

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI A KIA'I MEAOLA
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2026
3:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**GOVERNORS MESSAGE NO. 771
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE BOARD OF
AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JAMES GOMES,
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2030.**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Gubernatorial Nominee James Gomes to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Board) for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

Mr. Gomes brings years of experience in agriculture to the Board that includes serving on county advisory boards, commissions, associations and state boards such as the Board of Land and Natural Resources. As a current member of the Board, he enhances the discussions with probing questions and comments that come from his lifelong career in agriculture.

I have worked with James and have respect for the knowledge, professionalism, hard work ethic and candid assessments he brings with him to the Board.

Respectfully requesting your confirmation of James Gomes as Member-at-Large of the Board. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
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March 30, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON GM 771

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES GOMES, for a term to expire 06-30-2026.

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:00 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau strongly supports GM 771, seeking the confirmation of Mr. James Gomes to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

Mr. Gomes is known for his deep-rooted commitment to ranching and stewardship of the 'āina. He not only speaks of stewardship but demonstrates it through his lifelong work in agriculture and continued service to the community. Since his initial appointment, he has provided valuable insight and perspective to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity, grounded in real-world agricultural experience.

Mr. Gomes has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to Hawai'i's agricultural community through his service on numerous boards and organizations, including the Maui Cattlemen's Association, Hawai'i Cattlemen's Council, Hawai'i Cattle Producers Cooperative, and the Maui County Farm Bureau. His leadership roles, including serving as President of the Hawai'i Cattlemen's Council, reflect his ability to represent and advocate for the livestock industry and broader agricultural sector.

His experience as Operations Manager of Ulupalakua Ranch, and continued work as a consultant, reflects his practical understanding of balancing agricultural production with conservation and resource stewardship. This perspective is critical as the State works to strengthen food security while managing natural resources responsibly.

Additionally, his prior service on the Board of Land and Natural Resources and Agribusiness Development Corporation provides valuable insight into interagency coordination, which is essential for advancing agricultural policy and implementation across the State.

Mr. Gomes' continued service on the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity ensures that the voice of working farmers and ranchers remains represented in statewide decision-making.

We respectfully request your strong support for the confirmation of Mr. James Gomes to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

GM771

James Gomes

March 30, 2026, 3:00 PM

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **strongly supports GM771** for the consideration and confirmation to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES GOMES, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

We have been fortunate to work with Mr. Gomes through his time in leadership of the Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, in which he dedicated time towards advocating for ranchers of various sizes and operation types. James Gomes is a Paniolo Hall of Fame inductee because of his love of the land, hard work, and his passion for keeping the paniolo culture alive and thriving. It's important to retain this background and work ethic on the board. He has practical experience that benefits the decisions he is faced with as a board member of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity. As a board member, he is not afraid to ask questions to ensure that he is making the right decision.

Mr. Gomes has shown that he is dedicated to helping agricultural stakeholders across the state. We highly recommend the confirmation of James Gomes to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Ranchers produce a high-quality protein and are the stewards of almost 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or nearly 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director



GM-771

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 3:57:14 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Warren Watanabe	Testifying for Maui County Farm Bureau	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Maui County Farm Bureau supports James Gomes for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity. James has demonstrated for decades his dedication, knowledge, and a balanced approach in his decision making. He has concerns and seeks solutions for not just livestock, but for all the sectors in agriculture. His experience with the Board of Land and Natural Resources and with the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity will only lead to furthering the vision of a viable and productive agricultural industry in Hawaii. Mahalo.

Warren K. Watanabe

Executive Director, Maui County Farm Bureau

GM-771

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 6:33:43 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taylor Kellerman	Testifying for Kualoa Ranch	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support for the consideration and confirmation to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES GOMES, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

Jimmy is an experienced and well respected member of the Hawaii agricultural community, and will be an invaluable contributor to the execution of DAB's overall goal's.

Mahalo

Taylor Kellerman

Director of Diversified Agriculture and Land Stewardship

Kualoa Ranch Hawaii

GM-771

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 5:35:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support Mr. Gomes nomination to the Board of Agriculture. He has a deep commitment to the agricultural community and Hawaii's lands. He understands the needs of those who provide food for our community and will be an excellent representative.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
GM771

James Gomes
March 30, 2026, 3:00 PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Subject: Support for GM771 – Confirmation of James Gomes to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of GM771, the nomination of James “Jimmy” Gomes for confirmation to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity for a term to expire June 30, 2030.

I have had the privilege of working with Jimmy for several years in a variety of capacities, including through the Hawaii Cattlemen’s Council, as well as alongside him as a fellow board member of both the Maui Cattlemen’s Association and the Maui County Farm Bureau. Through these experiences, I have come to know him as a dedicated, thoughtful, and highly effective leader within Hawaii’s agricultural community, not just ranching.

Jimmy brings practical, real-world experience across multiple industries, which gives him a well-rounded perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing agriculture in our state. He is a strong advocate for local producers and consistently demonstrates a willingness to ask the right questions, carefully evaluate information, and make informed decisions in the best interest of the stakeholders he represents.

His work ethic and long-term commitment to agriculture make him exceptionally well-qualified to serve on the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity. His experiences on other boards and firsthand knowledge regarding the staff and inner workings of other department at the state level afford him a deeper understanding of issues facing agriculture and cross-functional opportunities for problem solving as well as providing policy direction for the department’s future success.

I am confident that his contributions will be meaningful and impactful to farmers, ranchers and the greater community at large in the state of Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this nomination.

Kyle Caires
Caires Farms

GM-771

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 6:48:12 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support

GM-771

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 7:26:28 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Ono	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

GM-771

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 7:31:21 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doreen Canto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

GM-771

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 8:15:29 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aileen K . F. Yeh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mr. Gomes is a long time supporter of agriculture and ranching, as well as being active in the community. He has a wealth of knowledge and experience of boots on the ground as well as the knowing Hawaii's past and present, which helps to wisely make decisions for the future.

He is a wise and honest person who speaks up for farmers and ranchers. I support James Gomes for the board.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

DATE: March 30, 2026
TIME: 3 pm
PLACE: Conference Room 224

GM 771 Confirmation of James Gomes to the Board of Agriculture

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES GOMES, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

My name is Alan Gottlieb. I have been involved in Hawaii agriculture for over 45 years.

I strongly support GM 771 nominating **Jimmy Gomes** to the Hawaii Department of Agriculture.

I have personally known Jimmy for over 25 years. During that time, I have always felt that Jimmy was intelligent, well spoken, and very knowledgeable of the issues which affect the agricultural industry, and of the highest integrity. His management of Ulupalakua Ranch demonstrates his dedication to conservation and to the land itself. Not only is Jimmy a good businessman and land steward, he is a nice guy. He is an outspoken advocate for Hawaii's farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of Jimmy Gomes for the Hawaii Board of Agriculture

Alan Gottlieb
P O Box 700489
Kapolei HI 96707

GM-771

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 10:32:31 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jill J. Mattos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mr Gomes would be great asset to the board,he knows the Industry and what is needed to help improve communication ,

Mr Gomes has always supported ranchers and farmers,he has a gift on listening skills and being fair in both ways.

Mr Gomes is well respected.

GM-771

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 11:27:42 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
james earl duffy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jim Duffy. My wife Jeanne and I are the owners of a small livestock company on Oahu, 4-J Livestock Co. I have had numerous dealings with Jimmy Gomes for a number of years and can personally attest to his Integrity, Honesty, Knowledge of the Agriculture Industry in Hawaii, Courage in expressing his opinions, and his Generosity in donating his time to Public Service. We will be fortunate to have him as a Member of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity. Respectfully submitted, Jim Duffy, retired Justice, Hawaii Supreme Court.

GM-771

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 12:35:17 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alex Franco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Senator Gabbard, Chair

Senator Tim Richards, Vice Chair

GM771

James Gomes

March 30, 2026 3:00 PM

Conference Room 224

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee

I Strongly Support GM 771 for the consideration and confirmation to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Gubernatorial Nominee James Gomes, for the term to expire 6/30/2026.

I have known Jimmy for many years and he takes serving on the Board very seriously. He not only comes with the knowledge and background of Hawaii's Agriculture Industry and its bottlenecks, but also takes the needed time to research key measures being brought before the Board. Allowing him a clear picture of what's at stake for Hawaii's Agriculture and its stakeholders and how best to engage in a meaningful discussion with fellow Board members.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alex Franco

GM-771

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 1:06:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Moniz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

GM771 James Gomes

March 30, 2026, 3:00 PM

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support JAMES GOMES for the consideration and confirmation to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity. Mr. Gomes has extensive experience in land, water, financial and energy matters as they pertain to agriculture. He has been a leader and strong Board member on both BLNR and the BAB. His continued participation on the BAB will enhance agriculture and biosecurity for Hawaii.

GM-771

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 6:01:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janet Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I ***strongly support*** the confirmation of Jimmy Gomes to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity. Jimmy's broad experience in agriculture and natural resources, his dedication to the local community and environmental stewardship, and his passion to help farmers and ranchers stay viable is a fitting background for this position.

As a current Board member, Jimmy has been an essential participant in the many complex discussions during Board meetings. His questions and insight have led to better decision-making and guidance for the Department.

Thank you for your consideration and confirmation of Jimmy Gomes to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

GM-771

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 1:14:45 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa M Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support GM771 for the consideration and confirmation to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES GOMES, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.

He is a valuable member on the Board of Maui Cattlemen's Association.

Mr. Gomes has the practical experience needed to benefit the board.

He is a true advocate for agriculture and has proven his dedication to speak up for farmers and ranchers.

Mahalo,

Theresa Thompson

Thompson Ranch, Kula, Maui

GM-771

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 6:11:17 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jimmy Greenwell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support Jimmy Gomes' nomination for this important position. I have worked with Jimmy for over 20 years on various ag policy matters and initiatives. I have been so impressed with his past service and his performance both within the cattle industry and as a member of the BLNR. He is hard working, dedicated, and diligent and will bring a valuable skill set to the Board.. We are fortunate that people like Jimmy are willing to offer their time and energy to serve our ag community in such a capacity.

GM-771

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 5:45:47 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
britt craven	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I have worked with Jimmy Gomes through the Hawaii cattle industry for many years. Jimmy has demonstrated time and time again his passion for the well being of our state. I've yet to meet anyone as pationate as Jimmy is when he committs to a cause. I fully support the Governors recommendation.