

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
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ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

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

Before the House Committee on  
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Wednesday, February 11, 2026  
9:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 1832  
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

House Bill 1832 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.

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY**  
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI A KIA'I MEAOLA  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9560 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson  
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

**DEAN M. MATSUKAWA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

**LATE**

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
AND FOOD SYSTEMS**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026  
9:30 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

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

Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1832. 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, 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 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, HB1832 directly targets this long-standing permitting challenge and provides a mechanism to reduce delays while maintaining rigorous biosecurity safeguards.

HB1832 would strengthen Hawaii's aquaculture industry development by modernizing regulations around science-based risk categories, tiered biocontainment

Testimony of Sharon Hurd  
February 11, 2026  
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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

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



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921  
e-mail [info@hfbf.org](mailto:info@hfbf.org); [www.hfbf.org](http://www.hfbf.org)

February 11, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1832**  
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference  
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice-Chair Kusch, 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**, 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 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 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.



February 11, 2026

To: Chair Cory Chun, Vice Chair Matthias Kusch, and the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

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

Aloha,

I am writing **in support of HB 1832**. 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.

Biosecurity is a core pillar of protecting the food system. Since the 1800s, over 50 alien species have been established in our streams and reservoirs<sup>2</sup>. 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 heritage<sup>1</sup>. Progressive legislation is necessary to prevent further damage to our ecosystems.

This bill will 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, I urge this committee to pass **HB 1832**.

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

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[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.

**LATE**

**HB-1832**

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 12:05:08 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/11/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronald Weidenbach	Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association supports the intent to amend HRS Chapter 141 and have Animal Industries be the lead in the development and implementation of a biological aquatic risk-based assessment and approval process for the importation and movement of aquatic livestock within the State. We recommend that this be specifically led by the State aquatic veterinarian. However, we see no justification for including the Planning Departments of each County in this process for which they have no expertise in this biological and environmental assessment matter and are already overloaded with their existing responsibilities. Instead, we would recommend aquaculture industry involvement from each County and/or from the statewide Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association.

Furthermore, we would like respectfully request that all existing import permit holders and biosecurity designations who have maintained a no-escape track record in the Hawaii aquaculture sector have their permits and biosecurity designations continued without interruption or reconsideration, given the very rigorous process that has long been in place. This has included expert reviews, including, as appropriate, by the DOA Aquaculture vet, DAR, NOAA, NMFS, Bishop Museum, EWC Environment and Policy Institute, the DOA/DAB Plant and Animal Committee, and ultimately by a vote of the BOA. This process has historically taken 2 to 5 years to complete. To undo this diligent prior work by an unintended consequence of this measure would be devastating to existing aquaculture businesses and research institutions who have prevailed through this existing rigorous and timely import permit process. All such existing permits should be "grandfathered" by addition of appropriate legal wording in this proposed amendment of HRS 141.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

**LATE**

**HB-1832**

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 1:29:23 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/11/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christy Martin	Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS)	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is in support of HB1832, which provides a sensible approach to scaling up aquaculture while also assessing potential invasive species risks. One request, if this bill advances, is to specify that the risk assessment should be an established, peer-reviewed risk assessment that can identify invasion risk under current and future climate conditions. Thank you for the opportunity to share our testimony.

**HB-1832**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 3:08:32 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/11/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT