

**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 AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026  
9:30 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 325 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2174, SD 2  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2174, SD2 relating to agriculture. This measure authorizes the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) to declare an emergency quarantine when it has been reasonably determined that there is a threat to agriculture or the environment in the State; authorizes the Department to halt operations related to or within the affected area for ninety-six hours, subject to extension by vote of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity; authorizes the Department to quarantine any business or other area that is known or reasonably suspected to be infested or infected with any pest; requires the Department to provide certain notices to affected farmers and provide compensation; and authorizes the Department to establish interim rules governing the transportation of any material into and within the State known to harbor or transport a high-impact invasive species or pest. The Department supports this measure and offers comments.

The Department believes that a time-limited quarantine may be a useful tool in certain circumstances and is appreciative of the clarification that threats to agriculture can trigger this provision. While the Department supports allowing the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Board) to vote on extending the quarantine, HRS 92-7 does not appear to allow the Board to convene within the 96 hour timeframe and while HRS 92-8 Emergency Meetings, appears to provide a method for the Board to initiate a meeting within the 96 hour timeframe, an emergency meeting can only be held if a board finds there is “. . . an imminent peril to the public health, safety, or welfare. . .”, which the Department believes does not appear to apply here.

Testimony of Sharon Hurd  
March 18, 2026  
Page 2 of 3

The Department is appreciative of the inclusion of its prior suggestions to clarify HRS 150A-8(b) in Section 2 and HRS 150A-9.5(a) in Section 3.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify to this measure.



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2174 SD2**

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka ‘Oihana Mahi‘ai a me ka ‘Ōnaehana Mea‘ai  
Ke Kapikala o Hawai‘i

Malaki 18, 2026

9:30AM

Lumi 325

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Aloha e Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS SB2174**, which provides the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) authority to respond to invasive species threats by declaring emergency quarantines.

Across ka Pae ‘Āina Hawai‘i, invasive species cause catastrophic damage to our native forests, degrade watersheds, reduce agricultural productivity, and diminish the quality of life for residents. The introduction and widespread infestation of invasive species threatens traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices, jeopardizes food security, and increases economic strain on our residents. Giving DAB the power to declare emergency quarantines when there is a threat to our agriculture or environment allows DAB and its invasive species partners to initiate mitigation measures.

Requiring DAB to provide detailed quarantine information and support options to impacted farmers as well as compensation for farmers who incur significant losses due to the quarantine balances the biosecurity necessity of quarantines with the economic impacts quarantines may cause. Invasive species that are detected and responded to early are significantly easier and cheaper to mitigate.

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **SUPPORT SB2174 SD2**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

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

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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FIRST DEPUTY

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
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LAND  
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Testimony of  
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
Acting Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Wednesday, March 18, 2026  
9:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 2174, SENATE DRAFT 2  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Senate Bill 2174, Senate Draft 2 authorizes the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) to declare an emergency quarantine when it has been reasonably determined that there is a threat to the environment in the State; authorizes DAB to halt operations related to or within the affected area for 96 hours, subject to extension by vote of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity; authorizes DAB to quarantine any business or other area that is known or reasonably suspected to be infested or infected with any pest or any other prohibited, restricted, or unlisted organism; and authorizes DAB to establish interim rules governing the transportation of any material into and within the state that creates a situation dangerous to public or ecological health. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports this measure, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Supplemental Budget request.**

The Department supports the amended authority of DAB to declare an emergency quarantine in response to environmental threats. The emergency 96-hour quarantine, which may be extended by the DAB board, would allow DAB and its invasive species partners to address the threat or initiate mitigation measures. The Department recognizes the need to act quickly to contain threats from invasive species. Threats detected early are significantly easier and less costly to mitigate when confined to a single area. Quarantines, although at times disruptive, can, when

initiated early and quickly, neutralize and eradicate an invasive species threat more quickly than if no quarantine were initiated.

The Department further supports this measure's amendments to DAB's authority to regulate the transportation of goods within the State. DAB's expanded authority to quarantine a business or area known or suspected to harbor an invasive species infestation is key to preventing the movement and human-caused spread of invasive species threats. Early containment of invasive species can significantly reduce the time, effort, and cost required to resolve such threats.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



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March 18, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2174, SD2  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

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 provides comments on SB 2174, SD2**, which strengthens the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity's authority to respond to invasive species threats, clarifies enforcement tools, and formally designates the coqui frog as a pest under statute.

Strong and effective biosecurity is essential to protecting Hawai'i's agricultural industry, natural resources, and communities across the State. Invasive species continue to pose one of the most serious long-term threats to local food production, and prevention and rapid response remain far more cost-effective than mitigation after establishment.

HFB supports providing DAB the authority to act quickly in response to emerging threats, including emergency quarantine measures and enhanced interisland inspection requirements. Rapid containment is critical when addressing highly mobile or fast-spreading pests.

We appreciate that SB 2174, SD2 clarifies that emergency quarantine authority may be exercised when there is a threat to agriculture and requires detailed notice to affected farmers, as well as compensation for significant losses resulting from a quarantine order. These amendments reflect important recognition of the economic realities faced by agricultural producers.

At the same time, the measure grants significant emergency authority, including the ability to declare an emergency quarantine, halt operations within an affected area for up to

ninety-six hours, extend that halt by board action, and adopt interim rules governing the transportation of materials known to harbor or transport a high-impact invasive species. For agricultural operations that depend on perishable goods, interisland shipments, livestock movement, and time-sensitive harvest schedules, even short-term interruptions can result in substantial economic losses.

