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LAND
STATE PARKS

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

Before the Senate Committee on
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Wednesday, March 18, 2026
3:30 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1832, House Draft 2
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

House Bill 1832, House Draft 2 proposes to require establishment of a biological aquatic risk-based framework for assessment and approval of aquatic livestock importation and movement; authorizes the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to adopt rules implementing species risk categorization, tiered biocontainment standards, pre-arrival disease testing, and interagency coordination procedures; establishes an interagency working group; requires development of species-specific risk matrices, interagency working group coordination with automatic permit approval timelines, and performance accountability; establishes an implementation timeline; and appropriates moneys. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill and offers the following comments.**

The State's greatest opportunities to reduce aquatic invasive species (AIS) impacts occur before species are imported, moved, or released into the environment. Once non-native aquatic organisms become established in nearshore or inland waters, eradication is often infeasible, and long-term management can require substantial public investment on the scale of millions of dollars. Risk-based screening frameworks are widely recognized as best practices for preventing detrimental introductions while allowing low-risk activities to proceed efficiently.

The Department's Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) has an AIS program structured around pre-border prevention, border screening, post-border response, and outreach,

consistent with the Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan. This measure directly supports these priorities by enabling:

- Species risk categorization and risk matrices to identify higher-risk taxa and pathways;
- Tiered biocontainment standards proportional to biological risk;
- Pre-arrival disease testing to reduce the likelihood of pathogen introduction; and
- Predictable, transparent permitting pathways that incorporate interagency expertise.

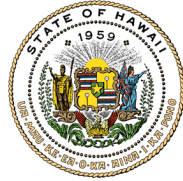
By formalizing these tools in statute and rule, this measure strengthens the State's capacity to prevent AIS introductions that could otherwise threaten coral reefs, fisheries, aquaculture operations, and culturally important aquatic resources.

The Department appreciates the bill's emphasis on interagency coordination, including the establishment of an interagency working group and implementation timelines. Effective AIS prevention depends on early coordination among agencies with expertise in agriculture, aquatic animal health, environmental protection, and natural resource management. These considerations will help ensure that the framework both supports responsible aquaculture development and protects Hawai'i's aquatic public trust resources.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

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

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**WEDNESDAY MARCH 18, 2026
3:30 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1832, HD2
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1832, HD2. The bill requires establishment of a biological aquatic risk-based framework for assessment and approval of aquatic livestock importation and movement, authorizes the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) to adopt rules implementing species risk categorization, tiered biocontainment standards, per-arrival disease testing, and interagency coordination procedures, establishes an interagency working group, requires development of species-specific risk matrices, interagency working group coordination with automatic permit approval timelines, and performance accountability, establishes an implementation timeline and, appropriates funds. The DAB supports this measure.

Import permits for aquatic livestock have been repeatedly identified as one of the most persistent constraints facing Hawaii's aquaculture sector, with documented processing timelines of eighteen to thirty-six months for many species. These extended timelines create uncertainty for producers, delay access to broodstock and seed needed for diversification, and have contributed to missed opportunities to scale production in support of Act 151's local food goals. By codifying a biological aquatic risk-based framework, clearer timelines, and coordinated inspections, HB 1832, HD2 directly targets this long-standing permitting challenge and provides a mechanism to reduce delays while maintaining rigorous biosecurity safeguards.

HB 1832, HD2 would strengthen Hawaii's aquaculture industry development by modernizing regulation around science-based risk categories, tiered biocontainment standards, and interagency coordination needed to responsibly expand production. A

transparent framework for species risk assessment and permit tracking would give investors, farmers, and Native Hawaiian practitioners greater predictability, enabling strategic expansion of food-fish, restorative seaweed, and bivalve operations aligned with statewide food security, climate, and cultural objectives. In addition, the bill's performance metrics, implementation timeline, and dedicated funding for inspections and framework updates would help ensure that regulatory capacity grows in step with industry needs, positioning Hawaii to compete for federal aquaculture and blue-carbon resources and to realize its documented potential for high-value, sustainable aquaculture.

