

**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

## **WRITTEN ONLY**

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2026  
3:05 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 120  
URGING THE STATE TO CONSIDER THE IMPORTANCE OF RANGELANDS AND  
PASTORALISTS AND ADOPT POLICIES THAT FURTHER SUSTAIN RANGELAND  
HEALTH AND PASTORALIST LIVELIHOODS.**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 120 that urges the State to consider the importance of rangelands and pastoralists and adopt policies that further sustain rangeland health and pastoralist livelihoods. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) supports this resolution.

The Department has long recognized the importance of Hawaii's ranchers to Hawaii's economy. Further, their sustained land management that, in some cases, span over generations, has balanced economic utilization and land stewardship practices before they even had names attached to them. The industry is organized, articulate, effective and tough when it needs to be. We look forward to collaborating with the Governor's office and the four counties in considering policies that encourage the conservation of rangelands.

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



**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM**

**‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII**

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
March 27, 2026 at 3:05 p.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean  
College of Agriculture and Human Resilience  
and

Vassilis Syrmos, PhD  
Interim Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SCR 120 – URGING THE STATE TO CONSIDER THE IMPORTANCE OF RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS AND ADOPT POLICIES THAT FURTHER SUSTAIN RANGELAND HEALTH AND PASTORALIST LIVELIHOODS.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SCR 120 which encourages state agencies, the University of Hawai'i, and organizations across the State to engage in activities that promote education, research, and outreach related to rangeland management and adopt policies that will further conserve rangelands and protect the livelihoods of the State's ranchers.

The University of Hawai'i College of Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) recognizes the value of Hawai'i's rangelands and the ranchers that steward them. Through research and Extension initiatives CTAHR is committed to working with ranchers and private and public land management agencies to assure the ecological, economic, and cultural significance of rangelands in Hawai'i are sustained. Our faculty, through a diversity of program areas, conduct research and provide Extension outreach across many areas directly aligned with the purpose of SCR 120 to engage in activities that promote education, research, and outreach related to rangeland management. CTAHR appreciates the contributions by ranchers, pastoralists and land managers to the state economy, paniolo culture and ecological stewardship of rangelands.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SCR 120.

**SCR-120**

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 6:58:12 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/27/2026 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brian Miyamoto	Testifying for Hawaii Farm Bureau	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ranch Strong

**SCR-120**

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 2:25:19 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/27/2026 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cathy Goeggel	Testifying for Animal Rights Hawai'i	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SCR120 portrays ranchers as the saviors of the land. The truth is that most of the "range" would benefit with the removal of cattle and replacing them with trees. Cattle produce prodigious amounts of methane and do not live lightly on the land.

Forests are the lungs of the land, and in Hawai'i many were clearcut to accommodate cattle. Ranchers characterizing themselves as pastorilists may sound cool...but are they going to follow their herds and live in yurts? I think not.

March 27, 2026

Senator Gabbard and Senator Richards  
Chair and Vice Chair, and members of the Agriculture and Environment Committee

Subject SCR 120

Commentor: Ted Metrose

Position: In support of SCR120: URGING THE STATE TO CONSIDER THE IMPORTANCE OF RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS AND ADOPT POLICIES THAT FURTHER SUSTAIN RANGELAND HEALTH AND PASTORALIST LIVELIHOODS

The surprising rise in foreign ownership highlighted below gives further credence and justification to adoption of Senate Concurrent Resolution 120 (SCR 120)

Something should be done to limit the foreign ownership of Hawaii's agricultural lands because it is rising fast - almost doubling in 3 years!

More than 70,000 acres were bought in a single year.

Apparently based on the notes, out of all the states, Hawaii has the second highest percent of foreign ownership (17.1%).

Foreigners (mostly Canadians) own at least 110,340 acres of Maui (approximately 466,000 acres) which equates to 23.6%

Even though much of Hawaii's agriculture land is not used according to its formal classification, specifically for growing crops. Also, those lands which are not actually in agriculture service is considered pastureland (whether specifically used for grazing or some other purpose, like open spaces or for groundwater recharge). The loss or transfer to agriculture and pastoral lands to foreign interests is concerning.

From this report below there is no telling how much of the land is owned by people or corporations that are not Hawaii residents, but I would not be surprised if it just as high.

Perhaps some ideas for limiting the amount of land owned or controlled by foreign interests can be generated through SCR 120.

