



**Minutes of the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity
September 23, 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 September 23, 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

Members Virtually Present: Roll call/alone

Ryan Kanaka'ole, DLNR, Ex-Officio Member
Dr. Parwinder Grewal, Dean CTAHR, Ex-Officio Member
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; Left the meeting at 11:58 am

Excused:

Deputy Attorney General Present In-Person:

DAG Jennifer Waihee-Polk

Others Present In-Person:

Indrajif Gunasekura, Niu Now Molokai
Kunani Nihipali, Niu Now Molokai
Ipo Nihipali, Niu Now Molokai
Klaus Radtke
Brandi Ah Yo, HDAB/ARM
Janice Fujimoto, HDAB/ARM
Brian Kau, HDAB/ARM
Leilani Combs, Civil Beat

Wayne Tanaka, Sierra Club of Hawaii
Daniel Anthony, Hui Aloha Aina Momona
Pauline Sato
Jonathan Ho, HDAB/PQ
Stephen Dalton, HDAB/IT
Marci Clingan, HDAB/Office of Chairperson

Others Virtually Present:¹

HDOA IT
Jill Scheibe
User Name (Original Name)
Molly Murphy
Leah/lea H.
iPhone
Godfrey Akaka
Moanike'ala Nanod-Sitch
Nina Wu
Rive Fredericks
Dean Matsukawa
Vicky Takamine
Lincoln Villnow
Hunter Heavilin
Keoki's iPhone
KHON2 Court Observer
Brooke Holderbaum
Brooke
reyford
Jesse Mikasobe-Kealiinohomoku
Mark Ladao
Adam Lee
Christy Martin-CGAPS
Kainani Merrill
Troy
J. Imada
Kali Arce
Christal Bismonte
degray vanderbilt
lindsey.ancog
Rae Gee
Jason Imada
gregory kahn
Jill Scheibe

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

1 J Ferrer, HDOA
2 Clare Ronquillo (Office of Rep. Kahaloa)
3 Healani
4 Noelani
5 Stephanie
6 Kevin Moore - ARMD
7 Mark Ladao
8 BTM B.I.
9 Elizabeth Speith
10 Arisa Barcinas
11 KB
12 gavincampbell
13 Clara
14 18082641202
15 George iPad Air (5th generation)
16 KKC
17 Lu Ann Faborito
18 Nicole
19 Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i
20 Chuck Chimera
21 Richard Kim - HDAB
22 richard.a.nichols
23 Klayton Kubo
24 Richie
25 Richie
26 leikalipi
27 DeGray.Vanderbilt@gmail.com
28 Shane Meaney
29 randyn rios
30 Heather Kaluna
31 Chris Kishimoto
32 Kori Koike - HDOA
33 Christine Kaehuaea
34 MKKFB
35 Teya Penniman
36 Roy Hasegawa
37 Jojo
38 Lori Buchanan
39 Jonathan Ho, DAB Plant Quarantine Branch
40 Reggie K. Garcia, Committee Clerk for Senator Tim Richards
41 GN
42 Mahina Poepoe
43 Ryan Kagimoto

1 Victoria campbell
2 KipapaLL
3 Jordyn Rosete
4 iPhone
5 Frannie
6 Jasper Teague
7 Claire Orodio
8 Tiera
9 kasidylk
10 Dexter Kishida
11 Jeremy Burns
12 Gloria "imiloa" Borland
13 'Ohana Ka'ahanui - Molokai Bred
14 Diandra Goodwin-Leung
15 Maile Lavea-Malloe
16 walterritte
17 kapua keliikoa-kamai
18 Tara Rojas
19 DAB HR
20 Maria McCarthy
21 Alex J
22 Cassandra Huber
23 Jordan Kapeliela
24 Julia Kemp
25 wayne tanaka
26 yoshi
27 Catherine Pactol
28 Karina Camacho
29 Patricia Tummons
30
31

32 II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 8/26/25 MEETING
33

34 Motion to Approve: Gomes/Ley
35

36 Public Testimony:

37 Ms. Lori Buchannan from Molokai testified online and said she'd like the August board
38 meeting minutes to include the number of testimonies received in support of the Petition
39 for Interim Rule.
40

41 Motion to amend the August board meeting minutes to include the testimony count –
42 Ley/Gomes
43

1 Vote: Approved – 7; Recused - 1 (Young)

2
3 III. INTRODUCTIONS

4
5 IV. COMMUNICATIONS FROM DIVISIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

6
7 A. AGRICULTURAL LOAN DIVISION

8
9 1. Request for Approval of one (1) Class C Loan for 'Aina Ho'okupu O
10 Kilauea

11
12 Chairperson Hurd announced that she will follow the order of the items on the agenda
13 because there may be testifiers that arrive later due to the Plant Quarantine Item being
14 last on the agenda.

15
16 Jillian Scheibe, Ag Loan Division, presented testimony as submitted.

17
18 Motion to Approve: Gomes/Grewal

19
20 Public Testimony:

21 Yoshi, CEO for 'Aina Ho'okupu O Kilauea (AHK), thanked the board and staff for their
22 support.

23
24 Hunter Heavilin, Hawaii Farmers Union, spoke in support expressing excitement about state
25 funds supporting food hubs.

26
27 Board Discussion:

28 Member Gomes questioned the applicant about their livestock processing plans.

29 Yoshito Lo explained their current custom-exempt slaughter process and their goal to
30 achieve a USDA inspection stamp to address the lack of small animal processing on
31 Kauai. Member Gomes also asked for clarification on the projected 'two and a half fold'
32 increase in protein production, which staff confirmed was the total for all proteins (lamb,
33 chicken, beef, pork).

34
35 Member Young, who is on the HIR Investment Committee and whose loan is contingent
36 on board approval, recused himself from voting but spoke in support of the project. He
37 highlighted the project's organic growth, its high-traffic location with untapped tourist
38 potential, and the owner's innovative thinking in developing turnkey farm projects for the
39 community.

40
41 Vote: Approved – 7; Recused - 1 (Young)

2. Request for Approval of one (1) Loan Guaranty for 'Aina Ho'okupu O Kilauea.

Jillian Scheibe, Ag Loan Division, presented testimony as submitted.

Motion to Approve: Gomes/Takemoto

Public Testimony:

Yoshi, CEO for AHK, testified that their vertical integration model has been successful, forecasting \$1 million in gross revenue for the year, with strong community support and minimal waste

Board Discussion:

Staff recommended approval, citing the client's proven food aggregation ability, adequate collateral, community impact, and historical/projected cash flow

Member Young recused himself but commented positively on the loan guarantee process, stating it allows community lenders to take necessary risks to innovate the agricultural system.

Vote: Approved – 7; Recused – 1 (Young)

B. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

1. Request for Approval to Address Delinquent Irrigation Bills for the Moloka'i Irrigation System

Brian Kau, Agricultural Resource Management Division, presented testimony as submitted.

Motion to Approve: Gomes/Grewal

Public Testimony:

Tara Rojas commented about the impact on homesteading families who rely on the water for subsistence.

Chairperson Hurd clarified that the fees are for the delivery infrastructure, not the water itself.

Lori Buchanan supported the plan but hoped the department would assist users with the new applications

1 Lei Kalipi questioned the lack of public meetings and community input before the
2 proposal.

3
4 Godfrey Akaka represented the Native Hawaiian Gathering Rights Association. He
5 questioned the per-gallon pricing model if the charge is only for transmission,
6 suggesting a flat fee instead.

7
8 Kunani Nihipali said this discussion needs to be carried out on their island, face-to-face.
9 He said they need to have this discussion so they can clarify and make sure the use of
10 the Molokai Irrigation System (MIS) comes back to the Native Hawaiian people.

11
12 Several speakers urged the board to defer the motion. They argued about the necessity
13 of face-to-face community meetings on their island to discuss the complex issues
14 surrounding the MIS, its history, and water rates. They highlighted a lack of trust with
15 the Department of Agriculture and expressed a desire for the system to be returned to
16 the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL), for which it was originally intended.
17 Testifiers felt the current billing structure was unfair, charging by volume instead of a
18 fixed rate for transmission, especially for homesteaders and farmers.

19
20 Board Discussion:

21 Mr. Kau clarified that the motion is not a rate increase but a beneficial measure to
22 address and nullify approximately \$1.5 million in longstanding delinquencies, some over
23 20 years old. The plan is to credit the delinquent accounts of current users, giving them
24 a 'fresh slate' at no cost, provided they update their contact information. He assured that
25 there would be zero ramifications for those in arrears who cooperate. He also
26 mentioned that the department has been working closely with DHHL and that a meeting
27 was held on this matter on Molokai on August 12.

28
29 Board Member Gomes expressed the need for on-the-ground dialogue and
30 transparency to help farmers.

31
32 Member Young discussed the MIS issue, acknowledging the complexity and sensitivity
33 of water-related matters. He emphasized the importance of clearing long-standing
34 delinquencies to prevent negative impacts on individuals' credit scores and to move
35 forward with a clean slate. Member Young expressed a desire to address the issue
36 promptly to avoid further delays and to ensure that the community is not left waiting for
37 solutions. He recognized the need for better communication and engagement with the
38 Molokai community, suggesting that the Board of Agriculture could improve its efforts to
39 listen and address concerns. Member Young supported moving forward with the current
40 relief motion while also considering ways to address broader issues and improve the
41 relationship with the community.

Board Member Oswald discussed the MIS water issue, emphasizing the importance of addressing long-standing delinquencies, some of which date back decades. He highlighted the need for a fair and equitable solution, expressing concern about the potential backlash from those who have been paying their bills when others' debts are forgiven. Oswald stressed the importance of ensuring that homesteaders, who have been waiting for water meters for many years, are prioritized. He also mentioned the critical nature of water access for subsistence farming on Molokai, where people rely on the land for food. Oswald advocated for a clear, step-by-step plan to address these issues and ensure transparency and fairness in the process.

Vote: Approved Unanimously

2. Request Approval for Conversion of Revocable Permit Nos. S-7259 and S-7940 to a New General Lease for Frank and Abigail Santos; TMK Nos. (4) 1-9-007:005, 007, 028, 029, 030 and 046, Hanapēpē, Island of Kaua'i, Hawai'i

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

Motion to Approve: Gomes/Young

Public Testimony:
None

Board Discussion:
None

Vote: Approved; Unanimously

C. PLANT INDUSTRY DIVISION

Plant Quarantine Branch

1. Request for Review and Adoption of an Interim Rule Pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes §150A-9.5, to Restrict the Transportation of Plants, Soil, Gravel, and Other Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Host Material Including Decomposing Plant Material Such as Compost, Wood or Tree Chips, and Mulch, Plant Propagation Material and Other Items Comprised of Decomposing Organic Plant Material Such as Landscaping Material or Erosion Control Socks, to the Island of Molokai From Any Other Area in the State to Prevent the Spread of CRB

Jonathan Ho, Plant Quarantine Branch (PQB), presented testimony as submitted.

Motion to Approve: Gomes/Young

Public Testimony:

Kunani Nihipali testified on the interim rule regarding the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB), emphasizing the urgency and importance of protecting Molokai from this pest. He expressed gratitude for the support received from the community and various committees for their petition. Kunani highlighted the inadequacy of current measures, noting that CRB continues to spread despite existing regulations. He questioned the necessity of importing gravel to Molokai, given the island's own resources, and expressed concerns about the potential for CRB to be present in imported materials. Kunani urged the board to support their original petition as submitted, emphasizing the need for decisive action to prevent the pest from reaching Molokai and protect the island's environment and resources.

The public testimony for the CRB interim rule was largely in support of implementing stricter measures to prevent the pest from reaching Molokai. Testifiers emphasized the urgency of the situation, highlighting the potential devastation CRB could cause to the island's environment and agriculture. There was a call for more community involvement and transparency in the decision-making process, with suggestions for town hall meetings to ensure the community's voice is heard. Overall, the testimony reflected a strong desire to take proactive steps to safeguard Molokai from the CRB threat.

Board Discussion:

Member Young favored a more restrictive rule including gravel due to difficulty assuring origin and cleanliness of aggregate piles.

Member Ley requested clarification on Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) comments in its written testimony. Mr. Ho summarized CGAPS' suggested edits (which generally aligned with Appendix E of PQB's submittal to the Board, but removed gravel and included other wording changes).

Counsel clarified with Mr. Ho that: (1) Appendix E was the Plant and Animal Advisory Committee's recommended draft to the Board; (2) Appendix E was substantially similar to the draft submitted by the Nihipalis, with the addition of a severability clause; and (3) PQB's submittal to the Board recommended further revisions for Appendix E, but these were only in the written portion submitted by PQB and were not included in Appendix E.

Member Grewal thanked staff and the Molokai community, emphasizing vigilance even after the rule is implemented.

1 Member Oswald noted the New Zealand community's motivated response and recorded
2 that a Maui County representative tried to call in but was unable.

3
4 Board members discussed which version to adopt; counsel clarified that technically
5 PQB's submittal to the Board included recommended changes to Appendix E.

6
7 Chairperson Hurd clarified that the motion that the board is considering is as written in
8 the board submittal and as shown on the agenda unless the board wants to make any
9 changes.

10
11 Amended Motion to adopt Appendix E without the proposed changes by Plant
12 Quarantine Branch – Young/Ley

13
14 Vote: Approved; Unanimously

15
16
17 V. OLD BUSINESS
18 None

19
20
21 VI. NEW BUSINESS

22
23 1. NON-ACTION ITEM: Invasive Species Action Plan Updates

24
25 Jonathan Ho, Plant Quarantine Branch, presented new business item.

26
27 Jonathan Ho provided an update on the invasive species action plan, highlighting a
28 recent trip to New Zealand by a delegation from Hawaii. The delegation included state
29 senators, representatives, and members from various departments and organizations
30 involved in biosecurity. The trip focused on learning about New Zealand's biosecurity
31 strategies, including their use of transitional facilities, pest management, and incursion
32 responses. The delegation visited several sites, including the Port of Auckland and New
33 Zealand Post, to observe their operations and biosecurity measures. They also
34 engaged with the Waikato Regional Council to learn about pest management strategies
35 for species like wallabies and Asian freshwater clams. The visit emphasized the
36 importance of shared responsibility and targeted outreach in managing biosecurity
37 threats. The update underscored the need for Hawaii to adopt similar comprehensive
38 and coordinated approaches to biosecurity.

39
40 Public Testimony:

41 Vicky Takamine asked if there were any Federal Government or USDA staff that went
42 on this New Zealand trip because that should require Federal Government involvement.

1 Mr. Ho said there was no federal representation.

2
3 Christine, the CEO of Stargazer Industries Hawaii, testified about her efforts to start a
4 new industry using eucalyptus trees on Hawaii Island. She explained that her company
5 began shipping eucalyptus wood chips in April, but initial attempts failed due to
6 insufficient fumigation levels. After switching to a different fumigator, they achieved the
7 necessary levels to meet state agricultural approval for transporting the wood chips.
8 Christine highlighted the need for clear definitions in regulations regarding different
9 types of wood chips, as her coarse wood chips, which are larger and not shredded,
10 differ from finer materials that could host pests like the CRB. She requested that
11 regulations consider these distinctions, especially since her product is legally
12 transportable to California.

13
14 Kunani Nihipali asked how the Maori people were involved in the New Zealand trip. He
15 also said he was happy that the Department took this trip because the protocols are
16 very important for them and for Hawaii.

17
18 Board Discussion:
19 None

20
21
22 Motion to adjourn: Ley/Oswald

23
24 The meeting was adjourned at 1:08 pm

25
26 Respectfully submitted,

27
28
29
30 Marci Clingan
31