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Acting Chairperson
Board of Agriculture

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & BUSINESS**

**FEBRUARY 13, 2019
10:10 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 309**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 463 HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY**

Chairperson McKelvey and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 463 HD1 which proposes to require the department to partner with the agricultural community to establish a food safety certification training program to assist small and medium sized farms to be certified by the USDA Good Agricultural Practices certification program. The Department supports the intent of this measure.

The Department currently works in partnership with the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH-CTAHR), who performs coaching and training with farmers to comply with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Produce Safety Rule and the USDA Good Agricultural Practices requirements. Under a cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, the Department conducts U.S. Department of Agriculture's Good Agricultural Practices audits at the request of farm businesses and restricts auditors from performing outreach and coaching activity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 | Honolulu, HI 96813
P: 808-533-1292 | e: info@hawaiiifood.com

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Barry Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Derek Kurisu, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*

TO:
Committee on Economic Development and Business
Representative Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 13, 2019
TIME: 10:10am
PLACE: Conference Room 309

RE: HB463 HD1 Relating to Food Safety

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

Local agriculture is important to HFIA. Small farms in Hawaii face many challenges, including the financial and administrative burden of meeting state and federal regulations. Providing Hawaii farms with the support they need to comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Good Agricultural Practices Certification will help to get more local Hawaii produce into the hands of Hawaii consumers. Many of our members require USDA GAP Certification because it confirms that a farm is committed to the highest standard of produce safety and freshness. GAP Certification is also an important first step towards full compliance with the Food Service Modernization Act (FSMA). This bill will help make Hawaii farms and Hawaii agriculture more viable, and help to decrease our reliance on imported food. We encourage you to vote yes on this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



67-332 Kaiea Pl.
Waialua, HI 96791-9501
808-383-4481
www.NSEVP.org

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Economic Development & Business

Rep. Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair, Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
Wednesday February 13, 2019, 10:10a, Conference Room 309

HB463-Relating to Food Safety

Chair McKelvey, Vice-chair Kitagawa, and members of the committee:

My name is Kevin Kelly and I am the President of North Shore EVP, a regional economic development organization located on the North Shore of Oahu. Our organization strongly supports the establishment a food safety certification training program that will provide direct assistance to small and medium sized farms in obtaining their USDA GAP certification.

In response to our community's desire to build a food hub to assist small farms on the North Shore of Oahu, we initiated a USDA GroupGAP program that allows farmers to work together and share the expense of obtaining good agricultural practices training and subsequent certification. In 2018 we became the 15th GroupGAP group in the United States and the only such program in Hawaii.

GAP certification is, in practice, a requirement for small farms that want to comply with the Food Safety & Modernization Act (FSMA) and scale their operations to meet the increasing demand for locally grown fresh produce. When FSMA comes into effect for all farms in January 2020, GAP certification will serve as tangible evidence to produce buyers that a producer is in compliance (or very close to being in compliance) with federal law.

Our work is paying off. It is estimated that there are approximately 50 certified farms in Hawaii. Of the ten farms in our first cohort, 2 have received their certification, one is responding to minor auditor findings and will be re-audited, and one other farm will be audited next month. If these four farms are successful we will have increased the number of certified farms by almost 10%! A second cohort of 9 farms is currently in training.

With your support of this measure, North Shore EVP would look forward to working with the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) to apply what we have learned training farmers on Oahu to help farms statewide with the challenges of compliance with FSMA.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Kelly, President



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Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Economic Development & Business

Rep. Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair, Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
Wednesday February 13, 2019, 10:10a, Conference Room 309

HB463-Relating to Food Safety

Chair McKelvey, Vice-chair Kitagawa, and members of the committee:

Oahu RC&D is pleased to submit testimony in support of HB463, which will provide funds to establish a food safety certification training program for Hawaii's farmers.

Oahu RC&D supports local agriculture by working one-on-one with farmers to adopt best practices to manage environmental and business resources. We have seen first-hand the importance of providing hands-on training to farmers and ranchers, and believe the proposed bill will increase the probability of a farm attaining USDA GAP certification, one of the most common certifications required by many produce buyers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important bill. If you have any questions, please contact Oahu RC&D at 808-622-9026.

Sincerely,

Jean Brokish
Executive Director



67-332 Kaiea Pl.
Waialua, HI 96791-9501
808-383-4481
www.NSEVP.org

Date: 02/11/2019

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Economic Development & Business

Rep. Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair, Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
Wednesday February 13, 2019, 10:10a, Conference Room 309

HB463-Relating to Food Safety

Chair McKelvey, Vice-chair Kitagawa, and members of the committee:

My name is Lisa Rhoden, I am the food safety director for North Shore Economic Vitality Partnership. I have been working with farmers in Hawaii for over 10 years, from providing advice on conservation measures to buying produce for a local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) business. During the last decade I have seen the benefits that third-party food safety certification can bring to a farm business and I believe it is a measure that all farms can and should attain. Not only does it ensure that the farm is implementing and follows safe practices for food production and handling, it also sets that farm up to be more competitive in the marketplace, no matter the size of the farm. Hawaii's farms, especially those that that are small, need every advantage they can get.

North Shore EVP has implemented a training program to help farmers through the USDA GroupGAP process. We've met farmers that are already following many of these "best practices" but they still need help with required record keeping and other documentation. We realize that there are many successful farms in our state that are owned by farmers who do not speak English as a first language; they need additional assistance including interpreted documents and translators. And there are farms that have interest in food safety but simply need to know where to go for education and on the ground assistance because they cannot do it on their own. With a clearly designated training program, these farms can successfully become food safety certified and grow their businesses.

Therefore, I strongly support a food safety certification training program. Hands-on training and assistance from qualified personnel will increase the probability of a farm attaining USDA GAP certification, one of the most common certifications required by many produce buyers. This will help to strengthen our local economy, keeps local land in agriculture, and preserves the small farm tradition in our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important bill.

Sincerely,

Lisa Z. Rhoden
Food Safety Director
North Shore Economic Vitality Partnership

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Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & BUSINESS
Wednesday, February 13, 2019 — 10:10 a.m. — Room 309

Ulupono Initiative Supports HB 463 HD 1, Relating to Food Safety

Dear Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Murray Clay and I am Managing Partner of Ulupono Initiative, a Hawai'i-based impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life for the people of Hawai'i by working toward solutions that create more locally produced food; increase affordable, clean, renewable energy; and better manage waste and fresh water resources. Ulupono believes that self-sufficiency is essential to our future prosperity and will help shape a future where economic progress and mission-focused impact can work hand in hand.

Ulupono supports HB 463 HD 1, which provides funding for the Department of Agriculture to partner with the agricultural community to establish a food safety certification program for obtaining Good Agricultural Practices certification, because it aligns with our goal to increase local food production.

One of the greatest challenges facing agricultural enterprises over the next few years is getting into compliance with new federal food safety regulations. These new rules are expected to protect public health by providing more information about food production. However, the new regulations are expected to be significantly more strict, which requires more time and cost for compliance. It is a challenge for our farmers and ranchers to navigate the nuances of the law, track new data requirements, and implement best practices for food safety. Without support, farmers and ranchers, particularly smaller scale operations, may be in violation of the law or be forced to shut down, which will jeopardize the future of local agriculture in Hawai'i.

As Hawai'i's local food issues become increasingly complex and challenging, organizations need additional resources and support to address and overcome them. We appreciate this committee's efforts to look at policies that support local food production.

We believe that through collaboration, we can help produce more local food and support an economically robust homegrown agriculture industry, which strengthens our community with fresh, healthy food. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Murray Clay
Managing Partner

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 13, 2019

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & BUSINESS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 463, HD 1
RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY**

Room 309
10:10 AM

Aloha Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,900 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

HFB supports HB 463, HD 1, which requires and appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture to partner with the Hawaii agriculture community to establish a food safety certification training program to assist small to medium-sized farms to comply with the United States Department of Agriculture Good Agricultural Practices Certification Program.

HFB appreciates the support by the legislature in our past efforts to help Hawaii's farmers achieve compliance with the FDA Food Safety and Modernization Act. As the actual rule has been rolled out by FDA the immensity of the task is becoming evident.

Foodborne illnesses can be serious, and we should seek ways to reduce the risk. This bill will provide that assistance to our farmers for the costs they will incur to become food safety compliant.

The many criteria associated with FSMA to be compliant should not be an impediment for safe food. Hawaii cannot afford to further lose farmers as we strive to increase local food production. We want to incentivize our farmers' ability to continue their operations and provide Hawaii with abundant safe food.

Hawaii Farm Bureau appreciates any effort which will assist farmers with expenses to become compliant with the Food Safety Modernization Act.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important subject.

HB-463-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2019 9:53:33 AM

Testimony for EDB on 2/13/2019 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:

HB-463-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2019 12:19:56 PM

Testimony for EDB on 2/13/2019 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Laura Gray	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I live on a small farm in Punalu'u and farmers need all the help we can get to understand how to make our food as safe as possible. Science is changing all the time and it would be helpful to know what the latest best practices are in order to keep up with all the changes that are happening. We are subject to warmer climate, changing threats from tropical pests and diseases etc. Also over-population confined in a small area which can result in contaminated soil and water. It would be helpful to have a cert. program to make sure we get the correct information. Mahalo, Laura Gray

HB-463-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2019 9:40:14 PM

Testimony for EDB on 2/13/2019 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joni Kamiya	Individual	Support	No

Comments: