

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

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
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
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 Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS

Monday, March 2, 2026
10:31 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2350, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Senate Bill 2350, Senate Draft 1 proposes to transfer oversight of the Aquaculture and Livestock Support Services Branch of the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) to the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC); transfers the Agricultural Development Division of DAB to the ADC; and requires that certain regulatory functions related to animal health, biosecurity enforcement, inspections, and permitting compliance remain within DAB. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) appreciates the intent of this measure and offers the following comments.**

The Department is responsible for managing, conserving, and restoring the state's unique aquatic resources and ecosystems, including preventing the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). In the context of aquaculture, the Department coordinates with DAB to review proposed aquaculture activities to minimize AIS risks to native species and ecosystems. The Department recognizes the intent of the transfer to improve administrative efficiency and service delivery within the agricultural sector. The Department supports the retention of regulatory authority within DAB as it helps maintain stability in aquatic livestock permitting, disease and pest control, and biosecurity oversight.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



WENDY GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
HUI HO'OU LU AINA MAHIAI

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

March 2, 2026
10:02 a.m.

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

SENATE BILL NO. 2350, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairpersons Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

We are writing to submit comments on SB 2350, SD1, which proposes transferring the Aquaculture and Livestock Support Services Branch and the Agricultural Development Division (ADD) from the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC). We recognize that this proposal represents a significant structural reorganization within the State's agricultural framework, and we appreciate the seriousness of that consideration. This transition is intended to be more than a simple relocation of programs. It represents a strategic effort to align industry development functions with an agency whose statutory authorities are specifically designed to deliver infrastructure development, land aggregation, facility financing, commercialization support, and public-private partnership capacity—tools that are essential for scaling modern agricultural industries.

Clear Purpose and Measurable Outcomes

We acknowledge concerns that the bill would benefit from clearer findings and defined objectives. The specific challenges this reorganization seeks to address include:

- Limited infrastructure development capacity dedicated to aquaculture and livestock industries

- Fragmented responsibility for land access, facilities development, and commercialization support
- Insufficient integration between industry development planning and statewide economic strategy
- Barriers to scaling production due to lack of production-ready sites and shared-use facilities

The intended outcomes of this transition are measurable and performance based. Success should be evaluated using metrics such as:

- Increased acres or facilities brought into production
- Growth in local production volumes and measurable import substitution
- Increased agricultural export revenues
- Private capital leveraged through public-private partnerships
- Job creation and wage growth within aquaculture and livestock sectors
- Reduced time required to bring production facilities online

Including legislative findings and performance benchmarks would provide transparency and strengthen accountability.

Transition Plan Requirement

Given the scope of the proposed transfer, a formal transition plan is essential. We strongly support including statutory language requiring the development and submission of a comprehensive transition plan prior to or concurrent with implementation which should include:

- A phased timeline for transfer of personnel, functions, and agreements
- Identification of all federal agreements and required federal approvals
- Continuity-of-service safeguards for producers and industry partners
- Formal interagency coordination agreements between ADC and the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity
- Defined roles and responsibilities to prevent duplication or service gaps
- Reporting requirements to the Legislature during the transition period

A structured transition plan will minimize disruption, protect federal funding relationships, maintain regulatory integrity, and provide clarity to producers and stakeholders throughout the process.

Continuity of Services and Producer Impact

We share the concern that services to farmers and ranchers must not be disrupted. The objective of this proposal is not to reduce support but to

strengthen long-term industry growth capacity by situating development functions within an entity equipped to execute capital-intensive, infrastructure-driven initiatives.

Regulatory authority, including animal health, inspections, biosecurity enforcement, and compliance, would remain within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. Formal coordination agreements should ensure continued collaboration. This structure preserves regulatory integrity while enhancing economic development capacity.

Structural Considerations and Governance

We understand concerns regarding precedent and the broader structure of agricultural governance. This proposal is not intended to fragment agricultural policy or diminish the Department's role. Rather, it clarifies specialization:

- The Department retains regulatory, biosecurity, and federal compliance functions.
- ADC focuses on land, infrastructure, commercialization, and industry scaling.

Separating regulatory oversight from industry promotion can strengthen governance by maintaining independent regulatory authority while allowing development functions to operate with economic and infrastructure-focused flexibility.

Additional Staffing and Business Development Capacity

Successful implementation requires dedicated staffing capacity within ADC. The transfer of functions alone is insufficient without additional support positions specifically focused on business development, project planning, industry outreach, and interagency coordination.

The addition of five (5) full-time equivalent positions should be clearly tied to:

- Infrastructure and site development planning
- Commercialization and export market support
- Federal grant coordination and compliance management
- Financial modeling and public-private partnership structuring
- Producer engagement and industry development strategy

These positions are not programming for their own sake. They represent foundational implementation capacity necessary to responsibly absorb transferred functions and deliver measurable outcomes. Without this additional

support, ADC would lack an administrative and strategic bandwidth to meet the Legislature's expectations.

Data-Driven and Transparent Implementation

We agree that restructuring should be grounded in data, transparent analysis, and ongoing reporting. Hawai'i's aquaculture industry currently generates approximately \$53 million in annual sales and supports nearly 400 hired workers statewide. The sector is export-oriented, innovation-driven, and infrastructure-dependent. We support incorporating:

- Formal legislative findings outlining the strategic rationale
- A required transition plan submitted to the Legislature
- Annual performance reporting tied to measurable benchmarks
- Continued coordination with federal partners to secure necessary approvals

Federal agreements should transition only upon approval by the relevant agencies, and implementation should proceed in phases to avoid disruption.

Conclusion

SB 2350, SD1, proposes a structural change rather than a narrow programmatic adjustment. For that reason, clarity of purpose, measurable goals, a formal transition plan, defined staffing support, and transparent reporting are essential components of responsible implementation.

With appropriate safeguards—including preservation of regulatory authority within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, formalized interagency coordination, a structured transition plan, and sufficient ADC business development staffing—this proposal offers a strategic opportunity to strengthen Hawai'i's agricultural development capacity while protecting continuity of services for producers.

We appreciate the thoughtful consideration of these issues and remain committed to ensuring that any reorganization strengthens—not disrupts—support for Hawai'i's farmers, ranchers, and aquaculture producers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. We welcome continued discussion to refine this proposal and ensure its successful implementation.

Respectfully submitted

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor

William V. Brilhante, Jr.
Managing Director



Benson Medina
Director

Dennis Lin
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

25 Aupuni Street, Room 1301 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-4252
(808) 961-8366 • Fax (808) 935-1205
E-mail: chresdev@co.hawaii.hi.us

February 27, 2026
HEARING BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Monday, March 2, 2026
10:02 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 211

TESTIMONY ON SB 2350 SD1: Relating to Agriculture

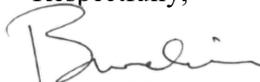
Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee,

I am Benson Medina, Director of the Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai'i. One of the agricultural objectives of this department is to support research, development, control, and education that improves agricultural production, quality, resilience, and producer viability. The County of Hawai'i provides **written comments on SB2350 SD1** to transfer oversight of the Aquaculture and Livestock Support Services Branch of the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to the Agribusiness Development Corporation; transfer the Agricultural Development Division of DAB to the ADC; and require that certain regulatory functions related to animal health, biosecurity enforcement, inspections, and permitting compliance remain within DAB.

Hawai'i County has 3,638 farms and 20+ farming associations that fall under and utilize services related to the Agricultural Development Division, while ADC assets in Hawai'i County are still in development. **We request that SB2350 SD1 be amended to remove Section 2 pertaining to the Agricultural Development Division.**

This amendment takes into consideration the statutes of each department and the potential that transferring any of the programs that ADD administers to ADC could affect the ability of the state to administer these programs. Given that more than \$8 million in federal funds were administered through ADD in 2023-2024 (HDOA, 2024), it is important that producers do not lose opportunities because of a loss of capacity within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to receive federal funding opportunities. The Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program, a USDA program to build resilience in the middle of the food supply chain, states: "eligible entities are departments of agriculture in States and Territories," (USDA). Given the current economic disruptions affecting producers, please consider possible interruptions to crucial funding streams resulting from a transfer. Thank you for championing agriculture in Hawai'i and for the opportunity to provide comments on SB2350 SD1.

Respectfully,


Benson Medina
Director

SB-2350-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 5:29:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Goeggel	Testifying for Animal Rights Hawai'i	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We oppose this bill. The Agribusiness Development Corp. has a long and tainted past, and we suggest a forensic audit be performed before any taxpayer monies are appropriated. Mahalo.



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

March 2, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON SB 2350, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
10:01 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, 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 respectfully opposes SB 2350, SD1. HFB appreciates the Legislature's continued focus on strengthening aquaculture and agricultural development in Hawai'i. We recognize that stakeholders have expressed concerns regarding program responsiveness and agree that improvements are necessary to ensure producers receive effective support.

While SB 2350, SD1 clarifies that regulatory authority will remain within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, the measure still proposes transferring the Aquaculture and Livestock Support Services Branch and the Agricultural Development Division (ADD) to the Agribusiness Development Corporation. This represents a significant structural reorganization of the State's agricultural framework.

HFB remains concerned that moving these agricultural development programs out of the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity could split up responsibilities that are better kept together under one department. Hawai'i's agricultural sector already operates with limited personnel and resources. Dividing regulatory and development responsibilities across multiple entities risks weakening coordination at a time when a unified strategy is essential.

In addition, many federal agricultural programs and cooperative agreements administered through ADD are traditionally structured to flow through State Departments of Agriculture. It is unclear whether transferring these functions to an entity housed within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism could affect federal

eligibility, designation status, or funding continuity. Any potential risk to federal funding should be carefully evaluated before a permanent structural change is made.

HFB believes that performance concerns should be addressed by improving oversight and resources within DAB, rather than restructuring our State's agricultural agencies. A strong and unified Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity remains essential to Hawai'i's long-term food security and agricultural stability.

HFB values its partnerships with both DAB and ADC and believes continued collaboration, rather than fragmentation, offers the most sustainable path forward.

For these reasons, HFB respectfully opposes SB 2350, SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

SB2350 SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Monday, March 2, 2026, 10:31 AM
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **opposes SB2350 SD1** which transfers oversight of the Aquaculture and Livestock Support Services Branch of the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to the Agribusiness Development Corporation and transfers the Agricultural Development Division of DAB to the ADC

When there is a threat of aquaculture or livestock disease, the veterinarians within this branch work closely with state veterinarians and vet medical officers in the Animal Industry Division and the USDA. This close working relationship allows the state to investigate, contain and resolve outbreaks immediately, which protects the industry. Moving this branch to another Department is concerning.

Additionally, other functions in this branch include providing grants in support of agriculture which benefit the aquaculture and livestock industries. We urge the legislature to keep this function within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity so that it continues to be a regulatory department as well as one that provides advocacy and support for agriculture.

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



SB-2350-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 11:25:56 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Philip Fernandez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am Phil Fernandez, a fisherman and fisheries management professional. I have a better understanding of aquaculture than livestock, thus my comment comes from the seafood perspective. From 2019 to 2025, I was the chairman of the State Office of Planning's (DBEDT) Marine and Coastal Zone Advocacy Committee.

Aquaculture is a growing and rapidly evolving segment of seafood production. A large component of its success will be economic development efforts, which is within DBEDT. The federal Small Business Innovation Research program, which is an economic development mechanism, is appropriate funding for new and evolutionary businesses such as aquaculture.

There are other reasons why this bill is appropriate for aquaculture. I hope the committee can find appropriate amendments to allow this bill to go forward.

Mahalo.

SB-2350-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 10:07:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Inoa Martinez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB2530, which aims to close the “pay-to-play” loophole by prohibiting state and county contractors from making political contributions. This legislation is a critical step toward ensuring fairness and transparency in Hawai‘i’s electoral and procurement systems.

Allowing contractors to contribute to political campaigns creates a perception of favoritism and undermines public trust in government processes. By closing this loophole, SB2530 reinforces the principle that contracts should be awarded based on merit and public benefit, not on political connections or financial contributions.

This bill also aligns with broader efforts to promote ethical governance. It helps to eliminate conflicts of interest and ensures that elected officials remain accountable to their constituents, rather than to donors with vested interests.

In conclusion, I urge the committee to support SB2530. This measure is essential for restoring trust in our democratic institutions and ensuring an equitable system of governance for all.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

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

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**FRIDAY, March 2, 2026
10:02 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 211 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2350, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chairs Moriwaki, and Wakai and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2350, SD1 that transfers the Agricultural Development Division and Aquaculture and Livestock Support Services Branch from the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to the Agribusiness Development Corporation. The Department strongly opposes this bill.

The Agricultural Development Division is responsible for agricultural marketing and statistics. These functions work closely with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service for Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, Microgrants for Food Security Program and USDA's Farm Service Agency for the Small States Weather Events Program, USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service for the Market Access Program to expand export markets and the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service to provide critical statistical information to ranchers and farmers. The Division also works synergistically with the Department's Agricultural Loan Program and the Agricultural Resource Management Division to provide comprehensive services to the agriculture industry.

The Aquaculture and Livestock Support Services provide support for aquaculture and livestock businesses through planning, coordination, counseling and information. The branch plays a significant role in aquaculture development and works closely with the Agricultural Loan Division to provide financing for aquaculture operations and with the Department's Aquatic Unit's veterinarian for disease surveillance and investigations. The ability for the development function and the regulatory function to work together and advocate for aquaculture is essential and if the transfer is to occur the aquaculture regulatory function should also be transferred.

Testimony of Sharon Hurd

March 2, 2026

Page 2

The Department overall has concerns that the loss of synergy within the economic development functions of the department may result in less support for the agricultural and aquaculture industries and hinder the Department from reaching the goal of doubling local food production. In addition, transferring agreements from Federal Agencies to the Agribusiness Development Corporation may require federal approval, which is not under the control of the department.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



PO Box 1095
Kurtistown, Hawaii
808-938-2840
Jim.wyban@gmail.com

February 27 2026

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
SB 2350 SD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

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

My name is Dr. Jim Wyban. I am an aquaculture scientist and entrepreneur and a pioneer of Hawai'i's Specific Pathogen Free (SPF) shrimp broodstock industry. Over the past three decades, my work has helped position Hawai'i as a global leader in biosecure shrimp genetics and high-value aquaculture exports.

I support SB 2350 SD1 and the transfer of the majority of aquaculture development responsibilities from the Department of Agriculture to the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Aquaculture today is both agriculture and advanced technology. It requires long-term land security, capital investment, and coordinated economic development strategy. Consolidating aquaculture development functions within ADC will better align land management, infrastructure planning, and business development under an entity focused on agribusiness growth and investment.

It is appropriate that animal health, biosecurity enforcement, inspection, and regulatory compliance remain within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. Hawai'i's global reputation in SPF broodstock production depends on strong regulatory oversight.

This measure will improve clarity, accountability, and strategic coordination while maintaining essential biosecurity protections.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jim Wyban
CEO
Marine Genetics LLC