



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

LATE

Testimony Presented before the
Senate Committees on Higher Education
and
Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs
February 6, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.

by
Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor
and
Andrew G. Hashimoto, Dean and Director
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 1179 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chairs Tokuda and Hee, Vice Chair Sakamoto, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Andrew Hashimoto, and I serve as Dean and Director of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR).

The purpose of SB 1179 is to direct the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM), CTAHR, in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture (DOA) and the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF), to study the feasibility of establishing a farm to school program in Hawai'i's public schools and to submit a report to the 2010 Legislature.

We note that the Department of Education (DOE), whose school lunch program, procurement practices and educational curriculum may be impacted by participation in a statewide farm to school program, is not named as a party to the study. It is important that the DOE is a part of the study since it is clear that whatever is conceived must meet the federal lunch program criteria.

UHM and CTAHR support the intent of this bill, as it will promote local agriculture, the farming community, and the use of safe, fresh, high-quality, locally-grown produce. The bill is also in keeping with the State's initiative to increase Hawai'i's food self-sufficiency from the current reality of importing 85% of all food we consume, and relates to CTAHR's vision to actively help Hawai'i diversify its economy, ensure a sustainable environment, and strengthen its communities.

However, this support is expressed on the condition that it does not adversely affect our UH priorities as set in our budget request, most notably in health and safety and repairs and maintenance issues. Addressing these urgent needs is critical to our ability to perform our core mission for the State of Hawai'i.

We appreciate all interest in the University, and want to emphasize that we will be able to perform better in all arenas and best serve the state with support of the current campus priorities approved by the Board of Regents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Date: 02/06/2009

Committee: Senate Higher
Education/Senate Water; Land; Agriculture
and Hawaiian Affairs

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 1179 RELATING TO EDUCATION

Purpose of Bill: Directs the University of Hawaii, in cooperation with other public and private entities, to study the feasibility of introducing the farm to school program in Hawaii's public schools.

Department's Position: The Department of Education will defer to and support the position taken by the University of Hawaii, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DUANE K. OKAMOTO
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512

**TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HIGHER EDUCATION
AND
WATER, LAND, AGRICULTURE, AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2009
4:00 P.M.
ROOM 229**

**SENATE BILL NO. 1179
RELATING TO EDUCATION**

Chairpersons Tokuda and Hee and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 1179. The purpose of this bill is to require the University of Hawaii, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH-CTAHR), in cooperation with the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) and the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF), to conduct a feasibility study on the potential for establishing a farm to school program in Hawai'i's public schools.

The Department acknowledges that House Bill No. 1434 has merit; however, given the current fiscal challenges it would not be prudent to allocate resources for this at this time. The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) offers comments.

The HDOA strongly supports programs that connect schools with local farms; educate students about food cultivation; encourage students to pursue careers in agriculture; and instill healthy eating habits in Hawai'i's youth. The HDOA is working toward increasing food self-sufficiency in Hawai'i, raising production and demand of locally grown foods and decreasing our dependence on imported foods. The Department is collaborating with public institutions (prisons and schools) and industry stakeholders, to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables from local producers.

The HDOA appreciates this committee's efforts to support programs that give students the choice to eat healthier, more nutritious local produce and expand the market for local farmers.



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TESTIMONY

Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs

SB 1179 Relating to Education

Chair Tokuda, Chair Hee and Members of the Committees:

Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation on behalf of its member farmers and ranchers is in **strong support of the intent** of SB1179 proposing a study for a Farm to School Program.

As referenced in the preamble, the Farm to School program is a well established National Program. In Hawaii Kokua Hawaii Foundation has piloted efforts in this area. It provides opportunities for our farmers and ranchers and will significantly add towards our self sufficiency.

We have also seen studies where students select salad and fruit bars as well as other healthy eating options when provided a choice. This is a good investment to minimizing healthcare costs in the future. Creating a linkage between farms and schools could bring about a greater appreciation of the source of food and foster a career choice in agriculture. The opportunities are boundless.

