



Date: February 27, 2020

To: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Ty Cullen, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Lydi Bernal, Coordinator, Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Re: SUPPORT for HB2215 HD1, Relating to Workforce Development

Hrg: February 27, 2020 at 2:00pm at Conference Room 308

Aloha and thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of HB2215 HD1**, which establishes and funds the Workforce Development Coordinator position within the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) to implement the P-20 Agriculture Education Statewide Plan (DC149, 2019).

The Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) works to advance policy and systems change to reduce disparities and improve the health of Hawai'i residents. HIPHI is home to the Obesity Prevention Task Force¹ and the Hawai'i Farm to School Hui², which collectively represent over 60 organizations from across the islands.

Since the passage of Senate Resolution 80 in 2015, the Hawai'i Farm to School Hui has worked with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH CTAHR) to convene the P-20 Agriculture Education Working Group for the purposes developing a **coordinated framework of support for preschool through post-secondary (P-20) agriculture education in Hawai'i**.

Representatives from **nearly 40 public-private-non-profit partners** have assembled under this umbrella for the past 4 years with a common goal of increasing the depth, breadth, and scope of agriculture and food systems education in the state. HB2215 HD1 is based largely on the group's final report to the 2019 legislature ([DC149](#)).

As outlined in the final report and provided for in HB2215 HD1, **the Coordinator position is essential** for continuing and expanding this work to advance a coordinated statewide approach to regenerating Hawaii's community food systems through agriculture and food systems education.

The primary focus of the Coordinator will be on **teacher development, curricular integration, and cultivation of agriculture educators**. Central to the P-20 Agriculture Education Statewide Plan is the task of infusing agriculture and food systems education into pre-service and in-service teacher development programs across the state.

This bill addresses the pressing need for **immediate and sustained investment by the state in agriculture and food systems education** in order to advance Hawaii's food security and food self-sufficiency through the development of agriculture educators, future farmers, and a society that understands, supports, and actively participates in regenerating Hawaii's community food systems.

We respectfully ask that you please pass this measure out of committee.

Me Ke Aloha,

Lydi Bernal
Coordinator, Hawai'i Farm to School Hui
Member, Obesity Prevention Task Force
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

¹ Created by the legislature in 2012, the **Obesity Prevention Task Force** is comprised of over 40 statewide organizations, and works to make recommendations to reshape Hawaii's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

² The **Hawai'i Farm to School Hui** is a statewide network comprised of five island-level networks, community organizations, schools, state agencies, and other food systems stakeholders with a collective mission to strengthen Hawaii's farm to school movement. The three pillars of successful farm to school programs are 1) school gardens, 2) agriculture, culinary, nutrition, and food systems education, and 3) school food improvements through local food procurement. The Hawai'i Farm to School Hui formed in 2010 and became a program of HIPHI in 2017.



February 27, 2020

RE: **SUPPORT for HB2215 HD1**

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of HB2215 HD1. Blue Zones Project was brought to Hawaii by HMSA to help increase the overall well-being of our communities and to make Hawaii a healthier, happier place to live, work and play. To accomplish that goal, we address ways that we can lower obesity rates, tobacco use, and chronic diseases.

The workforce develop coordinator would greatly increase exposure for students of all ages to agriculture education and drive career interest in agriculture and food systems. Studies show that agriculture education, school gardens, and hands-on nutrition learning triples student consumption of fruits and vegetables in school lunches¹ and increases access to low-fat fruits and vegetables at home.² Agriculture education can also play a critical role in shifting student's perceptions about healthy foods and provide opportunities for students to experience growing and cooking their own food. This bill will also lead to more teachers being trained in agriculture education, more local farms and farmers, and a stronger local food supply, all of which are extremely important for a sustainable and healthy future.

In addition to expressing our support for this bill, we would like to request an amendment to the bill's language; we strongly feel that the coordinator position should be housed in the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. This would better support the capacity to develop and deploy agriculture education curriculum to our teachers.

Agriculture education can help the families of Hawai'i enjoy healthier lifestyles, which is why Blue Zones Project strongly **support HB2215 HD1**. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB2215 HD1.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colby Takeda".

Colby Takeda
Senior Manager
Blue Zones Project Hawaii
Colby.takeda@sharecare.com

¹ Koch, P., Wolf, R., Grazioplene, M., Gray, H. L., Trent, R., & Uno, C. (2017) FoodCorps: Creating healthy school environments. Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Program in Nutrition, Teachers College, Columbia University.

² Wells, N. M., Meyers, B. M., Todd, L. E., Henderson, C. R., Barale, K., . . . Franz N. K. (2018). The carry-over effects of school gardens on fruit and vegetable availability at home: A randomized controlled trial with low-income elementary schools. *Prevention Medicine*, 112:152-159.



HB-2215-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2020 2:30:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Aisha Heredia	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in strong support of HB2215 HD1, our islands' workforce needs a strong start--from grade school, through high school we should be presenting our students options on what kinds of opportunities they can see themselves having a career within.

It's a shame that we don't have robust industry relationships with schools that can help our keiki understand what it takes to become an entry level technician in local, high-wage earning, high-demand jobs.

I am in strong support of HB2215 HD1 because our agricultural sector should be one of these industries that develops a pathway for students to get their foot in the door while in public school by learn practical real world skills.

Mahalo,

Aisha Heredia