As reported in *Seafood Source*, research on East Asian common octopus achieved 10-month and 12-month survival rates of about 47% and 42% respectively, meaning more than half the animals died even under optimized research conditions.<sup>iii</sup> Even species long

viewed as promising candidates for aquaculture, such as *Octopus maya* in Mexico, have proven difficult to move toward large-scale commercial production and achieve mortality rates below 50%.<sup>iv</sup> Mortality rates at this level would be considered catastrophic in terrestrial farming systems.

### **Pain and slaughter present another major welfare barrier**

Thirty years of scientific evidence show that octopuses can be easily injured and respond to pain and injury in ways that are consistent with the ways vertebrates react. They avoid places where they have been harmed, protect injured body parts, and change their behavior after injury (e.g. reducing or stopping eating), all signs of conscious pain experience.<sup>v</sup> Laboratory studies have also shown that when analgesic drugs are provided, injured octopuses respond in ways consistent with relief, a validated test for conscious pain.<sup>vi</sup> This body of evidence makes the lack of humane, commercially scalable slaughter methods for octopuses especially concerning.

The methods currently discussed for octopus slaughter underscore how unresolved this problem remains. Methods used include dewatering (suffocation by removal from water), immersion in ice slurry, clubbing, and brain severance. The American Veterinary Medical Association's *Guidelines for the Humane Slaughter of Animals* state that dewatering and ice slurries are not recommended or acceptable due to prolonged suffering.<sup>vii</sup>

### **Hawaii can act early and responsibly**

Hawaii can decide, early and on its own terms, not to invite a speculative industry that is burdened by unresolved animal welfare concerns. A 2026 nationally representative survey of over 2,000 U.S. adults found 66% of respondents would be somewhat or very supportive of state or federal laws banning commercial octopus farming.<sup>viii</sup> Sound agricultural policy includes recognizing when an emerging production model is biologically mismatched from the outset, rather than waiting for those harms to become harder to address after an industry is established. SR125 and SCR133 reflect that kind of narrow, precautionary decision-making. Their passage would enable Hawaii to set clear limits before the state is asked to serve as a testing ground for commercial octopus aquaculture. We respectfully ask that you support these resolutions.

Sincerely,



Heather Mitchell, MSc  
*Scientific Consultant, Farmed Animal Team*  
Animal Welfare Institute  
[hmitchell@awionline.org](mailto:hmitchell@awionline.org)

## References

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- <sup>i</sup> Marshall, C. (2023, March 16). World's first octopus farm proposals alarm scientists. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-64814781>
- <sup>ii</sup> Andrade, M. P., Santos, C. M. D., De Paiva, M. M. M., Medeiros, S. L. S., O'Brien, C. E., Lima, F. D., Machado, J. F., & Leite, T. S. (2023). Assessing negative welfare measures for wild invertebrates: The case for octopuses. *Animals: An Open Access Journal From MDPI*, 13(19), 3021. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani13193021>; Boal, J. (2006). Social recognition : A top down view of cephalopod behaviour. *VIE ET MILIEU – Life & Environment*, 56(2), 69–79. <https://www.millersville.edu/biology/faculty/boal-pdf/5.boal-vie-milieu-2006.pdf>; Casalini, A., Gentile, L., Emmanuele, P., Brusa, R., Elmi, A., Parmeggiani, A., Galosi, L., Roncarati, A., & Mordenti, O. (2023). Effects of environmental enrichment on the behavior of octopus vulgaris in a recirculating aquaculture system. *Animals: An Open Access Journal From MDPI*, 13(11), 1862. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani13111862>; Birch, J., Burn, C., Schnell, A., Browning, H., & Crump, A. (2021). *Review of the evidence of sentience in cephalopod molluscs and decapod crustaceans* (Vol. 31). The London School of Economics and Political Science. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0962728600009866>; Lloyd, J. (2019, January 22). *The Case Against Octopus Farming*. Issues in Science and Technology. <https://issues.org/the-case-against-octopus-farming/>
- <sup>iii</sup> Loew, C. (n.d.). *Breakthrough survival rate announced in octopus aquaculture research*. Retrieved April 5, 2026, from <https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/aquaculture/breakthrough-survival-rate-announced-in-octopus-aquaculture-research>
- <sup>iv</sup> Vázquez, C. R., Méndez, D., Reyes, A. C., Cob, A., Huicab, G., de la Cruz Ek, J., Sierra, J., Pardenilla, S. C., & Yunes, A. (2021). *Octopus maya aquaculture: Looking for products for the gourmet market*. World Aquaculture 2021, Merida, Mexico. <https://www.was.org/Meeting/Program/PaperDetail/159164>
- <sup>v</sup> Crook, R. J. (2021). Behavioral and neurophysiological evidence suggests affective pain experience in octopus. *iScience*, 24(3), 102229. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.isci.2021.102229>; Alupay, J. S., Hadjisolomou, S. P., & Crook, R. J. (2014). Arm injury produces long-term behavioral and neural hypersensitivity in octopus. *Neuroscience Letters*, 558, 137–142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neulet.2013.11.002>
- <sup>vi</sup> Crook, R. J. (2020). Conditioned place preference reveals tonic pain in Octopus. In *bioRxiv* (p. 2020.08.23.263426). bioRxiv. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.08.23.263426>; Deutsch, S., Parsons, R., Shia, J., Detmering, S., Seng, C., Ng, A., Uribe, J., Manahan, M., Friedman, A., Winters-Bostwick, G., & Crook, R. J. (2023). Evaluation of candidates for systemic analgesia and general anesthesia in the emerging model cephalopod, *Euprymna berryi*. *Biology*, 12(2), 201. <https://doi.org/10.3390/biology12020201>
- <sup>vii</sup> Members of the Panel on Humane Slaughter. (n.d.). *AVMA Guidelines for the Humane Slaughter of Animals: 2024 Edition*. <https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/Humane-Slaughter-Guidelines-2024.pdf>. Pg 19.
- <sup>viii</sup> Niemiec, R., Kogan, L., Jones, M. S., Santiago-Ávila, F. J., Seacor, R., Mertens, A., & Crooks, K. (2026). Widespread public support and pluralistic ignorance associated with United States Animal Protection Policy. *Human-Animal Interactions*, 14. <https://www.cabidigitallibrary.org/doi/10.1079/hai.2026.0001>



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April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**RE: Memorandum of Support – SCR 133 and SR 125**

*DLNR; DAB; Commercial Octopus Aquaculture; Environmental Protection*

Dear Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture, and the Arts; and Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

On behalf of the Animal Legal Defense Fund, the nation's preeminent legal advocacy organization for animals, and its hundreds of members in Hawai'i, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to submit this memorandum in **strong support of SCR 133 and SR 125**, requesting the Department of Land and Natural Resources, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, to adopt rules to prohibit commercial octopus aquaculture. The Animal Legal Defense Fund strongly supports these resolutions as they would be a first step in preventing the establishment of a practice that is not only inhumane but also carries significant environmental and public health risks. We strongly urge the committee to pass these resolutions and further the state's reputation as a leader in environmental and animal welfare issues.

**Background**

In recent years, international companies and countries have begun researching the development of open-ocean net cages and tanks on land to farm octopuses to capitalize on a growing gourmet demand for the animal. Foreign food companies, such as the Spanish company Nueva Pescanova, and countries including Spain, Chile, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, and Australia, have invested significant funds into this research.<sup>1</sup> Nueva Pescanova recently had plans to develop the first industrial octopus farm in the Canary Islands. This resolution would be a first step in preventing the spread of this harmful practice from coming to Hawai'i and having devastating consequences.

It is important to note that there are currently no octopus farms for human consumption in Hawai'i, thus a prohibition on octopus farming would have no financial impact on existing businesses. It would simply stop those who are currently researching octopus farming from coming to Hawai'i to set up shop, **at the expense of local fishermen and the local fish and octopus populations**. It would not prevent the sale of wild caught octopus and would not impose any restrictions on the fishing or consumption of octopus. In fact, it would **protect local fisherman** by stopping largely foreign interests from polluting Hawai'i's waters and harming local octopus. The requested rules would also carve out exceptions for the breeding or keeping of octopuses for research and education purposes.

**Octopus farming is inhumane**

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<sup>1</sup> *Public Funding of Octopus*, Compassion in World Farming (September 2024), available at [https://www.ciwf.org/media/7458920/ciwf-research\\_octopus-farming-global-public-funding-briefing.pdf?\\_gl=1\\*1exkopr\\*\\_ga\\*MTU5Njc4Mjk2NC4xNzM5MTMxMzg0\\*\\_ga\\_RMC05PGGT7\\*MTczOTEzMTM4My4xLjA\\_uMTczOTEzMTM4OS41Ni4wLjA.\\*\\_gcl\\_au\\*MTc1NjM0MjY4NS4xNzM5MTMxMzg2](https://www.ciwf.org/media/7458920/ciwf-research_octopus-farming-global-public-funding-briefing.pdf?_gl=1*1exkopr*_ga*MTU5Njc4Mjk2NC4xNzM5MTMxMzg0*_ga_RMC05PGGT7*MTczOTEzMTM4My4xLjA_uMTczOTEzMTM4OS41Ni4wLjA.*_gcl_au*MTc1NjM0MjY4NS4xNzM5MTMxMzg2).

Octopuses have inspired people for centuries due to their unique appearance and expectation defying abilities. Scientists are continuously learning more about them and new discoveries are changing the way the public thinks about these impressive creatures. Beyond their color changing ability, octopuses also have significant cognitive ability. They can learn new skills, can navigate complex mazes, are known escape artists, and even use tools.<sup>2</sup> Octopuses are so remarkable that the United Kingdom has legally recognized them as sentient beings, those capable of reasoning and experiencing emotions, deserving of enhanced legal protection.<sup>3</sup> Because of their complex mental ability, octopuses have high enrichment needs that simply cannot be met in farming environments. Keeping octopus in this manner would subject them to intense boredom and mental stress.

Adding to this stress is the number of animals that are forced together in aquatic farm settings. In nature, the octopus is a solitary creature, viewing other octopuses as threats. Thus, cramming a large number of them into small pools together would be cruel and cause significant stress. It could likely also result in aggression and fighting among the animals, putting their lives in danger before they even reach slaughter. Potential injuries and poor water quality from the high-stocking density within farm systems also puts them at an increased risk for the spread of disease and parasites. Finally, there is currently no accepted humane method of slaughter for octopuses, which would leave them vulnerable to unnecessarily cruel slaughter practices.

#### **Octopus farming has significant environmental risks associated with it**

Octopus farming is not the sustainable practice its proponents claim that it is. As is the case with the intensive farming of other aquatic species, octopus farming could harm the surrounding ecosystems and marine life by spreading pollution and changing water temperatures. Runoff from octopus farms contains high levels of nitrogen and phosphorous, which produces toxins that are harmful to both humans and marine life of all kinds.

There is also a significant risk of farmed octopuses escaping their enclosures, as they are notorious for doing, and impacting local populations. This has been seen in salmon farms with escaped salmon spreading pathogens, creating genetic abnormalities, and increasing competition with local populations.<sup>4</sup> Further, the wild harvesting of octopuses for the purpose of farming is a major threat to the sustainability of local populations. Octopuses are also carnivorous, feeding primarily on crustaceans, and require large amounts of feed in confined environments. This would require further devastation to already declining local marine

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Godfrey-Smith, *The Mind of an Octopus*, Scientific American (Jan. 1, 2017), available at <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-mind-of-an-octopus/>.

<sup>3</sup> *Lobsters, octopus and crabs recognised as sentient beings*, UK Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (November 19, 2021), available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/lobsters-octopus-and-crabs-recognised-as-sentient-beings>.

<sup>4</sup> Jennifer S Ford and Ransom A Myers, *A Global Assessment of Salmon Aquaculture Impacts on Wild Salmonids*, PLOS Biology (Feb. 12, 2008), available at <https://journals.plos.org/plosbiology/article?id=10.1371/journal.pbio.0060033>; see also Courtney Flatt and John Ryan, 'Environmental Nightmare' After Thousands Of Atlantic Salmon Escape Fish Farm, National Public Radio (Aug. 24, 2017), available at <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2017/08/24/545619525/environmental-nightmare-after-thousands-of-atlantic-salmon-escape-fish-farm>.

populations by commercially harvesting crabs and other animals to use as feed. Hawai'i's local populations of octopus and other marine life, including the day octopus, should not be put at such a significant risk particularly when so many people rely on **wild** populations for food.

### **Octopus farming poses a risk to public health**

Octopus farming has the potential to become a significant public health risk. Industrial aquaculture farms are breeding grounds for pathogens, and octopus have been found to be hosts of multiple pathogens and zoonotic diseases that can spread to humans, such as cholera.<sup>5</sup> The use of antibiotics, many of which are used to treat humans as well, to combat these pathogens has the potential for the creation of multi-drug resistant bacteria. The United Nations has labelled antibiotic resistance as a leading threat to human health globally.<sup>6</sup> There is simply no reason to bring these risks to Hawai'i.

Washington became the first state in the world to ban the farming of octopus in 2024, and California quickly followed suit. Several other states are considering octopus farming bans, as well as countries including Chile and Mexico, as concern over the above listed welfare and environmental consequences grows. The passage of these resolutions here in Hawai'i would be a strong step toward protecting the Pacific Ocean and its precious ecosystems from unnecessary harm, solidifying Hawai'i's status as a leader in marine protection.

For the above welfare, environmental, and public health reasons, the Animal Legal Defense Fund strongly urges the committee to vote yes on these resolutions. Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Vierheilig  
Legislative Affairs Manager  
Animal Legal Defense Fund  
[lvierheilig@aldf.org](mailto:lvierheilig@aldf.org)

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<sup>5</sup> John W. Forsythe, *A Synopsis of Cephalopod Pathology in Captivity*, National Resource Center for Cephalopods, available at <https://www.vin.com/apputil/content/defaultadv1.aspx?pld=11104&id=3981710&print=1>.

<sup>6</sup> *Environmental Dimensions of Antimicrobial Resistance, Summary for Policy Makers*, UN Environment Programme (2022), available at [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/38373/antimicrobial\\_R.pdf](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/38373/antimicrobial_R.pdf).

April 3, 2026

## **Memorandum of Support**

SR 125 - Resolution Prohibiting Octopus Aquaculture in Hawai‘i

Aloha Senator Lee, Senator Inouye, Senator Gabbard, Senator Richards, and Members of the Committee,

The Executive Board of the Student Animal Legal Defense Fund at the William S. Richardson School of Law respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of resolution prohibiting the commercial farming of octopus in Hawai‘i.

As students studying at William S. Richardson School of Law, we recognize both the legal responsibility and cultural importance of protecting the unique marine ecosystems of our state.

Hawai‘i’s oceans are central to the identity, food systems, and cultural heritage of the islands. The octopus, known locally as he‘e, holds ecological and cultural significance in Hawaiian waters. Allowing industrial octopus farming would introduce serious risks to cultural marine ecosystems, public health, cultural practices and animal welfare while offering little benefit to Hawai‘i’s communities.

For these reasons, we urge the legislature to act proactively to prevent the establishment of octopus aquaculture operations in the state.

### **Cultural and Ecological Importance of Octopus in Hawai‘i**

Octopus have long held significance in the cultural traditions of Hawai‘i. The Day Octopus (*Octopus cyanea*), commonly found in Hawaiian waters, is an important species within reef ecosystems and within traditional subsistence fishing practices. In Hawaiian culture, the ocean is not merely a resource but part of an interconnected living system requiring stewardship. Introducing intensive aquaculture practices for a highly intelligent and ecologically important species risks undermining this relationship.

Industrial octopus farming could threaten wild populations that local fishers rely upon, while allowing commercial interests to profit from Hawai‘i’s marine resources. Protecting the integrity of the marine environment aligns with Hawai‘i’s longstanding commitment to environmental stewardship, sustainability, and mālama ‘āina (care for the land and sea).

### **Scientific Evidence of Octopus Intelligence and Welfare Concerns**

Scientific research has demonstrated that octopuses possess remarkable cognitive abilities. Studies show that octopuses solve complex problems and navigate mazes, use tools and manipulate objects, demonstrate advanced learning and memory capabilities, and exhibit escape behaviors and adaptive problem solving. These abilities have led several jurisdictions to recognize cephalopods as sentient animals capable of experiencing pain and distress. For example, the United Kingdom formally recognized octopuses as sentient beings in animal welfare legislation.



Octopuses are also naturally solitary animals that interact with others primarily as competitors or threats. Scientists predict that confining octopuses in dense aquaculture systems would likely result in extreme stress, aggression, cannibalism, significant injuries and high mortality rates. Additionally, no widely accepted humane slaughter method exists for octopus, raising further cruelty and ethical concerns regarding commercial production.

Given these biological realities, farming octopuses would require keeping highly intelligent animals in environments fundamentally incompatible with their natural behaviors.

### **Environmental and Public Health Risks of Octopus Aquaculture**

Industrial aquaculture operations generate significant environmental harms, and octopus farming would be no exception. Aquaculture facilities release waste, excess nutrients, and pollutants into surrounding waters, including nitrogen and phosphorus that degrade marine ecosystems and coral reefs.

Octopus farming also presents additional environmental concerns including disease and parasite transmission, escape, ecosystem disruption, increased pressure on marine food systems, and public health risks. Diseases from high-density aquaculture systems create ideal conditions for pathogens and parasites to spread which can potentially spread to wild populations. Octopuses are well known for their ability to escape enclosures and if farmed individuals were to escape, they could introduce disease, compete with native populations, and disrupt local ecosystems. Octopuses are carnivorous and require large quantities of feed. Farming them would likely increase the harvesting of wild fish and crustaceans, placing additional strain on Hawai‘i’s already stressed marine ecosystems. Octopuses are known hosts for multiple disease-causing organisms that can affect humans. In response to disease outbreaks in aquaculture systems, producers often rely on antibiotics which contributes to the global problem of antimicrobial resistance, which the United Nations has identified as a major threat to human health.

Preventing the establishment of octopus aquaculture in Hawai‘i would help avoid introducing these risks to the state’s marine environment and food systems. For a state deeply dependent on healthy oceans, these risks are particularly concerning.

### **Legal and Policy Leadership**

Several jurisdictions have already recognized the risks associated with octopus farming. In 2024, Washington and California became the first jurisdictions in the world to ban commercial octopus farming. Resolution has also been introduced in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Oregon.

Hawai‘i has an opportunity to continue its tradition of environmental leadership by taking proactive action to protect marine ecosystems before industrial aquaculture operations can be established. By passing resolution prohibiting octopus farming, Hawai‘i would join a growing global movement recognizing the ethical, ecological, and public health concerns associated with this practice.

### **Conclusion**

As law students in Hawai‘i, we recognize the vital importance of safeguarding the state’s natural resources and protecting the animals and ecosystems that make Hawai‘i unique.



**ANIMAL LEGAL  
DEFENSE FUND**

William S. Richardson School of Law

Octopus farming presents significant risks to animal welfare, marine ecosystems, cultural practices and public health, while offering minimal benefit to local communities. Preventing the establishment of this industry is a forward-thinking step that aligns with Hawai‘i’s values of environmental stewardship and responsible governance.

For these reasons, the Executive Board of the Student Animal Legal Defense Fund respectfully urges the Legislature to support resolution prohibiting octopus aquaculture in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your commitment to protecting Hawai‘i’s oceans.

Respectfully submitted,

Executive Board  
Student Animal Legal Defense Fund  
William S. Richardson School of Law  
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa  
[wrsalsaldf@gmail.com](mailto:wrsalsaldf@gmail.com)

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DEFENSE FUND**

William S. Richardson School of Law

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**Animal Defenders International**

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Chair Mike Gabbard  
Vice Chair Herbet M. “Tim” Richards III  
Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
415 S Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Chair Chris Lee  
Vice Chair Lorraine R. Inouye  
Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts  
415 S Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

April 7, 2026

Dear Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment and Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts,

Drew McCormick for Animal Defenders International (ADI) who, on behalf of our Hawaiian supporters, submits the following testimony in strong support of Senate Resolution 125 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 133 calling on the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to prohibit the commercial aquaculture of octopuses.

The unethical and environmentally harmful practice of octopus farming leads to suffering and sickness for these highly intelligent, sentient creatures who are vital to our marine ecosystem. Good welfare in octopus farming is impossible. Breeding and slaughtering these intelligent, sensitive creatures on a mass scale causes enormous suffering to the animals and a negative impact on the marine environment.

Peer-reviewed studies have documented octopuses:

- Recognizing human faces and responding differently to various people
- Intelligent, curious, using tools, planning, solving multi-step problems
- Experiencing pain and fear
- Communicating through complicated and sophisticated changes in skin texture, pattern, and color.

Environmental and Ecological Impact:

- Feeding farmed octopuses is unsustainable: they would need to be fed large quantities of wild-caught fish, increasing pressure on wild fish populations.
- Octopus food conversion ratio is high – it takes 3 kg of fish to produce / 1 kg of octopus – highly inefficient from a food security perspective.
- Intensive octopus farming would likely produce significant amounts of organic waste, including nitrogen and phosphorus, into the surrounding marine environment.
- Octopuses are solitary by nature. Placing them in crowded, high-density, and artificial conditions causes severe stress, territorial aggression, and cannibalism.

Confining these animals of extraordinary intelligence to the barren, high-density tanks used for commercial aquaculture is not just impractical—it is inhumane, causes severe stress, territorial aggression and cannibalism.

If this bill passes, Hawaii would become the third state, after California and Washington, to stop commercial octopus aquaculture. We hope that you do so. These highly intelligent, communicative animals suffer greatly when confined in stressful, intensive, unnatural conditions. Therefore, we urge you to support both of these resolutions, SR 125 and SCR 133, to ban the commercial aquaculture of octopuses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Drew McCormick".

Drew McCormick, Policy Advisor  
[Animal Defenders International](#)  
[drewmccormick@ad-international.org](mailto:drewmccormick@ad-international.org)  
[www.ad-international.org](http://www.ad-international.org)

April 8, 2026

**Re: Memo of Support for SR125/SCR133 – Requesting the Department of Land and Natural Resources, in Consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, to Adopt Rules to Prohibit Commercial Octopus Aquaculture.**

Dear Honorable Members of the Water, Land, Culture, and the Arts Committee and the Agriculture and Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Hawaii-based volunteers and employees of The Humane League, as well as our supporters throughout the state of Hawaii, I am writing to express our unequivocal support for SR125/SCR133. Passing this resolution formally outlines Hawaii's intent to prevent future octopus aquaculture development within the state, curbing an unsustainable and environmentally destructive industry. We urge you to pass this humane and forward-thinking commitment without delay.

### **Preventing Growing Issues with Octopus Farming**

Hawaii's proactive commitment to prevent the establishment of an inherently harmful industry before significant capital investment, infrastructure, and economic influence is made, avoids the far greater difficulty of regulating or dismantling an existing industry later. While there are no octopus farms in the U.S., octopus aquaculture development is advancing rapidly around the world. Examples<sup>1</sup> of existing octopus aquaculture include a fishing association in Spain that captures up to 2,000 young octopuses per year and rears them to adulthood in controlled underwater shelters, as well as an industrial farming development facility in Mexico, which has a 52% mortality rate, with around 30% related to cannibalism<sup>2</sup>. Full lifecycle octopus breeding has been achieved on a laboratory scale, and seafood company Nueva Pescanova has already served captive-born octopus, originally hatched at the Biomarine Center, to its executives<sup>3</sup>. Resolving to address octopus farming in Hawaii preemptively is a responsible and efficient use of policymakers' time because it addresses a known issue before it becomes a problem, preventing public agencies from later having to invest in managing the animal welfare, environmental, and biosecurity harms that arise.

### **Negative Environmental Impacts**

Evidence shows that octopus farming poses serious environmental threats, going directly against the values of Hawaii. Octopuses are carnivorous, requiring diets rich in wild-caught seafood like crab and fish.<sup>4</sup> Thus, farming

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<sup>1</sup> Rainey (2026). [The Inside Story of the Effort to Build the World's First Octopus Farm](#). The Fast Company.

<sup>2</sup> Aquatic Life Institute. (2023). [What lies behind Mexico's octopus farm research facade](#). ALI Fish. Retrieved November 8, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Nueva Pescanova (2021). [Nueva Pescanova opens the Pescanova Biomarine Center, the leading aquaculture R&D&i centre in Spain](#).

<sup>4</sup> Jacquet, Jennifer; Franks, Becca; and Godfrey-Smith, Peter (2019) [The octopus mind and the argument against farming it](#). Animal Sentience 26(19), DOI: 10.51291/2377-7478.1504.; Watts, J. (2023, June 25). [A symbol of what humans shouldn't be doing: The new world of octopus farming](#). The Guardian.; Alder, Jack & Campbell, Brooke & Karpouzi, Vasiliki & Kaschner, Kristin &

them would increase pressure on already overfished marine ecosystems rather than alleviating it. Furthermore, the pollution generated by nitrogen and phosphorus runoff from aquaculture facilities is known to devastate fragile coastal habitats, fueling harmful algae blooms and habitat destruction.<sup>5</sup>

## Public Health Risks

Octopuses pose serious health risks to workers in these facilities through venomous bites and exposure to pathogens, such as *Vibrio vulnificus*, *Vibrio cholerae*, and *Anisakis* parasites, which can cause severe illness through ingestion or exposure to contaminated octopus tissue and tank fluids.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the widespread use of antibiotics in aquaculture contributes to the global crisis of antibiotic resistance.<sup>7</sup>

## Economic Threats

Industrial octopus farming could threaten small fisheries and the coastal communities of Hawaii that depend on them by altering marine ecosystems and monopolizing shared ocean resources.<sup>8</sup> Octopus farming requires large quantities of wild-caught fish for feed, exacerbating pressure on already overexploited fisheries rather than increasing the global food supply. Public policy should encourage innovations that extend and protect resources, not those that convert edible marine life into feed for highly sentient predators, like octopuses.<sup>9</sup> As no commercial octopus farms currently exist in Hawaii or the United States, this measure would protect the current fishing economy without disrupting any established businesses.

## Animal Suffering

Octopuses are among the most intelligent and cognitively complex animals on the planet. They exhibit sophisticated learning abilities, solve complex puzzles, use tools, and display advanced hunting tactics.<sup>10</sup> Their neurological makeup, with neuron clusters located not only in their brains but also within each arm, suggests they may even possess multiple levels of consciousness.<sup>11</sup> Studies reveal that octopuses are naturally solitary and territorial, and when forced into confined environments, they display extreme stress and aggression, sometimes resulting in cannibalism.<sup>12</sup> Trials in octopus farming have documented alarming mortality rates—over 50%—due to factors such as crowding, inappropriate temperatures, and unsuitable feed.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, proposed methods for slaughter—such

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Pauly, Daniel. (2008). [Forage Fish: From Ecosystems to Markets](#). Annual Review of Environment and Resources. 33. 153-166. 10.1146/annurev.environ.33.020807.143204.

<sup>5</sup> Compassion in World Farming. [Octopus Factory Farming: A Recipe for Disaster](#); Padden, C. (2023, June 15). [Scientists have warned that we absolutely must not farm octopuses](#). ScienceAlert.

<sup>6</sup> Aquatic Life Institute. (2023). [What lies behind Mexico's octopus farm research facade](#). ALI Fish. Retrieved November 8, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> *id.*

<sup>8</sup> Lombard Odier. [The Economics of Overfishing](#).

<sup>9</sup> Jacquet, Jennifer; Franks, Becca; and Godfrey-Smith, Peter (2019) [The octopus mind and the argument against farming it](#). Animal Sentience 26(19), DOI: 10.51291/2377-7478.1504.; Alder, Jack & Campbell, Brooke & Karpouzi, Vasiliki & Kaschner, Kristin & Pauly, Daniel. (2008). [Forage Fish: From Ecosystems to Markets](#). Annual Review of Environment and Resources. 33. 153-166. 10.1146/annurev.environ.33.020807.143204.

<sup>10</sup> Hendry, L. (n.d.). [Octopuses keep surprising us - here are eight examples how](#). Natural History Museum.

<sup>11</sup> Carls-Diamante S. (2022). [Where Is It Like to Be an Octopus?](#). Frontiers in systems neuroscience, 16, 840022.

<sup>12</sup> London School of Economics. [Review of the Evidence of Sentience in Cephalopod Molluscs and Decapod Crustaceans](#).

<sup>13</sup> Aquatic Life Institute. (2023). [What lies behind Mexico's octopus farm research facade](#). ALI Fish. Retrieved November 8, 2024.

as freezing octopuses in ice slurries—are inhumane, causing significant pain, terror, and slow death.<sup>14</sup> Subjecting these sentient beings to such conditions is unconscionable and antithetical to New York’s values of compassion and ethical treatment of animals.

## **Momentum Toward a Humane Future**

Hawaii has an opportunity to join a growing international and domestic movement against octopus farming. In 2024, Washington State became the first U.S. state to ban octopus farming, and California followed, prohibiting both farming and imports. Through 2025 and 2026, bills to prohibit octopus farming were also introduced in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Oregon. Globally, in early 2026, Mexico, which is home to the only operational octopus farm in the Western Hemisphere, introduced legislation to ban octopus farming nationwide.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, the sentience of octopuses has been formally recognized in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.<sup>16</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Hawaii has an opportunity to protect marine ecosystems and prevent the establishment of an inhumane, unsustainable industry in the state. By passing SR125/SCR133, Hawaii makes a powerful statement: that inhumane practices exploiting intelligent, sentient beings have no place in our society. The Humane League respectfully urges you to protect these extraordinary animals, safeguard our environment, and protect public health by passing this vital resolution.

Thank you for your leadership and compassion.

**Sincerely,**

Brenna Anderst  
Senior Policy Advisor  
The Humane League

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<sup>14</sup> Humane Slaughter Association. (n.d.). [Unacceptable methods](#). Humane Slaughter Association.; BBC News. (2023, February). [Octopus farming: Why tensions are rising](#).

<sup>15</sup> Aquatic Life Institute. (2023). [What lies behind Mexico's octopus farm research facade](#). ALI Fish. Retrieved November 8, 2024.

<sup>16</sup> UK Government. (2021, September 7). [Lobsters, octopuses and crabs recognised as sentient beings](#). GOV.UK.

**SR-125**

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 12:45:07 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alex Cerussi	Testifying for Mercy For Animals	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Lee, Chair Gabbard, and members of both the Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts and the Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

Mercy For Animals is a non-profit organization with approximately 1,500 Hawaii-based supporters and volunteers dedicated to constructing a more just and sustainable food system for all. Mercy For Animals commends the committees for their consideration of SR 125 and SCR 133, resolutions urging the Department of Land and Natural Resources, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, to adopt rules to prohibit the commercial aquaculture of octopus.

Octopuses are sentient creatures with high intelligence and complex emotional lives. Similar to many terrestrial animals, octopuses are capable of experiencing pain, stress, and fear. In their natural habitat, they establish and defend extensive territories and foraging grounds. Subjecting them to the cramped, unnatural conditions of crowded farms would be inhumane.

Subjecting these remarkable creatures to the constraints of commercial farming is not only cruel, but fundamentally unsustainable. Farming octopuses would place significant strain on Hawaii's marine ecosystems, as these carnivores require large, continuous inputs of animal-based feed. This feed is typically sourced from wild-caught fish and marine invertebrates. Consequently, the industry would increase pressure on already depleted species, which are vital food sources for local seabirds and marine mammals.

As such, Mercy For Animals strongly supports a prohibition on commercial octopus aquaculture and urges the committees to support SR 125 and SCR 133.

Sincerely,

Mercy For Animals

Alex Cerussi, Senior Manager

Government Affairs & Public Policy

[alexc@mercyforanimals.org](mailto:alexc@mercyforanimals.org)

631.479.9005

**Animal Law Section**  
**A Section of the Hawai'i State Bar Association**



Chair: Savannah Sherman, Esq.  
hsbaanimallaw@gmail.com

Aloha Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Inouye and Richards,

The Animal Law Section **supports** SR125/SCR133. This would prevent harm to native he'e, protect subsistence fishing, and prevent cruelty to animals. Further, it is crucial to prohibit intensive octopus commercial aquaculture before it has the chance to take hold in our fragile ecosystem.

Intensive octopus commercial aquaculture presents grave threats to coastal wildlife and the subsistence fishing that relies on these ecosystems. Octopuses are exceptionally intelligent animals that are notorious escape artists. There are documented instances of octopuses finding ways out of confinement. In a New Zealand zoo, for example, an octopus escaped the facility by leaving its enclosure, locating a drain opening across the room, and following the entire 164-foot-long drain pipe to the ocean.<sup>1</sup> This is just one example that highlights how raising octopuses would differ from other forms of aquaculture. Octopuses are known to be talented at escaping enclosures that other animals would not. In Hawaii, this presents a particular risk to native he'e due to competition for resources. Further, the pollution from octopus aquaculture would likely have significant negative impacts on our fragile reefs. Such risks present danger to the coastal marine life that our communities rely on.

Octopuses cannot be humanely raised in an aquacultural setting. In such scenarios, octopuses may injure themselves due to behavior associated with boredom or stress.<sup>2</sup> There is evidence that octopuses experience emotions and avoid unpleasant conditions.<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, octopuses have even been recorded to seek out analgesic therapy, or pain-relief.<sup>4</sup> These are complex, highly intelligent animals that would suffer immensely in intensive commercial aquaculture.

This resolution is not a ban on aquaculture in its entirety. Instead, it creates a narrow limit on one form of aquaculture that does not yet have a permanent existence anywhere in the United States. We should get ahead of this issue to protect our reefs and community before harm occurs.

**This testimony represents the views of the Animal Law Section only and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Hawaii State Bar Association as a whole.**

Respectfully,

Savannah Sherman, Esq.  
Animal Law Section Chair

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<sup>1</sup> Dan Bilefsky, *Inky the Octopus Escapes From a New Zealand Aquarium*, New York Times, (Apr. 13, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Ashley L. Powell, *Octopus aquaculture: Welfare practices and challenges*, Can Vet J. 2022 Oct; 63(10):1072–1074.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

**LATE**

**SR-125**

Submitted on: 4/8/2026 7:55:03 AM

Testimony for WLA on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Coates	Testifying for Animal Research Initiative	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Thomas Coates and I am representing Animal Research Initiative.

Washington and California have banned the practice of octopus farming with similar legislation proposed in 7 other states and Guam. Mexico, Chile, and the United States have also introduced federal legislation.

Octopus farming has been attempted and failed on multiple occasions, with the primary challenge being a catastrophically elevated mortality rate largely caused by cannibalism. Intensive farming of octopuses means forcing these highly intelligent and solitary animals into unnaturally confined spaces where squidlets struggle to attain adulthood. While this problem is pervasive and has prevented this practice historically, an insistence on forcing it in the interest of financial gain leads to a wide array of further problems.

Octopuses are vicious and venomous predators that pose prominent risk to aquatic ecosystems in the event of an escape. Their ability to squeeze through tiny holes mixed with their intelligent and curious nature means that confining these animals is especially challenging. One notable instance included an octopus in New Zealand that escaped his enclosure through a small opening, traversed the floor, squeezed through a 6 inch drain, and escaped to sea. Once out at sea, these predators can seriously jeopardize Hawaii’s endangered species and ecosystems.

Additionally, octopus feeding requirements are demanding and would entail extensive marine resource use. The result is immense waste that introduces persistent organic pollution and accelerates the growth of harmful algae blooms. This problem is consistently mentioned in proposed legislation because it is so pervasive.

This farming practice is unviable, unsustainable, and, possibly most importantly, unnecessary. Hawaii can prevent this problem before it starts. Please prioritize Hawaii's people and its waters.

Thank you for your time. Mahalo.



April 8, 2026

**RE: Prohibit the farming octopuses**

To Whom It May Concern,

I would first like to thank the state of Hawai'i for its vision on the issue of octopus farming and its closure of its experimental octopus farm. I write now with support for new legislation that would ban commercial octopus farming in the state.

As background for this additional letter to your committee, I am a Professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Policy in the Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric, and Earth Science at the University of Miami, and affiliated faculty with the Abess Center for Ecosystem Science and Policy. I have a PhD in natural resource management and environmental studies and my dissertation, completed in 2009 at the University of British Columbia, was titled "Fish As Food in an Age of Globalization."

I can attest fully to the scientific backing for a ban on octopus farming. My collaborators and I, one of whom has a PhD in animal welfare, one in psychology, and one in the philosophy of science, have published articles making the case against octopus farming, one of which has an additional 100 signatures from other university experts (Jacquet et al. 2019a; Jacquet et al. 2019b). Our recent letter in *Science* magazine supporting the federal OCTOPUS Act (S.41810), led by Sen. Whitehouse and Sen. Murkowski, which would prohibit commercial octopus aquaculture in the U.S. and the import of commercially farmed octopus or octopus products, was again signed by more than 100 scientists and scholars, this time almost all of whom are based in the U.S. (Jacquet et al. 2024).

In that letter to *Science*, we lay out why octopuses are not a species group suited for a life in a controlled, sterile, and monotonous environment with set diets and regimented feeding schedules. We cited a recent report declared that high-welfare commercial farming of octopuses is "currently impossible".

Octopuses are also carnivorous and therefore require other animals in their diet – in particular, crabs, squids, and hake. Ecologists have urged us not to farm carnivores since the 1970s, since farming carnivores only puts more pressure on wild fish for feed. Some proponents have suggested that farmed octopus will eat the discards or bycatch from fisheries or processors. There is no scientific evidence that octopuses will eat, let alone grow or prosper on, these diets.

**The people of Hawai'i have shown tremendous vision in protecting aquatic animals, including the state's ban on shark fishing.** Hawai'i is a visionary state that is not just about encouraging future opportunities, but shaping what those opportunities look like.

Octopus farming presents serious environmental and public health risks. This is not about undoing negative consequences, but preventing them. Let's keep octopuses wild. **Please vote YES to support the legislation.**

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Jacquet', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jennifer Jacquet  
Professor, Department of Environmental Science and Policy  
Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science  
University of Miami

**SR-125**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 9:55:54 AM

Testimony for WLA on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT!

**SR-125**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 10:02:57 AM

Testimony for WLA on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tony Nodine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SR 125 and the prohibition of commercial octopus aquaculture in Hawaii. Our coastal waters are the foundation of an \$18+ billion tourism economy, and industrial aquaculture operations are flatly incompatible with the visitor experience that keeps our communities afloat. High-density aquaculture generates concentrated waste: excess nitrogen and phosphorus from animal-based feed, metabolic byproducts, and decomposing organic material. When that discharge hits nearshore waters, you get eutrophication. That means nutrient overloading that fuels invasive algal blooms, depletes dissolved oxygen, smothers coral, and degrades the reef systems visitors travel thousands of miles to see. This is not theoretical. It has played out globally wherever intensive aquaculture meets sensitive coastal environments, and our already-stressed reefs are particularly vulnerable. We should not be industrializing our coastline to confine and slaughter highly intelligent, solitary animals in conditions that scientists have called fundamentally incompatible with their welfare, while simultaneously putting our water quality, reef health, tourism economy, and subsistence fishing traditions at risk. That is a bargain no community in Hawaii should be asked to accept. I urge the Senate to pass SR 125, and I further urge that this resolution be followed by binding legislation to ensure DLNR actually adopts the requested prohibition, because a resolution alone does not require them to act.

**SR-125**

Submitted on: 4/1/2026 11:51:45 AM

Testimony for WLA on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a Native Hawaiian and as someone who is concerned for the health of our environment and the existence of our native species, I am submitting this testimony in support of SCR133.

It seems written to prevent the farming of all species of octopus, with exception made for research of native species. I do believe that farming native species of octopus could be a positive thing for our environment, but would suggest a study be done before that is allowed as well.

Mahalo for your consideration,  
Keoni Shizuma

**SR-125**

Submitted on: 4/2/2026 5:34:12 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
STACEY DAWN GOODHUE-SOUZA- KAULULAAU	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of S.R. No. 125**

**Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,**

**My name is Stacey Dawn Goodhue-Souza-Kaululaa, and I submit testimony in strong support of S.R. No. 125.**

**As a Native Hawaiian, I support this resolution because I believe that protecting Hawai'i's natural resources is essential to preserving our cultural practices and traditions. He'e is an important part of our nearshore ecosystems and holds cultural significance as a traditional food source and presence in our mo'olelo. Safeguarding the native he'e populations helps to ensure these relationships continue for future generations.**

**Commercial octopus aquaculture could place additional stress on Hawai'i's already fragile reef systems. Non-native species can have adverse effects on our marine life if accidentally introduced. Other stressors are through pollution, disease risk, and increased pressure on marine food webs. Our reefs are already vulnerable, and protecting them is critical for food security, cultural practice, and the health of our communities for generations to come.**

**This resolution represents such an important step toward caring for and restoring our ocean resources and honoring Native Hawaiian values, our responsibility to mālama 'āina, and ensuring our keiki and future generations can continue to have access to traditional relationships with he'e and our natural marine environment.**

**Programs such as Paepae o He'eia and Kāko'o 'Ōiwi are working to restore traditional aquaculture systems and strengthen sustainable food systems in Hawai'i. Protecting nearshore ecosystems helps ensure the long-term success of these important cultural and community-based efforts.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of S.R. No. 125.**

**Stacey Dawn Goodhue-Souza-Kaululaau, BSW**

**Native Hawaiian**

**SR-125**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 9:54:18 AM

Testimony for WLA on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jane Arnold and I live in Kaimuki. I am submitting testimony in support of SCR133 and SR125, which would prohibit octopus farming in Hawaii.

Octopuses are very intelligent animals. Their intelligence has evolved via different pathways from our own, and they do not look anything like humans. Therefore it is not as easy to see the similarities between humans and octopuses as, for example, between humans and chimps. However, octopuses have extremely complex mental abilities and a strong need for enrichment that cannot be met in farming environments.

On farms, octopuses are cruelly overcrowded, causing significant stress, aggression, and high mortality. Farming practices also pose serious threats to the environment, local wild octopus populations, and public health.

**SR-125**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 12:27:15 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christeen Fernando	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in support of S.R. NO. 125**

**Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,**

**I strongly support S.R. No 125 to prohibit commercial octopus aquaculture in Hawai'i .**

**Octopuses are highly intelligent, sentient beings capable of feeling pain, fear and stress. Confining them in tanks for their entire lives is unnatural, inhumane and cruel, often leading to physical and mental suffering, aggression and poor welfare. If similar treatment were applied to more familiar animals like cats and dogs, it would clearly be considered animal abuse and would be illegal. Please do not punish these beings for not being able to express their pain and suffering in the same way others can.**

**Farming octopuses is also unnecessary and environmentally harmful, requiring significant resources and placing additional strain on marine ecosystems.**

**Hawai'i has the opportunity to lead with compassion and protect these remarkable animals before this industry takes hold. I respectfully urge you to support this measure.**

**Thank you for your consideration.**

**Sincerely,**

**Christeen Fernando**

**SR-125**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 2:34:54 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica Spencer Lym	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators Brian Schatz and Mazie Hirono and representatives,

I am writing to you today as a concerned resident of Hawaii to respectfully urge your support for legislation that would prohibit the farming of octopus for human consumption.

Octopuses are widely recognized by scientists as some of the most intelligent and sentient invertebrates on Earth. They demonstrate complex problem-solving abilities, exhibit curiosity, use tools, and even show individual personalities. Their capacity for learning, memory, and experiencing pain and distress raises serious ethical concerns about subjecting them to confinement and industrial farming practices.

Unlike traditional livestock, octopuses are solitary and highly sensitive animals. Confining them in crowded, artificial environments can lead to extreme stress, aggression, and self-harm. These conditions are fundamentally incompatible with their natural behaviors and well-being.

Beyond the ethical implications, octopus farming also presents significant environmental risks. Octopuses are carnivorous and require large amounts of wild-caught fish to sustain them, placing additional pressure on already strained marine ecosystems. The waste, pollution, and potential for disease associated with intensive aquaculture can further degrade Hawaii’s delicate ocean environments—ecosystems that are not only ecologically vital but deeply tied to our cultural and economic identity.

Hawaii has long been a leader in ocean stewardship and environmental protection. By taking a stand against octopus farming, we have the opportunity to set a precedent that reflects both scientific understanding and our shared values of respect for marine life.

I urge you to support this legislation and help ensure that Hawaii continues to lead with compassion, responsibility, and foresight.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Spencer Lym

**SR-125**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 2:51:29 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Garland Lym	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senators and representatives,

I am writing in strong support of legislation to prohibit the farming of octopus for human consumption in Hawaii.

Living in Hawaii, we are constantly reminded of our kuleana—our responsibility to care for the land and ocean that sustain us. The concept of mālama ‘āina teaches us to protect and nurture our natural world, not exploit it in ways that cause harm or imbalance. Octopus farming stands in direct opposition to these values.

Octopuses are not simple animals. They are deeply intelligent, sentient beings capable of problem-solving, learning, and even forming unique personalities. There is something profoundly unsettling about confining such aware creatures in unnatural, restrictive environments for the purpose of mass consumption. It does not reflect the respect and reverence for life that Hawaii strives to uphold.

Beyond the ethical concerns, the environmental impact of octopus farming cannot be ignored. These animals are carnivorous, requiring significant amounts of wild-caught fish, which places additional strain on our already vulnerable marine ecosystems. Industrial farming practices risk polluting our waters and disrupting the delicate balance that so many species—and our communities—depend on.

Our oceans are not just resources; they are a living, breathing part of Hawaii’s identity and heritage. To move forward with octopus farming would be to move away from the values that make these islands so special.

I respectfully urge you to stand for compassion, sustainability, and cultural integrity by supporting this legislation.

Mahalo for your time, care, and commitment to protecting Hawaii's future.

Sincerely,

Garland Lym Jr

**SR-125**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 11:21:39 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Raatz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As Professor Hira Jaleel has written, "Octopuses are sentient animals with unique cognitive and behavioral traits that make them entirely unsuitable for intensive farming."

Mahalo.

## Testimony in Support of SCR 133 and SR 125

Dear Chairs and Members of the Hawaii Senate Committees on Water, Land, and Agriculture (WLA) and Agriculture and Environment (AEN),

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the undersigned law professors and law students at Lewis & Clark Law School in Portland, Oregon, who are concerned about the negative impacts of introducing octopus aquaculture in the State of Hawaii. Institutional affiliations are provided for identification purposes only. The views expressed herein are solely those of the signatories in their individual capacities, and do not represent the views of the Center for Animal Law Studies or Lewis & Clark Law School.

We strongly support Senate Current Resolution 133 and Senate Resolution 125, Requesting the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, in Consultation with the Hawaii Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, to Adopt Rules to Prohibit Commercial Octopus Aquaculture. Our reasons for supporting SCR133 and SR125 are as follows:

Octopuses are sentient animals with unique cognitive and behavioral traits that make them entirely unsuitable for intensive farming. A London School of Economics Report, reviewing over 300 scientific publications, found very strong evidence of sentience in cephalopod molluscs, including octopuses.<sup>1</sup> As a result, cephalopod molluscs were explicitly included in the definition of ‘animal’ and recognized as sentient beings in the UK Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022.<sup>2</sup>

The 2012 Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness, a document signed by a well-respected group of cognitive and computational neuroscientists, as well as scientists in related fields, included octopuses in the species of non-human animals who possess consciousness, memory and the ability to make decisions. The scientists declared that:

*“...Convergent evidence indicates that non-human animals have the neuroanatomical, neurochemical, and neurophysiological substrates of conscious states along with the capacity to exhibit intentional behaviors. Consequently, the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Non-human animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, **including octopuses**, also possess these neurological substrates.”<sup>3</sup> (Emphasis added).*

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Birch et al., *Review of the Evidence of Sentience in Cephalopod Molluscs and Decapod Crustaceans*, London School of Economics and Science (Nov. 2021) available at <https://www.lse.ac.uk/business/consulting/reports/review-of-the-evidence-of-sentiences-in-cephalopod-molluscs-and-decapod-crustaceans>.

<sup>2</sup> Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022, c. 22, § 5(1) (UK).

<sup>3</sup> Phillip Low, *The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness* in Proceedings of the Francis Crick Memorial Conference on Consciousness in Human and Nonhuman Animals 1 (Jaank Paaksep et al. eds., July 7, 2012) available at <https://fcmconference.org/img/CambridgeDeclarationOnConsciousness.pdf>

In terms of their unique characteristics, the species of octopus currently proposed to be farmed, like *Octopus vulgaris*, are cognitively complex and naturally solitary animals, which gives rise to serious welfare concerns in a farm setting. Octopuses have demonstrated problem-solving skills,<sup>4</sup> tool use,<sup>5</sup> and the ability to navigate mazes,<sup>6</sup> indicating their high intelligence. In confined, high-density farming environments, they are likely to exhibit aggression, stress, and cannibalism. Farming conditions of intense confinement and inadequate enrichment would severely restrict their ability to express natural behaviors, and could lead to immense psychological suffering as well as physical harms for these animals.

Importantly, there is no widely accepted humane method for slaughtering octopuses. Octopuses have complex nervous systems, making current stunning processes inadequate to ensure they are not conscious during slaughter.<sup>7</sup> The London School of Economics study found that “there is no slaughter method for cephalopods that is both humane and commercially viable on a large scale.”<sup>8</sup> Currently, many octopuses are slaughtered by being subjected to an ice slurry, clubbing, slicing of the brain, asphyxiation, impalement, or reversal of the mantle (the sac-like part of the body found behind the head).<sup>9</sup> Proposed methods, such as death by ice slurry immersion or head spiking, are cruel and likely to cause intense suffering.<sup>10</sup>

Beyond welfare concerns, octopus farming also poses significant environmental threats. Due to their intelligence and unique bodily structure, octopuses are well-known to escape when in captivity. There are many reported cases of captive octopuses escaping various facilities, thus the escape of farmed octopuses is of greater concern than with other species.<sup>11</sup> Octopuses are also highly sensitive and prone to diseases. Given the limited scientific understanding of their immune systems, farmed individuals escaping to the wild could introduce novel pathogens and parasites into the wild, threatening Hawaii’s native marine ecosystems.

Octopuses are carnivorous, which means they cannot survive on plants and algae. Farmed octopuses will require that fish be caught to feed them; this will put additional pressure on wild fish and invertebrate populations, which are already heavily impacted by overfishing. The food

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<sup>4</sup> Graziano Fiorito, Carla von Planta & Pietro Scotto, *Problem Solving Ability of Octopus vulgaris Lam.* (Mollusca, Cephalopoda), 53 *Behav. & Neural Biology* 217 (1990).

<sup>5</sup> Julian K. Finn, Tom Tregenza & Mark D. Norman, *Defensive Tool Use in a Coconut-Carrying Octopus*, 19 *Current Biology* R1069 (2009).

<sup>6</sup> Jean G. Boal et al., *Experimental Evidence for Spatial Learning in Octopuses (Octopus bimaculoides)*, 114 *J. Compar. Psychol.* 246 (2000).

<sup>7</sup> Elena Lara & Christine Xu, *Uncovering the Horrific Reality of Octopus Farming*, *Compassion in World Farming* (2021), <https://www.ciwf.com/research/species-other/octopus-factory-farming/>

<sup>8</sup> Birch *supra* note 1.

<sup>9</sup> Heather Browning et al., *Animal Welfare Risks from Commercial Practices Involving Cephalopod Molluscs and Decapod Crustaceans*, 34 *Animal Welfare* e24 (2025).

<sup>10</sup> Why Cephalopod Farming Must be Rejected Before it Starts, AQUATIC LIFE INSTITUTE (Feb. 2023), available at [https://drive.google.com/file/d/13CKkJJzmGA7bN8DtK9Nc\\_sF4XbBPMYs5/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/13CKkJJzmGA7bN8DtK9Nc_sF4XbBPMYs5/view)

<sup>11</sup> Jennifer A. Jacquet et al., *The Case Against Octopus Farming*, *Issues in Science and Technology* (Mar. 23, 2021), available at <https://issues.org/the-case-against-octopus-farming/#:~:text=But%20octopuses%20are%20atypical%20invertebrates,perspective%20of%20humane%20food%20production.>

conversion rate for an octopus is about 3:1, which means that the weight of the feed required to sustain an octopus is three times higher than the weight of the octopus.<sup>12</sup> Farming them could worsen the decline of already overexploited fish populations, creating further strain on marine biodiversity.

It is well-documented that aquaculture creates environmental harms, including pollution caused by phosphorus and nitrogen that are released from the feces of the confined nonhuman animals.<sup>13</sup> If octopus farming follows the same pattern, this industry could produce nitrogen- and phosphorus-rich waste, exacerbating harmful algal blooms and polluting Hawaii’s waters.<sup>14</sup>

Lastly, octopus farming could also endanger public health. The release of contaminants like pesticides, antibiotics, algacides, viruses, and bacteria from octopus farms into the environment, in particular water, can harm human health when someone comes into contact with these contaminants via physical exposure or consumption. Octopuses who are continuously exposed to antibiotics could develop antibiotic resistance (as farmed land animals have), which could be passed onto humans who consume their flesh. A bacteria in the same genus as cholera, *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, is also commonly found in octopuses, which may cause acute digestive problems in humans and septic shock in immunocompromised individuals.<sup>15</sup> Octopus meat may also contain roundworms (*Anisakid nematodes*), which can cause nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal distention and pain.<sup>16</sup>

State legislatures across the United States are considering octopus farming ban bills. Washington enacted the first explicit prohibition on octopus aquaculture in 2024 (H.B. 1153, effective June 6, 2024) and is now considering H.B. 1608, targeting the sale, possession, transport, and distribution of farmed octopus. California enacted AB 3162, effective Jan. 1, 2025, combining a production ban with the first state-level sales restriction on farmed octopus. Bills have also been introduced in North Carolina (H.B. 293), New Jersey (A. 5078), and New York (S. 7421/A. 8043).

At the federal level, the OCTOPUS Act (S. 1947), reintroduced in 2025, proposes prohibiting federal authorization of commercial octopus aquaculture in U.S. waters and restricting imports of farmed octopus products. Internationally, Nueva Pescanova’s proposed industrial octopus farm in the Canary Islands was denied a simplified environmental review in 2023 after the government determined the project could have “significant” environmental impacts. Legislators in Spain, Chile and Mexico have all introduced bills to ban octopus farming.

Due to our concern about these serious environmental and ethical problems, and given Hawaii’s long track record of animal welfare and environmental leadership, we urge the Hawaii

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<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> Yi-Cheng Su & Chengchu Liu, *Vibrio parahaemolyticus: A Concern of Seafood Safety*, 24 Food Microbiology 549 (2007).

<sup>16</sup> Hawaii Dep’t of Health, Disease Outbreak Control Div., *Anisakiasis*, [https://health.hawaii.gov/docd/disease\\_listing/anisakiasis/](https://health.hawaii.gov/docd/disease_listing/anisakiasis/) (last visited Apr. 6, 2026).

Department of Land and Natural Resources, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, to join with the legislatures of California and Washington State and prohibit commercial aquaculture of octopuses.

Sincerely,

Joyce Tischler, Professor of Practice, Center for Animal Law Studies, Lewis & Clark Law School.

Hira Jaleel, Visiting Assistant Professor, Center for Animal Law Studies, Lewis & Clark Law School.

Mahika Gupta, MSL Candidate, Lewis & Clark Law School.

Jennifer Huizen, MSL Candidate, Lewis & Clark Law School.

**SR-125**

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 3:38:01 AM

Testimony for WLA on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Debra Bringman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,**

My name is Debra Bringman, and I respectfully submit this testimony in support of SCR 133.

As an animal lover, I am concerned about the proposal to allow commercial octopus aquaculture in Hawai‘i. Octopus are highly intelligent, solitary animals with complex behavioral and psychological needs that experts have found to be incompatible with intensive confinement. There are also no proven humane methods for the large-scale handling and slaughter of octopus, raising serious animal welfare concerns.

Hawai‘i has an opportunity to act proactively by preventing an industry that would cause unnecessary animal suffering and conflict with our values of mālama ‘āina and respect for life. SCR 133 reflects compassion, foresight, and responsible stewardship.

I respectfully urge your support for SCR 133. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**Respectfully,  
Debra Bringman**

**SR-125**

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 7:51:37 AM

Testimony for WLA on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lory Ono	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly SUPPORT SR125 and its companion resolutions and am extremely opposed to octopus farming.

Octopus farming would involve intensive coastal development, high energy demands, large seawater withdrawals and discharges, and the generation of nutrient-rich waste and animal carcasses, with significant implications for water quality, marine ecosystem health, and the state's limited landfill and waste management capacity. Also, octopuses are among the most intelligent invertebrates, with complex neurological systems and behavioral needs that cannot be met in barren captive environments, and should not be farmed simply for human appetites.

No humane or practical slaughter methods currently exist for octopuses on a commercial scale, which would mean cruel and inhumane methods of killing them.

Please support these resolutions and do NOT allow octopus farming in Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Lory Ono

**LATE**

**SR-125**

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 6:05:57 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/8/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kalika Taira	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

My name is Kalika Taira, I am a Hawai'i resident living in Hawai'i Kai, and I strongly support SCR 133.

This resolution recognizes the environmental, economic, and biosecurity risks of commercial octopus aquaculture, and it is critical that we keep this conversation grounded in those systemic impacts.

This is not a standard aquaculture issue. We are discussing a highly intelligent, carnivorous species, one that has been known to escape containment and survive outside of water for extended periods. Due to the combination of their impressive cognitive abilities as well as having soft, boneless bodies with approximately 40 million neurons in each of their arms, they have been known to be excellent escape artists.

Octopus aquaculture is not sustainable and it has never been successfully commercialized, meaning Hawai'i would be assuming untested risks to our nearshore ecosystems, fisheries, and food security.

In the United Kingdom, a recent octopus population surge has led to documented declines of 30 to 50 percent in crab, lobster, and scallop fisheries. This is not theoretical, it is happening right now.

The research on proposed octopus farming, has estimated that to produce 3,000 tons of octopus meat, it could take up to 28,000 tons of wild caught fish to farm them, which would threaten our marine biodiversity and food ecosystems.

SCR 133 takes a precautionary, science-based approach by recognizing the risks of escape, pollution, pathogen spillover, and ecosystem disruption.

I respectfully urge your support.

Kalika Taira