However, even as we support the concept, we do not support another Study. Since Kokua Foundation has begun piloting this program, lessons can be learned from their experience and how it could be expanded throughout the State. What is lacking at this time is a State Policy as a expression of commitment to this program, sending a message to all schools that opportunities to exploit farm to school programs should be exploited. Many states have policies, and examples are provided at the Farm to School website: <http://www.farmtoschool.org/policies.php>

We urge that a policy regarding a Farm to School Program in Hawaii be adopted at this time in place of a Study. Other measures before the legislature including modifications in the procurement code and the Value-Added Facility CIP as proposed in SB494 are practical measures that can be implemented to make the Farm to School Program a reality.

One of the possible uses of the Value-Added Facility is to prepare locally grown produce into forms that can be easily used in school cafeterias. A central facility for multiple schools should be able to reduce its' costs by having a critical mass to support its operations. This may relieve some of the issues such as preparation time that may currently inhibit use of locally grown products.

We respectfully request your support in amending this measure to be a policy statement supporting the Farm to School Program as well as support of the other measures such as SB494 to implement the program. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Maui County Farm Bureau

An Affiliate of the American Farm Bureau Federation and Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation

Serving Maui's Farmers and Ranchers

P.O. Box 148 Kula, Hawaii 96790

TESTIMONY

Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs

SB 1179 Relating to Education

Chair Tokuda, Chair Hee and Members of the Committees:

Maui County Farm Bureau is Maui's general agriculture advocacy non-profit organization. Affiliated with the Hawaii Farm Bureau and American Farm Bureau Federation, we represent Maui's farm and ranch families and organizations. MCFB strongly supports the intent of SB1179, fostering a farm to school program.

MCFB has for several years, with the support of the County of Maui carried out an Ag in the Classroom Program. This program, sanctioned by the Department of Education, exposes 2nd graders to agriculture. It has been well received with the number of schools participating every year on the increase.

This program complements our Ag in the Classroom program by further educating our youngsters about the source of their food and to bring an appreciation of what it takes to grow the food. At the same time, healthy eating habits can be nurtured while supporting farms and ranches to increase our level of self sufficiency.

We understand there are models of successful Farm to School Programs. On Maui, one of our farms has regularly provided to a school. We believe favorable procurement policies would go a long ways to making this program a reality.

We strongly support the intent of this measure, but respectfully suggest amending it to include an implementable action measure such as improvement of the existing procurement code. Thank you for this opportunity to provide input on this matter. If there are any questions, please contact Warren Watanabe at 2819718.



LATE

P.O. Box 866 Honolulu, HI 96712 (808) 638-5145 kokuahawaii.org

February 6, 2009

HRE and WTL Committees

Submitted to <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/emailtestimony/>

RE: Support for SB1179, Friday, 2/6/09, 4 p.m., Room 229

Aloha Chairs Tokuda & Hee and Committee Members,

Thank you for considering this important measure.

As you know, farm to school programs can have many interrelated positive impacts: keeping dollars and jobs in Hawai'i; providing fresh, nutritious produce to students; instilling healthy eating habits in Hawai'i's keiki; supporting Hawai'i's farmers; keeping agricultural lands intact; and reducing our dependence on imported food.

The Kokua Hawai'i Foundation is a non-profit organization supporting environmental education in Hawai'i's schools and communities. In 2006, we launched 'AINA In Schools, a farm to school program aimed at connecting children to the food, land, and water that sustains them. While much of our work has focused on nutrition lessons and school gardens, some of the schools we work with have made headway in occasionally featuring locally grown food on their menus.

Still, there are many data gaps that must be filled in order for Hawai'i schools to make significant, large-scale progress in this arena. The feasibility study that SB1179 provides would provide much of the information that individual schools, the statewide educational system, farmers, and distributors need in order to determine how to best work toward increasing the amount of fresh, locally grown produce provided in school lunches.

UH CTAHR is an appropriate entity to conduct the feasibility study, as its staff and researchers have extensive experience with the types of questions such a study should address. Kokua Hawai'i Foundation is active in the local and national farm to school movement and commits to supporting the study through information sharing and consultation, if needed.

Again, thank you for your time. We humbly ask you to support Senate Bill 1179 and farm to school in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Kim Johnson
Executive Director
Kokua Hawai'i Foundation

Chair Tokuda, chair Hee, vice-chair Sakamoto, members of the Higher Education Committee and members of the Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs Committee, thank you all for giving me this opportunity to testify in support of SB1179. The farm-to-school program has gained national recognition for having the ability to combat some of America's most enduring problems – ones dealing with unhealthy food choices, rising healthcare costs, and neglect of environmental responsibilities. Entire districts of schools across the nation can testify to the myriad of potential benefits that the farm-to-school program holds for schools, farms, and the state.

Hawaii's youth needs a farm-to-school program. According to HMSA, 22% of Hawaii's youth is either overweight or obese, which is double the national average. Overweight youths have a 70% chance of becoming overweight as adults. Already, half of our state's population is overweight or obese. Obesity related problems have cost the healthcare system \$290 million per year. Providing better-quality, more nutritious produce, fresh from our local farms to the students can help boost overall health. In fact, studies done on successful farm-to-school programs in places like California and Oregon have found that student and teacher participation increases significantly when local produce is served. Although allowing students to eat more fruits and vegetables won't solve obesity by itself, it would definitely be a crucial factor to the solution.

Hawaii's farmers need a farm-to-school program. By creating greater demand for local food, the program increases farmers' revenues and income. A wide-scale implementation would expand local agriculture significantly, which would improve Hawaii's self-sufficiency and economy. More money would be invested in the people of Hawaii, dependence on imported food would decrease, and rising global food costs would not have as devastating effects to the economy. Considering the fact that Hawaii has only enough food to sustain its people for seven days, it is imperative that we look to improving our food self-sufficiency.

All these benefits of a farm-to-school program, attractive as they may be, means nothing if it is not implemented equitably and sustainably. SB 1179 seeks to find whether Hawaii's schools can utilize this program in a manageable, cost-effective way. Currently, there's too much unknown information, such as price differentials between institutionalized selling of imported and local food. Hawaii needs to look for ways to reduce its dependency on imports, which plays a major role in contributing to Hawaii's carbon footprint. The projected increase in food prices and volatile gas prices indicate the urgency of finding solutions to expand the local farming industry – the farm-to-school program may be one of those solutions. Thus, the feasibility test must be done so that Hawaii can take the next step to establishing a more economically and environmentally sustainable future for its people. Thank you.

Conference room: 229
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Yongki Chung
Organization: Individual
Address: 1288 Kapiolani Blvd. #808 Honolulu, HI
Phone: 8085932139
E-mail: ychung10@punahou.edu
Submitted on: 2/5/2009

From: Jason Wagner [jwagner@assets-school.net]
Sent: Thursday, February 05, 2009 2:18 PM
To: HRE Testimony
Cc: Susan_Sato/OIS/HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us
Subject: Support of SB 1179

Aloha,

My name is Jason Wagner and I am a teacher at Assets School and a resident of Pearl City. I would like to encourage the passing of SB 1179.

Hawaii needs to become less reliant on imported goods, especially food. I read in an article by the Hawaii Department of Agriculture that we import between 85-90% of our food. This is incredible since we live on a island whose climate is perfect for farming. What happens when we are hit by a natural disaster, heaven forbid, and we are stuck, stranded on our island thinking, "We should have been more supportive of agriculture"?

We need to teach the children the importance of buying locally. Supporting local businesses keeps Hawaiian money in Hawaii, which is especially important in our current economic situation. This research may cost, but I feel that it would save in the long run. We need to determine if a farm to school program is feasible.