If this authority is implemented, HFB respectfully encourages clear operational standards and guardrails to ensure that emergency powers are exercised in a predictable, transparent, and proportionate manner. Clarifying the criteria for determining when an emergency quarantine is warranted, defining the scope of affected operations, and ensuring consistent communication with impacted producers will help minimize unintended disruption to compliant agricultural businesses.

In addition, the compensation mechanism contemplated in the measure will be critical to maintaining industry cooperation. We encourage the establishment of clear timelines, defined eligibility standards, and identified funding sources to ensure that farmers who incur significant losses due to quarantine orders are made whole in a timely and practical manner.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



### **IN OPPOSITION TO SB2174**

The Libertarian Party of Hawaii opposes SB2174, which authorizes the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to declare an emergency quarantine upon a "reasonable determination" of a threat to the environment or agriculture in the State. Key provisions include allowing the Department to halt operations in affected areas for up to 96 hours, quarantine businesses or areas suspected of pest infestation, and establish interim rules governing transportation of materials that could pose risks.

This risks arbitrary shutdowns of farms, nurseries, businesses, transportation, and personal activities. If passed, this bill would devastate livelihoods in agriculture, tourism-related sectors, and small enterprises without prompt judicial review or compensation for losses. The measure grants overly broad and unchecked executive authority to a state agency. The language relies on a subjective "reasonable determination" standard without necessary safeguards, due process requirements, or independent oversight.

Hawaii's history shows that government emergency powers often expand beyond necessity and infringe on individual liberties, property rights, and free enterprise. SB2174 magnifies this by empowering unelected bureaucrats to impose quarantines and rules with minimal checks.

The Libertarian Party of Hawaii urges the Committee to OPPOSE SB2174 in its current form. Liberty and voluntary cooperation best serve Hawaii, not more coercive powers.

Abbra Green | LPHI Secretary | [LibertarianHawaii.com](http://LibertarianHawaii.com) | (808)824-LPHI

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy  
Supporting SB2174 SD2, Relating to Agriculture  
Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems  
March 18, 2026 at 9:30 am  
Conference Room 325 and via Videoconference**

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Hawai'i and Palmyra supports SB2174 SD2, which authorizes the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) to declare an emergency quarantine when it has been reasonably determined that there is a threat to agriculture or the environment in the State, authorizes the Department to halt operations related to or within the affected area for ninety-six hours, subject to extension by vote of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity, authorizes the Department to quarantine any business or other area that is known or reasonably suspected to be infested or infected with any pest, requires the Department to provide certain notices to affected farmers and provide compensation, and authorizes the Department to establish interim rules governing the transportation of any material into and within the State known to harbor or transport a high-impact invasive species or pest.

Hawai'i faces increasing threats from invasive pests and diseases that endanger agriculture, the environment, and culturally important landscapes. Timely detection and rapid response are essential to preventing small infestations from becoming widespread and costly.

This bill strengthens the State's ability to respond quickly to emerging threats by clarifying pest designation authority, improving emergency quarantine powers, and strengthening inspection and transport requirements between islands. We support provisions that allow DAB to act swiftly when an incipient infestation is detected, while also requiring communication and support to communities. Overall, this measure improves the State's biosecurity framework, enhances protections against high-impact invasive species, and balances rapid response with transparency and support for the community.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of SB2174 SD2.

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*Guided by science, TNC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 84,000 acres in 13 nature preserves and 18 managed areas and have supported over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands.*

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Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU offers comments on SB2174.**

HFU supports the intent of SB2174, which provides the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) critical emergency tools to manage biosecurity threats.

While we appreciate the inclusion of compensation for losses and Board oversight in SD2, the bill still lacks two critical partnership components. HFU proposes two specific amendments to ensure **coordination with farm organizations** and a **90-day post-evaluation report** to ensure state power is being used effectively and to quantify the economic toll on our food system."

**Amendment 1: Collaborative Communication Outreach**

A 96-hour halt can result in total crop loss for many perishable products. To ensure that every affected farmer, including those in remote areas or with limited digital access, receives immediate guidance and support, the HDAB should be mandated to leverage existing agricultural networks.

Amend Section 1 to insert a new subsection (f):

(f) To ensure the timely dissemination of quarantine orders and support resources, the department shall coordinate with recognized non-profit agricultural organizations and local cooperatives to facilitate outreach to all affected agricultural operations within the quarantine area.

**Amendment 2: Post-Quarantine Accountability and Evaluation**

Emergency quarantines are an extraordinary exercise of state power over private business. A lessons learned review is essential to assess whether the 96-hour halt successfully contained the pest and to quantify the economic burden placed on the farming community. This data is vital for refining future protocols and justifying compensation or relief efforts.

Amend Section 1 to insert a new subsection (g):

(g) Within ninety days following the termination of an emergency quarantine or halt of operations under this section, the department shall conduct a post-quarantine evaluation. The evaluation shall include consultation with affected stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of the containment and the economic impact on the affected businesses. The department shall submit a summary of this evaluation to the board of agriculture and biosecurity.

The amendments in SB2174 SD2 address some previous concerns regarding notification and compensation, but incorporating these mechanisms for farmer engagement and evidence-based review will strengthen the efficacy of this significant quarantine power. HFU respectfully requests that the Committee pass SB2174 with these clarifying amendments to ensure our farmers are partners, not just subjects, in the fight against invasive species.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union

**SB-2174-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 8:48:25 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Uilani Naipo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure.