



**Minutes of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity
July 22, 2025**

A video recording of this meeting can be found online by visiting this website:
<https://dab.hawaii.gov/meetings-reports/>

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity was called to order on July 22, 2025, at 9:05 am by Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity Chairperson, Sharon Hurd. The meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom and in-person from:

*State of Hawaii, Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity
Plant Quarantine Branch
1849 Auiki Street*

Members Present In-Person:

Sharon Hurd, Chairperson, Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Board)

Members Virtually Present: Roll call/alone

Mark Takemoto, DBEDT, Ex-Officio Member

Diane Ley, Hawaii Member

Nathaniel Oswald, Maui County Member

En Young, Member-at-Large

James Gomes, Member-at-Large

Excused:

Ryan Kanaka'ole, DLNR, Ex-Officio Member

Dr. Parwinder Grewal, Dean CTAHR, Ex-Officio Member

Deputy Attorney General Present In-Person:

Deputy Attorney General Jennifer Waihee-Polk

Others Present In-Person:

Jason Azus-Richardson, HDAB IT

Marci Clingan, HDAB /Office of the Chair

Brandi Ah Yo, HDAB ARM

Kevin Moore, HDAB/ARM

Lori Buchanan, Molokai Aha Kiole Aha Moku

Others Virtually Present:¹

Jill Scheibe
Stephanie
KRISTI SAIKI
AGR - Kau, Brian
Francis Duran
Lesley Harvey
GN
18083843272
Kainani Merrill
Roy Hasegawa
J Ferrer, HDOA
BTM B.I.
Ted Yamamura
18083843272
Rae Gee
Richard Huynh
lindsey.ancog
Stephanie
Lyle Roe
takeminews
Chad Buck
Asokha ~ Hana Tropical
Jonathan Ho, HDOA Plant Quarantine Branch
yamamoto earl
BK
Diandra Goodwin-Leung
PIO
Cornel Kea
HDOAPIO
richard.a.nichols
P2182301
richard.kim
KipapaLL
William

Board Member Mark Takemoto announced that he was having trouble with getting his video camera to work. His video camera was working properly at 9:12 am.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 6/24/25 MEETING

Motion to Approve: Gomes/Ley

¹ The identification of the public members is based on their sign-in name but are not verified.

1
2 Vote: Approved; unanimously
3

4 III. INTRODUCTIONS
5

6 IV. COMMUNICATIONS FROM DIVISIONS AND ADMINISTRATION
7

8 A. AGRICULTURAL LOAN DIVISION
9

- 10 1. Request for Approval of one (1) Class C Loan for co-borrowers ZBAR
11 Ranch, LLC and Barney James Schutte.
12
13

14 Richard "Buddy" Nichols, Agricultural Loan Division, presented testimony as submitted.
15

16 Motion to Approve: Gomes/Young
17

18 Discussion:
19 None
20

21 Vote: Approved; Unanimously
22
23

- 24 2. Request for Approval of one (1) Class A Loan for Michelle Valentin
25

26 Richard "Buddy" Nichols, Agricultural Loan Division, presented testimony as submitted.
27

28 Motion to Approve: Gomes/Ley
29

30 Discussion:
31 Board Member Young asked about yield projections and if inclusion of Pono Pies
32 applies in financials.
33

34 Mr. Nichols confirmed projections are based on test plots and yield, and non-farm
35 income is included.
36

37 Vote: Approved; Unanimously
38
39

- 40 3. Request for Approval of one (1) Class A Loan for co-borrowers, Minerva
41 Ilagan, Gloria Ilagan, and Diana Ilagan-Clifford
42

1 Jillian Scheibe, Agricultural Loan Division, presented testimony as submitted.

2
3 Motion to Approve: Ley/Young

4
5 Discussion:

6 Member Young recused himself due to employment conflict.

7
8 Chairperson Hurd accepted the recusal and deferred the item to the next board
9 meeting.

- 10
11 4. Request for Approval of one (1) Class C Loan for co-borrowers Robert
12 David Butlar and Lori Ann Butlar

13
14 Motion to Approve: Gomes/Ley

15
16 Discussion:

17 Board Member Young asked about lease decision dependency on Kamehameha
18 Schools.

19
20 Ms. Scheibe confirmed there was no issue.

21
22 Vote: Approved; Unanimously

- 23
24
25 5. Request for Approval of Proposed Chapter 4-8, Hawaii Administrative
26 Rules, Title 4, Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Subtitle 2,
27 Agricultural Loan Division Chapter 8 "Agricultural Loan Program
28 Rules." The proposed new amendments to chapter 8 includes: §4-8-1
29 Definitions; §4-8-8 Letters of Decline; §4-8-12 Interest Rates; §4-8-20
30 Line of Credit Loans; and Repealing Subchapter 3 North Kohala Loan
31 and Grant Program Loan Servicing §4-8-43 through §4-8-48.

32
33 Richard "Buddy" Nichols, Agricultural Loan Division, presented testimony as submitted.

34
35 Motion to Approve: Gomes/Ley

36
37 Discussion:

38 Member Ley mentioned there are several references where the updated title for the
39 Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity ("Department") needs to be reflected.

40
41 Member Ley asked about interest rate policy and food hub/co-op definitions.

42

1 Mr. Nichols clarified that the new law sets rates and that co-ops are included in food
2 hubs.

3
4 Member Ley said under import replacement loans, it talks about loans that provide
5 credit for qualified farmers to participate with crop expansion programs initiated by the
6 state on large-scale basis. She asked if there are any examples of what this might look
7 like.

8
9 Mr. Nichols said primarily any crop that we're having a large amount of import that we're
10 doing very little of. He used tea and avocado as an example.

11
12 Chairperson Hurd acknowledged the work and suggested further discussion at public
13 hearings.

14
15 Vote: Approved; Unanimously
16
17

18 B. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DIVISION
19

- 20 1. Request for Approval to Add and Withdraw Officers to Hawaii Secure
21 Foods, LLC; General Lease No. S-5586, TMKs: (3) 3-9-001:001 and 002,
22 (3) 3-9-002:007 and 008, (3) 4-1-001:006 and (3) 4-1-005:001, Hāmākua
23 and North Hilo, Island of Hawai'i
24

25 Brandi Ah Yo, Agricultural Resource Management Division, presented testimony as
26 submitted.

27
28 Motion to Approve: Gomes/Young
29

30 Discussion:

31 Board Member Ley raised concerns about the progress of the manure and nutrient
32 management strategy and asked about departmental oversight.
33

34 Ms. Ah Yo clarified that the Department is responsible and must abide by all rules.
35 Discussion confirmed that cattle are present for pasture management, not dairy
36 operations.
37
38

- 39 2. Request for Approval to Sublease Between the Hāmākua Agricultural
40 Cooperative, Lessee/Sublessor; and Jianguo Wang, Sublessee; General
41 Lease No. S-7013, TMK: 3rd DIV/4-3-005:020 (Por), Lot No. 2, Hāmākua
42 Agricultural Park, Phase II, Pōhaku haku and Kemau 1st, Hāmākua
43 District, Island of Hawai'i

1
2 Brandi Ah Yo, Agricultural Resource Management Division, presented testimony as
3 submitted.

4
5 Motion to Approve: Ley/Gomes

6
7 Discussion:
8 None

9
10 Vote: Approved; Unanimously

- 11
12 3. Request for Approval for Grant of a Term, Non-Exclusive Utility Easement
13 to Spectrum Oceanic, LLC; General Lease No. S-3133; Mahealani
14 Farms, Inc., Lessee; TMK: (2) 1-3-004:006 and 020; Wākiu, Kawaipapa,
15 Hāna, Island of Maui, Hawai'i

16
17 Kevin Moore, Agricultural Resource Management Division, presented testimony as
18 submitted.

19
20 Motion to Approve: Gomes/Young

21
22 Discussion:
23 Member Young asked about easement maintenance.

24
25 Mr. Moore confirmed it would be the easement holder, which is Spectrum.

26
27 Vote: Approved; Unanimously

- 28
29
30 4. Request for Acceptance of Annual Lease Rent as Determined by
31 Independent Appraisal for Rent Reopenings for Various Lots Located
32 Statewide; TMK Nos.: (1) 4-1-010:006, 041, 043, (1) 4-1-024:023, 054,
33 062, 063, (1) 4-1-025:055, (1) 4-1-026:018, (1) 4-1-027: 006, 007, 008,
34 010, 012, 025, (1) 5-6-006:030, 034, 036, (1) 9-4-012:002, (2) 5-2-
35 001:010, 016, (3) 1-8-006:103, (3) 2-2-056:018, (3) 2-4-049:009, 010,
36 012, 020, 022, 032, (3) 3-1-004:002, (3) 4-4-011:033, (3) 4-6-002:007, (3)
37 9-5-015:003, (4) 1-9-007:005, 007, 028, 029, 030, 046, (4) 1-9-012:028,
38 (4) 4-4-004:005, (4) 4-6-005:011

39
40 Kevin Moore, Agricultural Resource Management Division, presented testimony as
41 submitted.

42
43 Motion to Approve: Ley/Gomes

Discussion:
None

Vote: Approved; Unanimously

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 5/27/2025 MEETING

Motion to Approve: Gomes/Ley

Discussion:
None

Vote: Approved; Unanimously

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. NON-ACTION ITEM: Update on Biosecurity-Related Measures Approved in the 2025 Legislative Session, including Act 236 – Relating to Biosecurity, Act 240 – Relating to Invasive Species, and Act 250 – Relating to the State Budget.

Jonathan Ho, Plant Quarantine Branch presented the new business item.

The Department and Board have been renamed to include "biosecurity." A new deputy chairperson for biosecurity will be appointed by the governor by January 1, 2027, to oversee biosecurity mandates.

Starting January 1, 2028, the Department can declare a biosecurity emergency with the governor's approval, allowing specific actions to address such emergencies.

By December 1, 2025, a test dashboard must be established to post treatment area information regularly. Non-compliance with this requirement will affect funding.

Additional funding has been allocated for various biosecurity initiatives, including \$4.25 million for the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) and \$500,000 for the Hawaii Ant Lab. Forty-four positions from a previous legislative session are now permanent, with efforts underway to fill these roles through a hiring event.

1 Act 240 requires labeling of imported firewood to ensure proper heat treatment against
2 wood boring pests.

3
4 Existing projects, such as outreach campaigns and pest control efforts, will continue
5 with released funds. The Department and Department of Human Resources (DHRD)
6 are working on a mass hiring event which will occur in this facility on August 20th.

7
8 The projects from Act 231 are now enshrined in this bill. It enables the Department to
9 continue existing projects such as outreach education campaign, Coconut Rhinoceros
10 Beetle (CRB) and Little Fire Ant control.

11
12 Chairperson Hurd advised that the Department will be announcing an official name
13 change with the Federal Government so that the name change can be coordinated
14 together.

15
16 Lori Buchanan, from Molokai, expressed concerns about the potential introduction of
17 high-priority pests, particularly CRB, to the island. She emphasized the importance of
18 protecting Molokai's natural resources, which are vital for the community's subsistence
19 economy. Buchanan highlighted the proactive measures being taken, such as deploying
20 traps and conducting outreach, but stressed the need for additional support from the
21 Department and the Board to restrict high-risk imports like plants, soil, mulch, and
22 compost from areas with known pest issues. She urged for quick action to prevent the
23 introduction of these pests, which could have devastating effects on Molokai's
24 environment and economy.

25
26 Stephanie Easley, representing the Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species,
27 expressed concern about the CRB situation, emphasizing its urgency across the
28 islands. She supported Lori Buchanan's call for action to protect Molokai and other
29 areas. Ms. Easley also mentioned Act 190, a new law prohibiting items under USDA
30 quarantine from entering Hawaii, which aims to prevent the introduction of citrus
31 greening—a disease with no cure that could severely impact Hawaii's citrus production.
32 She highlighted the importance of this legislation in safeguarding Hawaii's agricultural
33 industry.

34
35 Board Member Ley asked if there are any plans for holding similar job fairs on the
36 neighbor islands and well as projections for divvying up the new positions.

37
38 Mr. Ho discussed the allocation and distribution of new positions within the Department
39 following Act 231. These positions are spread across the state, with the majority on
40 Oahu due to the high volume of importations. The goal is to have more inspectors and
41 reintroduce a night shift that was discontinued in 2009. Additional staffing is planned for
42 Kauai, Maui, and Kona. Ho also mentioned efforts to establish a departmental presence
43 on Molokai, potentially through a general professional series position that could handle

1 multiple roles. He highlighted the Department's collaboration with DHRD to expedite
2 hiring processes and noted the success of recent job fairs in filling positions quickly. The
3 Department is also considering allowing higher-level positions to be based on
4 neighboring islands, leveraging technology to facilitate remote work.

5
6 Board Member Nathaniel Oswald expressed gratitude to Lori Buchanan for her
7 dedication and efforts in protecting Molokai from invasive species. He acknowledged
8 the unique challenges Molokai faces and emphasized the importance of community
9 involvement, noting that the island's success in managing these issues is due to the
10 deep care and connection its residents have with their land. Oswald offered to
11 collaborate with Buchanan and Jonathan Ho to explore solutions and strategies to
12 address Molokai's specific needs in managing invasive species threats.

13
14
15 Motion to adjourn: Gomes/Young

16
17 The meeting was adjourned at 10:31 am

18
19 Respectfully submitted,

20
21
22
23 Marci Clingan
24