

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2480

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 20 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2349  
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2026  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Economic Development and Tourism, to which was referred S.B. No. 2349 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT,"

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to:
  - (A) Establish a four-year Restorative Aquaculture Development Program to reduce aquaculture permit processing time, support aquaculture infrastructure expansion, increase the aquaculture workforce, and pursue federal aquaculture grants;
  - (B) Establish three pilot demonstration sites for restorative aquaculture; and
  - (C) Convene a Restorative Aquaculture Advisory Council;
- (2) Require reports to the Legislature; and
- (3) Appropriate funds.



Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program, Hawai'i Farmers Union United, Hawai'i Food+ Policy, and two individuals.

Your Committees received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General, Hawai'i Farm Bureau, and Hawai'i Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association.

Your Committees find that aquaculture is a significant sector of the State's agriculture industry. Aquaculture development, particularly restorative ecosystem services, has documented benefits including water quality improvement, carbon sequestration, ocean acidification buffering, and supporting native oceanic species. Federal financial recognition of the State's aquaculture industry further displays the potential for responsible commercial growth with environmental regenerative practices. Your Committees believe that this measure demonstrates strategic federal partnership aligned with national aquaculture development priorities and will support local aquaculture, improve local food systems, and decrease the State's dependency on imported seafood.

Your Committees acknowledge the concerns raised in testimony by the Department of the Attorney General that this measure lacks standard reimbursement provisions for the members of the Restorative Aquaculture Advisory Council. Therefore, amendments to this measure are necessary to address this concern.

Your Committees have amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that members serving on the Restorative Aquaculture Advisory Council shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for expenses necessary to perform their duties;
- (2) Inserting blank appropriation amounts;
- (3) Amending section 1 to accurately reflect findings concerning updated research data;
- (4) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and



- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

Your Committees note that this measure, as amended, contains unspecified appropriation amounts. Should your Committee on Ways and Means choose to deliberate on this measure, your Committees respectfully request that it consider inserting an appropriation amount of \$4,500,000 to be expended as follows:

- (1) \$2,000,000 for aquaculture infrastructure development; provided that twenty-five percent of funds shall be directed to support Native Hawaiian practitioners and traditional aquaculture systems;
- (2) \$600,000 for aquaculture workforce development and technical assistance; provided that twenty-five percent of funds shall be directed to support Native Hawaiian practitioners and traditional aquaculture systems;
- (3) \$1,000,000 for the pursuit of federal grants;
- (4) \$500,000 for the establishment, operation, and monitoring of restorative aquaculture pilot demonstration sites; and
- (5) \$400,000 for the establishment and administration of the Restorative Aquaculture Development Program.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Economic Development and Tourism that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2349, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2349, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.



Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committees on Agriculture and  
Environment and Economic  
Development and Tourism,

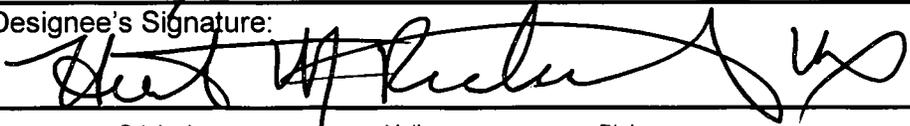
*Lynn DeLoite*  
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LYNN DECOITE, Chair

*Mike Gabbard*  
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MIKE GABBARD, Chair



The Senate  
Thirty-Third Legislature  
State of Hawai'i

**Record of Votes**  
**Committee on Agriculture and Environment**  
**AEN**

|  |                     |                         |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Bill / Resolution No.:*  | Committee Referral: | Date:                   |
| SB2349   | AEN/EDT,WAM         | 2-6-26                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure.<br>If so, then the previous decision was to: _____                                      |                     |                         |
| The Recommendation is:   |                     |                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313 |                     |                         |
| Members  | Aye                 | Aye (WR)                |
| Nay  | Excused             |                         |
| GABBARD, Mike (C)  | X                   |                         |
| RICHARDS, III, Herbert M. "Tim" (VC)   | X                   |                         |
| DECOITE, Lynn  | X                   |                         |
| RHOADS, Karl   | X                   |                         |
| AWA, Brenton   | X                   |                         |
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| <b>TOTAL</b>   | 5                   | -                       |
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| Recommendation:  |                     |                         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted   |                     |                         |
| Chair's or Designee's Signature:   |                     |                         |
|    |                     |                         |
| Distribution:  |                     |                         |
| Original<br>File with Committee Report   | Yellow<br>Committee | Pink<br>Drafting Agency |

\*Only one measure per Record of Votes

