

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
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State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
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SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

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LATE

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026
9:30 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 60
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY TO
CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO IMPROVE CONSUMER AWARENESS OF
INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES, REDUCE THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES
THROUGH PLANT SALES, AND CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE LABELING
FRAMEWORK THAT PROVIDES AN INDICATION OF A PLANT SPECIES'
INVASIVENESS RISK WHEN SOLD IN THE STATE.**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution No. 60, requesting the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) to convene a working group to improve consumer awareness of invasive plant species, reduce the spread of invasive species through plant sales, and create a comprehensive labeling framework that provides an indication of a plant species' invasiveness risk when sold in the State. The Department supports the intent of this measure and offers comments.

The Department notes that the majority of plants that are introduced into the State are not invasive. However, the Department agrees that managing the spread of those plants that are invasive should be undertaken and that consumer awareness is one mechanism to effectuate this.

Regarding the composition of the working group, the Department suggests that the Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) and County Invasive Committee's (ISC's) be replaced with the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC). As the HISC is the mandated coordinating body to provide policy direction related to invasive species; is comprised of the State Departments of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Health, Land and Natural Resources, and Transportation; and can work with other parties such as CGAPS and the ISC's, the Department

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believes that this change would provide a more comprehensive report, should this measure move forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Wednesday, March 25, 2026
9:30 AM Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
State Capitol

Testimony in Support of HCR60

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

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is **in support of HCR60**, *Requesting the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity To Convene a Working Group To Improve Consumer Awareness of Invasive Plant Species, Reduce the Spread of Invasive Species Through Plant Sales, and Create a Comprehensive Labeling Framework That Provides an Indication of a Plant Species Invasiveness Risk When Sold in the State.*

As noted in HCR60, invasive plant species are for sale in Hawaii and are unknowingly purchased by consumers. Many people are unaware that harmful invasive plant species can be sold in the State. Providing information about the invasiveness of plants at the point of sale may be a way to help consumers make informed choices and identify and purchase native and non-invasive plant species.

Labeling and information are not a replacement for effective laws and regulations to prohibit the sale of invasive plants. However, the working group and framework requested by HCR60 will provide much-needed information to the public about the invasiveness of plants for sale in Hawaii while the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity works to update its list of noxious weeds and create a list of restricted plant species.

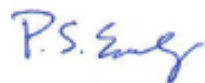
We respectfully suggest that this Committee consider adding an expert from the Hawaii Invasive Species Council staff who works on the Plant Pono Program and the Hawaii-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment (HPWRA) to the working group. HPWRA is a vetting process for plants that uses published scientific papers to assess the invasiveness risk of different plant species in Hawaii and is the basis for Plant Pono scores. HPWRA has assessed thousands of plant species, and any person can request a HPWRA score for a plant species. Adding a HPWRA expert to the working group will provide practical information about how invasiveness can be determined and quantified.

Thank you for bringing attention to the problem of invasive plants in Hawaii, for including CGAPS as a participant in the working group, and for the opportunity to support HCR60.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Christy Martin'.

Christy Martin
CGAPS Program Manager

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie Easley'.

Stephanie Easley
CGAPS Legal Fellow



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March 25, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HCR 60

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO IMPROVE CONSUMER AWARENESS OF INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES, REDUCE THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES THROUGH PLANT SALES, AND CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE LABELING FRAMEWORK THAT PROVIDES AN INDICATION OF A PLANT SPECIES' INVASIVENESS RISK WHEN SOLD IN THE STATE

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 HCR 60, which requests the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to convene a working group to improve consumer awareness of invasive plant species, reduce their spread through plant sales, and develop a labeling framework to better inform purchasing decisions.

Invasive plant species pose real and ongoing challenges to agriculture in Hawai'i. They compete with crops for resources, increase production costs, contribute to fire risk, and reduce overall agricultural productivity. Improving awareness at the point of sale is an important step toward prevention.

HFB appreciates the collaborative approach outlined in this measure, particularly the inclusion of agricultural stakeholders, industry representatives, and invasive species experts. Bringing these groups together will help ensure that any recommendations are balanced, practical, and informed by on-the-ground experience.

As this effort moves forward, HFB encourages the working group to build upon existing programs, such as the Plant Pono Program, and to avoid duplicative or conflicting frameworks.

We also encourage that any labeling system developed be science-based, clear, and practical for both consumers and businesses. It is important that the approach improves awareness without creating unintended burdens for agricultural producers, nurseries, or retailers.