**Table 24.13-- AGRICULTURAL AND NONAGRICULTURAL LANDHOLDINGS OF FOREIGN OWNERS: 2004 TO 2023**

[The source report is required annually under section 5 of the U.S. Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978. Under the Act, any person who holds an Immigration and Naturalization Service Form I-151 or I-551 (green card) is exempt from filing. For 2004 and 2005, approximate land area as established by the U.S. Census Bureau in conjunction with the 1990 Census of Population there were 4,111,000 acres of land in the state and for 2006 through 2021, 4,110,720 acres with the 2000 Census. 2022 and thereafter based on Census Bureau data as of January 1, 2010]

Closing date 1/	Parcels owned by foreigners	Privately owned agricultural land 2/	Acres owned by foreigners	Agricultural acres owned by foreigners	Percent of all privately owned agric. land 3/
Feb. 28, 2004	100	1,986,000	172,186	167,206	8.4
Feb. 28, 2005	103	1,986,000	172,211	167,600	8.4
Feb. 28, 2006	104	1,803,038	172,238	167,627	9.3
Feb. 28, 2007	105	1,803,038	172,619	168,008	9.3
Feb. 29, 2008	106	1,803,038	162,590	157,974	8.8
Feb. 28, 2009	114	1,803,038	163,495	158,874	8.8
Feb. 28, 2010	114	1,803,038	163,495	158,874	8.8
Dec. 31, 2010	115	1,803,038	163,527	158,884	8.8
Dec. 31, 2011	116	1,803,038	163,530	158,887	8.8
Dec. 31, 2012	116	1,803,038	163,530	158,887	8.8
Dec. 31, 2013	115	1,803,038	163,498	158,887	8.8
Dec. 31, 2014	115	1,803,038	163,498	158,877	8.8
Dec. 31, 2015	113	1,803,038	163,139	158,529	8.8
Dec. 31, 2016	115	1,803,038	163,244	158,634	8.8
Dec. 31, 2017	119	1,803,038	163,303	158,692	8.8
Dec. 31, 2018	126	1,803,038	171,105	166,421	9.2
Dec. 31, 2019	127	1,803,038	171,108	166,424	9.2
Dec. 31, 2020	127	1,803,038	171,108	166,424	9.2
Dec. 31, 2021	127	1,803,038	170,556	165,872	9.2
Dec. 31, 2022	137	1,627,539	212,376	207,692	12.8
Dec. 31, 2023	138	1,627,539	283,425	278,741	17.1

1/ Historically reports have covered the 12-month period ending the last day of February, however, a second report was issued for 2010, which contains data gathered between March 1, 2010 and December 31, 2010. Beginning with the 2011, the report will be published only as of the end of each calendar year.

2/ Preliminary estimate based on unpublished USDA, Economic Research Service 1997 data through 2005, and for 2006-2016, similar unpublished 2002 data of Ruben Lubowski, Economic Research Service. Total land area minus federal, state, county and municipal; Indian Trust; rural transportation; and urban lands. Includes forest land, pasture land, cropland, range, and miscellaneous. Estimates of urban and rural transportation lands are from U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, 2006 and estimates of federal and other public lands are from the General Services Administration, 2001 and National Resource Conservation Service, 2002 respectively.

3/ The December 31, 2023 percentage for Hawaii ranked 2nd (rank of 1 assigned to the highest) among the 50 States, exceeded only by Maine at 21.1 percent and well above the national percentage of 3.5 percent.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency, *Foreign Ownership of U. S. Agricultural Land Through February 28* (annual except 2008 when it was through February 29), *Ibid. Foreign Holdings of U.S. Agricultural Land Through December 31* (annual, 2017, 2018, 2021, 2022, as revised, and 2023) <<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/economic-and-policy-analysis/afida/index>> accessed January 2, 2025.

**2023**

**Table 24.14-- AGRICULTURAL AND NONAGRICULTURAL LANDHOLDINGS OF FOREIGN OWNERS, BY COUNTRY AND BY COUNTY: 2021 TO 2023 -- Con.**

Subject	State total	Honolulu	Hawaii	Kauai	Maui
2023					
Parcels owned by foreigners	138	9	76	5	48
Use of landholdings of foreign owners	283,425	5,901	159,221	7,873	110,430
Agriculture	278,741	2,719	158,046	7,832	110,144
Cropland	88,758	1,610	34,151	132	52,865
Pasture	81,245	-	28,035	2,844	50,365
Forest	7,027	-	1,686	4,201	1,140
Other agriculture	101,711	1,109	94,174	655	5,773
Non agriculture	4,684	3,182	1,175	41	286
Acres owned by foreigners	283,425	5,901	159,221	7,873	110,430
Canada	112,512	-	63,572	-	48,940
Germany	8,835	621	23	384	7,807
Netherlands	37,135	-	37,133	-	2
United Kingdom	3,128	-	3,128	-	-
All others	121,815	5,280	55,365	7,489	53,680

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency, *Foreign Ownership of U. S. Agricultural Land Through December 31* (annual) <<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/economic-and-policy-analysis/afida/index>> accessed January 2, 2025; and calculations by Hawaii State Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism.

From DBEDT Hawaii Data Book