

JOSH GREEN
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

1151 PUNCHBOWL ST, #325
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

VOTING MEMBERS

DAWN CHANG
DEPARTMENT OF LAND & NATURAL
RESOURCES

SHARON HURD
HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

KATHLEEN HO, D.Env
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PARWINDER GREWAL
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

MARY ALICE EVANS
BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &
TOURISM

EDWIN SNIFFEN
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Hawai'i Invasive Species Council

November 26, 2025; 1:00 PM

Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, Board Room (Rm 132) 1151
Punchbowl St, Honolulu, HI, 96813

Per Hawaii Sunshine Law guidelines, this meeting was hybrid with attendees participating virtually through a Zoom link provided by HISC Support Staff or through the HISC YouTube channel or in-person at the DLNR Board Room in the Kalanimoku Building in Honolulu, HI. Council members, legislative representatives, and HISC Resources Working Group members were provided with a Zoom link. Members of the public were able to view the meeting through the HISC YouTube Channel. A recording of the meeting can be found here: <https://youtube.com/@hawaiiinvsivespeciescouncil/featured>

1. Call to order

- Opening comments for the hybrid committee meeting were made by Co-Chair Hurd starting at 1:03 pm.

2. Introductions

List of Attendees:

- Council Voting Members:
 - Dawn Chang, Co-Chair (Department of Land and Natural Resources [DLNR]);
 - Sharon Hurd, Co-Chair, Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB)];
 - Rachel Beasley, (Department of Economic Development and Tourism) for Mary Alice Evans;
 - Dexter Kishida, (Department of Transportation);
 - Phyllis Shimabukuro-Geiser (for Dean Grewal for UH); and
 - Matt Kurano for Kathleen Ho (Department of Health)
- Legislative Non-Voting Members:
 - Clare Ronquillo (Rep Kahaloe's office)
- Support Staff:
 - Patrick Chee (DLNR/HISC), Elizabeth Speith (HISC); Chuck Chimera (HISC), Mason Russo (HISC), Jack Reef (HISC), Danica Swenson (Attorney General)
 - Additional Staff: Rob Hauff (Forestry & Wildlife), Richard Kim (DAB), Elizabeth Monaghan (DAR)
 - Other attendees: Zhiqiang Cheng, Franny Brewer (BIISC), Stefanie Easley (CGAPS) and Jeanni Rossa.

3. Approval of minutes from May 28, 2025, and September 29, 2025

- *The May 28th Minutes were approved*
- *HISC approved amended minutes for September 29, 2025, as presented by HISC staff. Amendments included formatting changes and minor word choice for readability.*

4. Updates from Council members and Department representatives on 2026 legislative requests & policies related to biosecurity and invasive species. The Item is only a status update.

Chair Hurd asked the Departments for updates which are as follows:

- Rob Hauff from Forestry & Wildlife stated that their division submitted approximately 10 green fee invasive species related bills to the Governor.
 - Some of these bills are HISC priority projects impacting mosquitos detrimental to native birds, biocontrol. Other non-Green Fee proposals including the Rapid Ohia Death 5-year strategic plan, and other new initiatives regarding predator control. Chair Hurd stated those issues are worthy of support.
- Elizabeth Monaghan (DAR) stated that they submitted biosecurity proposals for aquatic invasive species including removal of algae and soft coral. Funding for fishing tournament to remove invasive fish.
- Sharon Hurd (DAB) advised that they will be supporting the predator bill and biocontrol. DAB is working with legislators on other matters.
- UH – submitted one proposal regarding a biosecurity biocontrol facility, however it was included in the UH Board of Regents package.
- No updates from DBEDT, DOH, and DOT.

5. Update on the Implementation of the Interagency MOU for High Priority Pests. Presentation from Patrick Chee, Hawaii Invasive Species Council. The Item is only a status update.

- Patrick Chee provided a PPT presentation and started by providing background on the MOU which includes the three signatory agencies of UH, DLNR, and DAB to address the high priority pests of Little Fire Ant, Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle, and Coqui frog.
- The presentation also addressed the following:
 - i. Goals of the MOU to prevent, eradicate incipient infestations and control existing pest levels.
 - ii. Features of MOU include matrices, response plans, data sharing, research, and communication
 - iii. Response plans for LFA are finished and CRB and Coqui are in development
 - iv. Data Sharing –unlikely to reach deadline to develop protocols
 - v. HISC hired a data manager
 - vi. DAB’s Dashboard is now live by DAB, ahead of schedule. Currently on has DAB data
 - vii. Research needs will be provided in the future
 - viii. MOU Subgroups have been created to help lead implementation
- Chair Hurd thanked Patrick and stated that the Hawaii County Mayor has extended the voluntary 90-day green waste stay on movement
- Patrick Chee stated HISC is waiting for the State to provide funding

- Chair Hurd stated DAB wants to focus on Queensland Longhorn Beetle and propagate its biocontrol nematode

6. Submittal Requesting the Council to provide guidance to the legislature on the transfer of the Hawaii Invasive Species Council to the Hawaii Department of Agriculture & Biosecurity by January 1, 2030 under ACT 236, Section 7.

- This item was presented by Rob Hauff (Forestry & Wildlife) and Patrick Chee (HISC)
- Chair Hurd stated that none of this discussion or guidance should differ than law and will not challenge mandate from legislators this year. Future years can address changes to law
- Chair Chang said the report is authored by HISC not DLNR, HISC is administratively attached to DLNR, and this item is in response to Rep. Kahaloa's request for HISC's guidance.
- Chair Chang stated that she is not intending to change legislators transferring biosecurity to DAB, but that complications exist because HISC is staying with DLNR until 2030. Chair Chang raised the issue if HISC will be transferred intact or with changes.
- Rob Hauff advised that all of the recommendations in the Submittal have been discussed at previous HISC meetings.
- Chair Chang also stated that Chelsea Arnott the previous HISC program manager has brought up many of the points – the HISC team went back in response to Rep. Kahaloa's request for guidance to the legislature, and that offering recommendations is not fundamentally changing substance or intent of ACT 236
- Patrick Chee also stated that Rep. Kahaloa asked for potential future changes
- Patrick Chee advised that HISC is a cabinet level interagency council, including when its transferred. Administrative support to DAB like it is today with DLNR
- Patrick Chee stated that DLNR-Forestry & Wildlife have supplemented HISC positions and that DAB should anticipate staffing.
- Chair Hurd and Chair Chang both confirmed no positions will transfer
- Patrick Chee advised his position is a DLNR position and is loaned to HISC
- Chair Chang said they want to retain Patrick's positions at DLNR, but want to make sure smooth transition is possible. Perhaps DLNR can create a standalone agency with an Executive Director position. Many of the RCUH would become permanent positions. When transition occurs in 2030 the entire team would move over to DAB.
- Chair Hurd and Chair Chang both stated their departments have not asked for positions
- Chair Hurd is in support of DLNR retaining its position(s).
- The Council further discussed how HISC positions would be established by the State. DAB could create its own positions, and DAB is not taking DLNR's HISC positions.
- Rob Hauff stated that steps need to be determined to transfer existing HISC programs such as 643 pest / Weed Risk Assessment / and Research when HISC is transferred.
- Rob Hauff presented Item #5 that funding should be recurring annually
- Chair Hurd stated that Act 236 funding will move to DAB in 2027 and that DAB's legislative mandate is to ask for funding in 2027 and there after
- Chair Chang stated that Rep. Kahaloa has stated at HISC meetings that it was not her intent to transfer funding to DAB in 2027, but it may have been the full legislators' intent. DLNR has provided two options for funding- 1) Amend fundings or 2) DAB Journal vouchers to DLNR in 2027 since DLNR oversees HISC

- Chair Hurd informed that by 1/1/27 DAB's new biosecurity deputy will be in place, may be involved in funding
- Rep. Kahaloa's staff Clare Ronquillos stands by her comments from the last meeting.
- In response to Member Kishida, Chair Chang said it will be difficult to absorb operating costs if there is a delay in funding.
- Rob concluded the discussion stating the Submittals was presented for consideration

Public Comment

- Stephanie Easley with CGAPS provided testimony as follows:
- She passed out the organization's chart previously approved by HISC for potential development
- Thanked HISC for 20 years of excellence and leadership and CGAPS will continue to support HISC
- CGAPS supports all recommendations in the Submittal
- CGAPS has three new recommendations:
 - i. Establish an Executive Director position
 - ii. HISC staff should report on its statutory duties and what is feasible and important moving forward; and
 - iii. Affirm that HISC should remain a cabinet level position
- Chair Chang advised that positions would be needed to be established by the Legislature
- Chair Hurd said they will administer HISC in accordance with the law, and that HISC being considered "autonomous" is **not** in the language of the law. Stephanie Easley advised that its CGAPS' to ensure everything goes to DAB.
- Stephanie Easley advised that many of the duties of HISC in the Statute are not performed because there isn't staff capacity to execute and may not be most important tasks, such as creating a list of all invasive species in the State
- After discussion of CGAPS testimony and HISC's previous action to approve inquiry into restructuring HISC, Chair Hurd said she is ok with making recommendations as long as they do not go against Act 236 and the law.
- Patrick Chee affirmed that this Submittal is in response to Rep Kahaloa's request
- Chair Chang advised that nothing in HISC's action precludes DAB from saying no or taking its own actions

Approval

- Chair Hurd called for the motion, Chair Chang 2nd.
- The Submittal was approved unanimously but CGAPS recommendations were not included.

2. *Adjournment*

- Chair Hurd adjourned the meeting at 2:14pm