HFB looks forward to participating in the working group and contributing to solutions that support both agricultural viability and invasive species prevention.
Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



March 23, 2026

Testimony with Comments in support of HCR60

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

On behalf of the Landscape Industry Council of Hawaii (LICH), I support HCR 60, and respectfully request that a representative of LICH be added to this working group if this resolution is adopted.

Hawaii's landscape industry, comprised of a variety of "green industries", has an economic impact of over \$520 million annually and full-time employment of over 11,000 professionals. Formed in 1986, LICH is dedicated to building green industry unity and promoting professionalism and industry standards through education, research, certification, and networking.

LICH's membership includes landscape contractors, arborists, nursery owners, pesticide applicators, researchers, government agencies, hotel and resorts, and landscape architects from across the state.

If you have questions, please contact me at me at 808-798-5210 or email at lyummatt@gmail.com. Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Matt Lyum
2026 President, Landscape Industry Council of Hawai'i
<https://hawaiiscape.com/>

HCR-60

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 8:21:14 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/25/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

60 HCR REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO IMPROVE CONSUMER AWARENESS OF INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES, REDUCE THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES THROUGH PLANT SALES, AND CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE LABELING FRAMEWORK THAT PROVIDES AN INDICATION OF A PLANT SPECIES' INVASIVENESS RISK WHEN SOLD IN THE STATE.

HCR-60

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 6:17:42 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/25/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chuck Chimera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of H.C.R. 60. I submit this testimony as a private individual. I work as a weed risk assessment specialist and have over three decades of professional experience in invasive plant management, including work with the U.S. Geological Survey and the National Park Service.

A substantial body of invasion biology literature demonstrates that most naturalized and invasive plant species were intentionally introduced, with horticulture identified as the dominant pathway (Reichard and White 2001; Dehnen-Schmutz et al. 2007). This pattern is strongly corroborated by foundational Hawai‘i-based research. In a comprehensive assessment of alien plant impacts, Smith (1985) identified 86 of the most significant invasive plant species in Hawai‘i’s natural areas; of these, approximately 90% were intentionally introduced for horticulture, agriculture, or other human uses, while only about 10% were attributed to inadvertent introduction. This stark imbalance highlights the disproportionate role of intentional pathways in driving plant invasions in Hawai‘i. Continued availability of high-risk species in commerce contributes directly to propagule pressure, which is widely recognized as the strongest predictor of establishment and spread (Lockwood et al. 2005).

The Hawai‘i-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment (HPWRA), adapted from the Australian WRA system (Pheloung et al. 1999), is one of the most robust pre-border screening tools available. Validation work conducted in Hawai‘i has demonstrated that the system correctly identifies the majority of major invaders while maintaining high overall predictive accuracy (Daehler et al. 2004; Gordon et al. 2008). The HPWRA applies standardized criteria, including climate matching, life history traits, reproductive capacity, dispersal mechanisms, and invasion history elsewhere, to generate transparent, repeatable risk scores. These assessments form the scientific foundation of the Plant Pono program, which translates WRA results into accessible guidance for consumers and the nursery industry (Plant Pono 2026). However, despite the availability of these tools, risk information is not consistently communicated at the point of sale.

This disconnect represents a critical gap in Hawai‘i’s biosecurity framework. Without access to risk information, consumers and retailers may inadvertently facilitate the secondary spread of high-risk taxa already present in the State. Empirical evidence indicates that reducing propagule pressure through informed decision-making can significantly decrease invasion likelihood and long-term management costs. Prevention, particularly through pathway management and risk

communication, is consistently identified as orders of magnitude more cost-effective than post-establishment control or eradication.

H.C.R. 60 appropriately proposes a coordinated, multi-stakeholder process to develop a standardized labeling and outreach framework grounded in existing scientific tools. Integrating risk assessment outputs into a consumer-facing system could operationalize decades of research and strengthen the linkage between science and decision-making. This approach is consistent with best practices in invasion biology and aligns with successful efforts in other jurisdictions to reduce the distribution and planting of invasive species through education and transparency.

For these reasons, I support H.C.R. 60 and respectfully urge the Committee to adopt this measure.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Charles Chimera

References:

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Plant Pono (2026). *Plant Pono Program: Promoting responsible plant choices in Hawai'i*. <https://plantpono.org/>

Reichard, S.H., & White, P. (2001). Horticulture as a pathway of invasive plant introductions in the United States. *BioScience*, 51(2), 103–113.

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