Children also need to know the nutritional benefits of eating locally grown produce. Produce grown here does not need to preservatives other products from the mainland need to stay fresh. How wonderful would it be to have something picked yesterday be on your table today.

Please consider passing this bill so we can get going on the farm to school program. You can contact me through email at jwagner@assets-school.net or call me at 754-0140 should you have any questions.

Aloha,
Jason

LATE

To whom it may concern,

Farm to school programs can have many interrelated positive impacts: keeping dollars and jobs in Hawai'i; providing fresh, nutritious produce to students; instilling healthy eating habits in Hawai'i's keiki; supporting Hawai'i's farmers; keeping agricultural lands intact; and reducing our dependence on imported food.

SB1179 is an excellent opportunity to advance farm to school in Hawai'i. The feasibility study could provide much of the information and links to resources that individual schools, the statewide educational system, farmers, and distributors need in order to determine how to best work toward increasing the amount of fresh, locally grown produce provided in school lunches.

Please support this bill and farm to school in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Carol Feinga

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, February 06, 2009 9:08 AM
To: HRE Testimony
Cc: hunakai5@aol.com
Subject: Testimony for SB1179 on 2/6/2009 4:00:00 PM

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Testimony for HRE-WTL 2/6/2009 4:00:00 PM SB1179

Conference room: 229
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Kelly Perry
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone: 637-3038
E-mail: hunakai5@aol.com
Submitted on: 2/6/2009

Comments:

This feasibility study is a very important first step in supporting farm to school efforts in Hawaii.

Please support Hawaii's farmers, and providing locally grown, fresh food for our students at school!

Aloha,
Kelly Perry

Farm-to-School (FTS) programs are a promising way to help curb the obesity epidemic in Hawaii and to instill in children a stronger sense of environmental concern. There are multiple factors contributing to our current obesity problem, and farm-to-school addresses many of these. Two of the key problems in the obesity epidemic will be discussed below, and FTS's beneficial potential will be explained.

1) Problem: Healthy foods like fruits & vegetables are too expensive

The correlation between income and healthy eating is well documented. Healthy foods, like fresh fruits and vegetables, are more expensive than calorie-dense, processed foods. As such, families on a budget tend to buy less expensive, unhealthy foods.

FTS as a Solution: By creating a new, stable market for fresh fruits and vegetables, FTS encourages the production of these foods by local farmers and other suppliers. An increase in production means an increase in the supply of these foods more broadly. As the supply of healthy foods increases, they become less expensive, and hence, more affordable to a larger part of the population. The U.S. currently imports 21% of the fruits and vegetables on the U.S. market, and imports in Hawaii are much higher. An increase in the local supply of fruits and vegetables, and a decrease in the reliance on imports for these foods will make healthy eating a more affordable and rational choice for consumers.

2) Problem: Knowledge, Self-Efficacy, Social Norms, Preferences

An individual's behavior is influenced by her knowledge about the effects of the behavior, her sense of self-efficacy for conducting the behavior, her belief that others think she should conduct the behavior, and her attitudes regarding the behavior. Many children lack sufficient knowledge about the importance of eating healthy foods like fresh fruits and vegetables, and they do not have the skills necessary to make healthy snacks for themselves. They may also not receive important encouragement at home to conduct healthy eating behaviors, and often, they have not developed a preference (positive attitude) for eating fruits and vegetables.

FTS as a Solution: Farm-to-School programs address all of these issues. By providing fresh fruits and vegetables at lunch, FTS reinforces the message that children should eat healthily, and establishes a positive social norm for these behaviors at school. To develop a preference for a food, a child must have the opportunity to sample that food, and FTS creates this opportunity. Beyond bringing fruits and vegetables into the cafeteria for children, some FTS programs include nutrition education classes in which children learn about the positive consequences of healthy eating, and how to prepare healthy snacks for themselves.

Conference room: 229
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Joahna Rocchio
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Submitted on: 2/6/2009