

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
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SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2026
2:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 308**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1831, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL LANDS**

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1831, House Draft 1. This bill directs and provides an appropriation for the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) to identify and, if legally permissible, resolve survey deficiencies and wastewater compliance issues, including unresolved cesspool assessments, unresolved remediation requirements, and any necessary equipment and infrastructure replacement, on non-agricultural park lands. The Department provides the following comments.

The Department is currently in the process of contracting a statewide audit assessment of large-capacity cesspools on its properties. This audit is being conducted pursuant to settlement negotiations with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and will be carried out in coordination with the EPA. The Department's leases and revocable permits place an obligation on the tenant to comply with all laws. Accordingly, if a large-capacity cesspool were discovered on a parcel encumbered by a lease or revocable permit, the Department would require the tenant to close the cesspool and connect to county sewer or install an approved individual wastewater system at the tenant's expense.

With respect to the portion of the bill relating to survey deficiencies, unresolved remediation requirements and equipment and infrastructure replacement, the Department does not expend public funds to enhance the usability of non-agricultural

park lands already encumbered by leases or revocable permits. Instead, the tenants are required to conduct appropriate due diligence prior to signing their lease or revocable permit to determine whether the land will meet the tenant's needs in its current condition. If the Department were to use public funds to cure survey deficiencies, or remediate or develop equipment and infrastructure for a parcel of non-agricultural park land in its inventory, it would necessarily be with the understanding that when the deficiencies were cured and remediation and development were completed, the Department would offer to lease the property through a competitive public process in the interest of transparency and fairness. This approach would be consistent with the Department's practice of developing infrastructure for a new agricultural park, subdividing the park into leasable lots, and offering to lease the subdivided lots to farmers through the Department's public notice process.

Lastly, Section 3 of House Bill 1831, House Draft 1, includes an appropriation in an unspecified amount to further the purposes of the bill. The Department recommends an appropriation of \$1,000,000 which will be used to address issues on unencumbered land.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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February 23, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1832, HD1
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE**

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 1832, HD1, which establishes a science-based, risk-driven framework for the assessment and approval of aquatic livestock importation and movement while strengthening biosecurity protections for Hawai'i's unique ecosystems.

HFB supported similar legislation last session that sought to modernize aquaculture permitting by shifting toward biological risk-based assessments and tiered biocontainment standards. HB 1832, HD1 builds on that policy direction by providing clearer structure, interagency coordination, accountability measures, and performance benchmarks, while maintaining strong safeguards against disease transmission and the establishment of invasive species.

We appreciate that this measure recognizes aquaculture as a critical component of Hawai'i's local food system and rural economy, while acknowledging the need for regulatory clarity and predictability. Long and uncertain permitting timelines remain a barrier to responsible aquaculture expansion, and risk-based frameworks used in other jurisdictions have demonstrated that permitting efficiency and biosecurity protection can be advanced together.

As the framework is developed and implemented, HFB encourages continued engagement with aquaculture producers and industry stakeholders to ensure that rules are practical, science-based, and do not disrupt existing permitted operations. Clear

veterinary oversight, continuity for current producers, and transparent coordination among agencies will be important to achieving the bill's intended outcomes.

HB 1832, HD1 represents a thoughtful step toward modernizing aquaculture regulation in Hawai'i while balancing food security, environmental protection, and industry growth.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

HB1831 HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Monday, February 23, 2026, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB1831 HD1** which authorizes and provides funding for the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, in coordination with relevant state agencies, to identify and resolve survey deficiencies and wastewater compliance issues on non-agricultural park lands.

We appreciate the progress that has been made to transfer agricultural lands to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity through Act 90, 2003. While many of these leases approved by both boards are still in the process of the transfer, we support this bill which would provide funding the DAB to resolve survey and wastewater compliance issues. These measures will allow the leases to be fully utilized for agriculture, contributing to the state's goal of increasing local food production.

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



HB-1831-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2026 4:27:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

1831 HB RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL LANDS.

HB-1831-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2026 8:19:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!!!

HB-1831-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 12:04:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordyn Koki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I respectfully submit testimony in support of this measure.

As an environmental studies student, I view this bill through an environmental justice lens. Wastewater compliance and land survey deficiencies might sound technical, but the impacts are very real. When wastewater systems are not properly maintained or brought into compliance, contamination can affect groundwater, nearshore waters, and surrounding communities. In Hawai'i especially, where ecosystems and communities are closely connected, environmental harm quickly becomes a public health and equity issue.

Environmental justice means recognizing that infrastructure failures and regulatory gaps often affect certain communities more than others. Addressing these deficiencies proactively, rather than waiting for a crisis to happen, reflects responsible governance and preventative environmental management. It also shows a commitment to protecting both natural resources and the people who depend on them.

Survey deficiencies are also important. Clear land documentation strengthens accountability, supports restoration efforts, and ensures that environmental regulations can actually be enforced. Without that foundation, long-term sustainability efforts become more difficult.

Appropriating funds to identify and resolve these issues is a practical investment in environmental protection, public health, and equitable land management.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for your consideration.