Recommended Amendment

DAB respectfully recommends amending Section 141-(b) of the bill to include the Manager of the Aquaculture Development Program (ADP) as a member of the interagency working group to ensure consistent industry development. The ADP Manager serves as the primary state coordinator for aquaculture development strategy, federal partnership coordination, producer technical assistance, and industry stakeholder engagement. Amend Section 141-(b) by adding a new paragraph (7) to read:

"(7) The Manager of the Aquaculture Development Program of the department of agriculture and biosecurity; and"

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



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March 18, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON HB 1832, HD2
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
3:30 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 supports HB 1832, HD2, 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, HD2 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, HD2 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.



Date of Hearing: March 18, 2026

To: Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Subject: **HB 1832 HD2**, Relating to Aquaculture.

Aloha,

Hawai'i Food+ Policy is **in support of HB 1832 HD2, with comments**. This bill establishes and implements a biological aquatic risk-based framework for the assessment and approval of aquatic livestock importation and movement. The measure will develop biocontainment standards, interagency coordination mechanisms, and performance accountability to simultaneously advance food security and biosecurity objectives. We want to acknowledge the previous amendments requiring a timely annual report. We also want to acknowledge the previous addition of the definition for "Indigenous species" which may help clarify language during the development of this framework.

Biosecurity is a core pillar of protecting the food system. Since the 1800s, over 50 alien species have been established in our streams and reservoirs². These species threaten the endemic animals that play essential roles in Hawaiian culture. For instance, the human-led release of ta'ape fish in the 1950s in O'ahu has affected reef health and community heritage¹. Progressive legislation is necessary to prevent further damage to our ecosystems.

At the same time, we recognize the limitations of this framework. The policies and procedures do create bureaucratic red tape, which may prevent aquaponic farmers from farming efficiently. Stakeholder concerns should be listened to, and legislators should incorporate the expertise of aquaponic farmers into these frameworks to prevent long permitting wait times.

Generally, this bill seeks to create a clearer, faster, and safer system for approving aquaculture for the state, allowing for the growth of local food production, while protecting the ecosystems from disease, invasive species, and escapes. Therefore, we ask this committee to pass **HB 1832 HD2**, while keeping in mind that community collaboration is essential to ensure that the framework intended to protect our food system does not prevent sustainable food production.

Mahalo,
Brandon Kinard & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

[1] Malloy, V. (2025, August 13). Invasion innovation: Hawai'i turns the tide on its marine menace. Oceanographic. <https://oceanographicmagazine.com/features/invasion-innovation-hawai-i-turns-tide-on-a-marine-menace/>

[2] Yamamoto, M. (2026). Alien Species. State of Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources. <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/habitat/about-streams/alien-species/>

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2026, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.

Opposed to HB 1832,

Aloha Esteemed Representative,

Current laws are very effective, and no disease outbreaks or failures in aquaculture or public or private aquariums have occurred in a Google search on the subject.

Current protocols from APHIS, USDA, and the Department of Agriculture, Fish and Wildlife all inspect incoming wildlife, with strict laws and enforcement.

Every aquatic animal entering the state is currently visually inspected by Department of Agriculture inspectors. Fish and Wildlife Permits for any export or import are also required.

Veterinarian inspections of facilities are currently required, and some have veterinarian staff on board. New laws and regulations are not needed at this time. Education and funding for existing law enforcement would be helpful.

🔗 **Amnesty Programs:** The state utilizes the "Don't Let It Loose" campaign, encouraging the public to surrender, rather than release, non-native species through the [Waikīkī Aquarium](#).

🔗 **Strict Regulatory Frameworks:** The [Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources \(DLNR\)](#) works to manage these threats through the Hawaii Interagency Biosecurity Plan.

🔗 **Industry Best Practices:** Improving biosecurity in Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) through enhanced filtration (UV/Ozone), strict quarantine procedures, and water quality monitoring is crucial for reducing disease.

The Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources' Hawaii-Interagency-Biosecurity plan is currently being implemented.

<https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/hisc/files/2017/02/Hawaii-Interagency-Biosecurity-Plan.pdf>

When active, our facility employs UV sterilization, weekly antibiotics, and anti-parasitic treatments for all livestock to ensure quarantined fish remain effective, at great expense. The alternative is more expensive, and other facilities do the same thing. It is against the law to release a captive non-native fish or an imported fish into the wild. All aquaculture facilities and fish dealers know this and do not do this.

Biosecurity is an important part of the DLNR, aquaculture, live fish, and SAP permitting process.

Do not pass HB 1832, it is not needed.

Thanks, Ron Tubbs, B.S.N.D. UHM