



Date: June 20, 2020

To: Representative Angus McKelvey, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Economic Development & Business

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

Re: SUPPORT for SB2722 SD2, Relating to a Food Hub Pilot Program

Hrg: June 22, 2020 at 11am at Conference Room 329

Aloha and thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of SB2722 SD2**, which requires the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) to establish a five-year food hub pilot program and provides for the awarding of grant funding to establish and expand food hubs.

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 and testifies here on behalf of the Obesity Prevention Task Force¹ and the Hawai'i Farm to School Hui², which **collectively represent over 60 organizations from across the islands**.

This important bill directly addresses the urgent need to diversify our state's economy and reduce our dependence on imported foods. Through our extensive experience with strengthening Hawaii's farm to school movement over the past decade, it has become abundantly clear that **food hubs are an absolutely essential and key component to regenerating Hawaii's community food systems**, and thus to achieving food security and food self sufficiency in Hawai'i. This bill is critically important for supporting the sustainability and growth of small family farms (which constitute 95% of all farms in Hawai'i³) by significantly expanding their access to large and relatively stable institutional markets such as the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE).

On January 30, 2020 the Hawai'i Farm to School Hui, HIDOE School Food Services Branch (SFSB), and partners hosted a **webinar for farmers and distributors** on supplying fresh and local produce to HIDOE. The turnout was impressive with over 120 registered participants. Importantly the three panelists representing those with experience sourcing local produce to HIDOE were from **community-based food hubs**, including the Kohala Food Hub, Hawai'i 'Ulu Cooperative, and Sustainable Molokai. Each entity serves as a regional aggregation center, sourcing from dozens of small family farms and supplying thousands of pounds of locally grown foods annually to HIDOE SFSB.

Thanks to the **strategic investments** made during the last several years by the Hawai'i State Legislature (including funding for the HDOA Hawai'i Farm to School Program, HIDOE SFSB Farm to School Coordinator, and HDOA Farm to State positions), and the focused efforts of a multitude of community partners, we are beginning to see the first fruits of Hawaii's farm to school movement. We respectfully request that you to **please pass this bill as an essential next step** toward achieving our shared vision for food security and food self-sufficiency in Hawai'i!

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.

³ United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) **2017 Census of Agriculture**. Small farms are defined by USDA as earning less than \$250,000 in gross sales per year, which applies to 5,250 of 5,521 (95%) farms in Hawai'i. Importantly, 75% (3998 of 5316) of Hawaii's farms are one to nine acres in size.

June 20, 2020

RE: SUPPORT for SB2722 SD2, Relating to a Food Hub Pilot Program

Aloha Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the House Committee on Economic Development & Business:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of SB2722 SD2. 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.

Food hubs can be an especially supportive resource for families to get access to healthy produce, especially in disadvantaged communities with inaccessible fresh produce retailers. These “food desserts” often force families to seek alternative food sources with higher proportions of processed foods, including fast food and pre-packaged foods. At the same time, food hubs require initial start-up investment for shared resources and support, which is why this bill is so critical to helping Hawai‘i expand our food hub network.

We are extremely pleased with the success of other ‘food hubs,’ such as the Food Basket on Hawai‘i Island, which brings together nonprofits, community leaders, public and private investment, and our local agriculture community for the benefit of our families.

Food hubs can help the families of Hawai‘i enjoy healthier lifestyles, which is why Blue Zones Project strongly supports SB2722 SD2.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Colby Takeda, MPH, MBA
Senior Manager
Blue Zones Project

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Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & BUSINESS
Monday, June 22, 2020 — 11:00 a.m. — Room 329

Ulupono Initiative supports SB 2722 SD 2, Relating to a Food Hub Pilot Program.

Dear Chair McKelvey and Members of the Committee:

My name is Amy Hennessey, and I am the Senior Vice President of Communications & External Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-based impact investment firm that strives to improve our community's quality of life by creating more locally produced food; increasing affordable clean renewable energy and transportation options; and better managing freshwater and waste resources.

Ulupono supports SB 2722 SD 2, which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a 5-year food hub pilot program to increase access to local food.

Ulupono supports the efforts of food hubs statewide as they serve as critical aggregation, food processing, and distribution for small farmers to access local markets. By increasing local market accessibility, small farmers will be able to provide a fresh, healthy product for consumers statewide. According to the 2017 USDA NASS Census of Agriculture, of Hawai'i's 7,328 farms statewide, 66%, or 4,868 farms, are between 1–9 acres and 78%, or 5,701 farms, produce less than \$25,000 in sales. Hawai'i's agricultural producer majority is small farmers. State supported food hubs allow Hawai'i's producers the opportunity to compete in local markets while also remaining financially viable.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Amy Hennessey, APR
Senior Vice President, Communications & External Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i

SB-2722-SD-2

Submitted on: 6/20/2020 7:08:06 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Megan Fox	Malama Kauaï	Support	No

Comments:

This has been, and continues to be, a critical need to make local agriculture viable and increase our food security.

SB-2722-SD-2

Submitted on: 6/20/2020 7:49:38 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Douglas L. Vincent	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am an Emeritus Professor and Animal Scientist from CTAHR and UH Manoa. I strongly urge support of this measure. We need to find creative ways to increase our food security. This bill does that. Please support its passage. Thank you.

SB-2722-SD-2

Submitted on: 6/20/2020 8:18:34 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jeri Di Pietro	Hawai'i SEED	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2722-SD-2

Submitted on: 6/20/2020 9:12:22 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tina Taniguchi	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2722-SD-2

Submitted on: 6/20/2020 10:08:37 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Terese I Masters	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in full support of this Bill. Thank you for the opportunity to expand our food security measures, this is an excellent way for the state to start becoming food self-sufficient.

Mahalo!

Terese Masters

Haiku, HI

SB-2722-SD-2

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 7:00:08 AM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
melissa snyder	Stellar Gardens, LLC	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Melissa Nash and I am project director at Stellar Gardens, a permaculture & beekeeping homestead on Kauai. I support this bill to create a focus on local food accessibility here in our islands. Amidst the global pandemic, threatening weather events and simply being located so far from other land masses, being 90% dependent on shipped food is both irresponsible and unsustainable for the people of Hawaii. Local food is critically important at this time and we must support local farmers to support our local communities. Please pass this bill to support all of us in Hawaii to have healthy, sustainable & locally grown food. Mahalo!

SB-2722-SD-2

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 8:11:28 AM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Koa Young	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB2722 local food needs to be grown and given more access to

SB-2722-SD-2

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 9:27:48 AM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sherry Pollack	350Hawaii.org	Support	No

Comments:

This bill is a win-win for the health of our communities and the climate.

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

**TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & BUSINESS

**MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2020
11:00 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 309**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2722 SD2 (SSCR3101)
RELATING TO A FOOD HUB PILOT PROGRAM**

Chairperson McKelvey and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2722 SD2, (SSCR3101) which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a five-year food hub program to increase access to local food. It provides further for the award of grant funding to qualified applicants wishing to establish or expand a food hub, requires reports to the Legislature, and makes an appropriation.

The Department supports this measure provided it does not adversely impact the Department's priorities in the Executive Budget and offers comments and clarifying amendments.

Food hubs are facilities that facilitate the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution and marketing of locally grown produce, and may help to increase local food self-sufficiency and the doubling of local food production in Hawaii.

The Agribusiness Development Corporation's Whitmore Community Food Hub Master Plan illustrates the complexity of the food hub concept as evidenced by the scale of the central Oahu agricultural community that it will serve. The participation of farmers and their involvement in managing the food hub are fundamental to ensure that production, processing, packaging, marketing, shipment, value-adding and other functions will be effectively and beneficially utilized.

Additionally, this measure clarifies that an applicant seeking to launch a new food hub in an area where none exists shall have secured a physical location for the hub and



have drafted a detailed plan for the operation of a food hub. We believe that project planning and farmer engagement should be conducted before developing new or improving existing qualifying food hubs statewide.

The Department is aware of four food hubs on Oahu, four on Hawaii Island, and one each on Maui and Molokai, identified as follows:

- Oahu: Kahumana Farm Hub (Waianae), Farmlink Hawaii (North Shore), Kokua Kalihi Valley Cultural Food Hub (Kalihi), and Oahu Fresh (Honolulu);
- Hawaii Island: Adaptations (Kona), The Ulu Producers Cooperative (Kona), The Food Basket (Kona), and The Kohala Food Hub (Kohala);
- Maui: Local Harvest Food Hub (Kula); and
- Molokai: Sustainable Molokai.

These food hubs are providing jobs, representing hundreds of small to medium sized farms, serving thousands of customers, and producing over \$2.5 million in annual gross income.

The Department agrees that food hubs may become a more important link in the supply chain to channel more local food to the consumers and institutions of the State. This measure addresses the challenge of local small farmers to scale-up production by providing a pathway to the larger purchasers of safe and marginally processed, locally grown, fresh fruits and vegetables.

The Department offers the following amendments:

Page 2, lines 6-19

"SECTION 2. (a) There is established a five-year food hub pilot program, which shall be administered by the department of agriculture.

(b) The pilot program shall:

(1) Adopt the United States Department of Agriculture's working definition of "food hub," which means "a centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products;" and

(2) Award grant funding to qualified applicants for the **planning, feasibility studies, and** construction of critical

infrastructure to establish new food hubs and expand existing food hubs in each of the counties of Maui, Kauai, Hawaii, and Honolulu, including:"

Page 3, line 6 to page 4, line 9

"(c) The department of agriculture shall establish criteria for the award of initial start-up grant funding or subsequent expansion funding under the pilot program, including the following provisions:

(1) Priority shall be given to organizations with demonstrated experience in aggregation, washing, minimal processing, packaging, cold storage, and other value-additions for delivering local produce to local markets;

(2) Qualifying applicants shall include corporations, limited liability companies, partnerships, sole proprietorships, non-profit organizations, and agricultural cooperatives with requisite insurance requirements and a certificate of vendor compliance with Hawaii compliance express;

(3) Applicants seeking to launch new establishment of food hubs in areas where none currently exist shall have first secured a physical location for the food hub; ~~and~~ drafted a detailed plan for the food hub's operation and management; provide evidence of interest to engage with the food hub by agricultural operations in the area, including; identify activities in which the applicant intends to engage, such as serving as a marketplace for buying and selling, or providing certified kitchen space in which multiple farmers may share use of facilities for value-added product development; and"

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SB-2722-SD-2

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 10:43:53 AM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Debbie Lee-Jackson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support this bill. Please allow our small farmers to feed our people. Continuing to rely on imports is like a house built upon the sand. We can support each other.

SB-2722-SD-2

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 12:13:46 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Regina Gregory	EcoTipping Points Project	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2722-SD-2

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 12:54:58 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Donna K Santos	Individual	Support	No

Comments:



6/21/20

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2722 SD2 BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS

Aloha Chair McKelvey and members of the Committee,

Alternative Structures International (dba Kahumana Organic Farms), a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization operating on 50 acres in Lualualei Valley in Waianae. Since its establishment in 1974, Kahumana has integrated social services with training venues and social ventures that work toward three goals: 1. Ending Local Family Homelessness, 2. Providing Services for People With Developmental Disabilities, and 3. Lowering Hawaii's Dependence on Imported Food.

In 2017, Kahumana launched Kahumana Farm Hub with the mission of connecting local growers with local markets. The hub facilitates sales on behalf of small farmers and backyard growers on the Leeward Coast of Oahu. The hub has been a powerful reminder of how Hawaii residents can contribute to food security. In the first 2 years KFH generated a total of \$280,499 of which \$204,325 was paid directly to over 100 growers. KFH shows that multiple small farmers and backyard growers create a resilient network illustrating the strength in numbers of backyard grower and their contribution to Hawaii's local economy.

In the wake of the corona virus epidemic, Kahumana took the place of first responders. Kahumana did this by increasing their produce boxes from 10 to approximately 400 per week, operating three farmers markets per week on the farm with strict Covid-19 protocols. The Kahumana Farm Hub did this by sourcing produce from farmers and food hubs on Hawaii Island and Maui that, in turn, allowed to increase local access to food by contributing to several other large CSA programs on Oahu including Oahu Fresh, Farmlink Hawaii, and Oahu Food Banks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Zuckerman", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

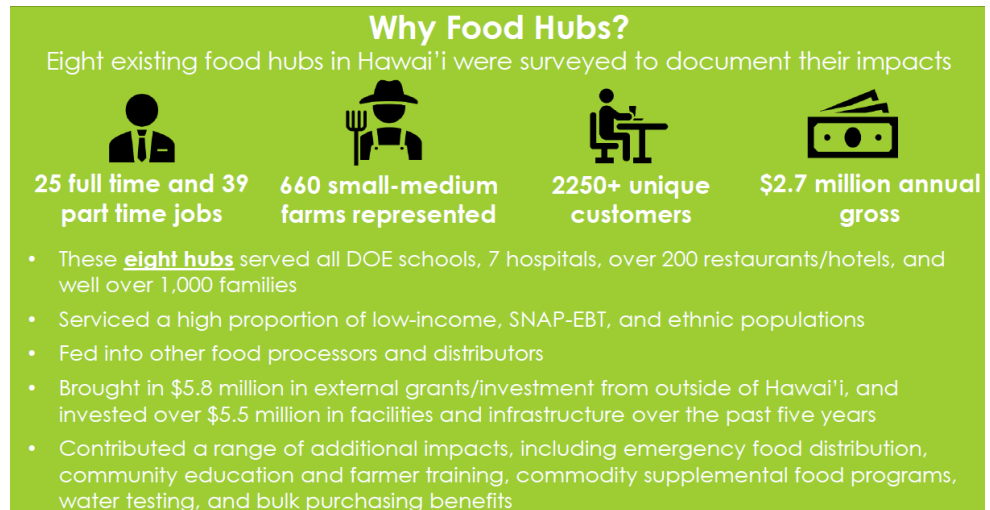
Christian Zuckerman
Farm Director, Kahumana Organic Farms
86-660 Lualualei Homestead Road, 96792, Waianae HI

6/21/2020

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2722 SD2 BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS

Aloha Chair McKelvey and members of the Committee,

A recent survey of 8 food hubs by the Hawai'i Farmers Union United show that they represent over 650 small and medium farms and generate 2.7 million in income annually in local food sales (see image below).



By way of introduction, I am Saleh Azizi, and I am the Community Economic Development Coordinator at Kahumana Organic Farms, an organization operating for 40 years in Wai'anae. In 2019, I worked with the Hawai'i Farmers Union Foundation as a Food Hub Coordinator. I facilitated meetings with ten existing food hubs to document the obstacles they face in their journey to expand operations and services for the benefit of small farmers who grow local food for Hawai'i's consumers. The observations and recommendations compromised a central part of my PhD. Dissertation that was awarded in 2019 by the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Food hubs create economic development opportunities at local community and neighborhood level in ways that celebrates Hawai'i's historical and cultural abundance of cultivating and sharing food. In the wake of the corona virus epidemic, Kahumana took the place of **first responders**. Kahumana did this by increasing their produce boxes from 10 to approximately 400 per week, operating three farmers markets per week on the farm with strict Covid-19 protocols. The Kahumana Farm Hub did this by sourcing produce from farmers and food hubs on Hawaii Island and Maui that, in turn, allowed to increase local access to food by contributing to several other large CSA programs on Oahu including Oahu Fresh, Farmlink Hawaii, and Oahu Food Banks.

Saleh Azizi Fardkhales, PhD

808-383 5224

azizi@hawaii.edu

SB-2722-SD-2

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 1:17:42 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Eliel Starbright	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

- This bill addresses Hawaii's urgent need to diversify our economy and reduce our dependence on imported foods.

Food hubs are critical to expanding farm to school/farm to state by allowing small farmers (95% of Hawaii's farms) to aggregate, store, wash/process, pack, market, and distribute produce and other foods and to bid on larger contracts offered by state institutions (schools, hospitals, prisons).

- Food hubs support existing and new farmers by relieving/sharing the burden of these significant challenges.

- This bill is needed to expand current efforts and increase government investment in farm to school/farm to state and the regeneration of Hawaii's community food systems toward achieving food security and self sufficiency in Hawai'i.



TESTIMONY OF THE KAHANA FOUNDATION
IN REGARD TO **SB2722 SD2** RELATING TO FOOD HUB PILOT PROGRAM
TO BE HEARD BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS
JUNE 22, 2020 11AM ROOM 329

Dear Chair Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair Lisa Kitagawa and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alexandra Kahn and I am the Founder of Kahana Foundation. We are a Hawai'i-based environmental awareness nonprofit working to improve our community's understanding and support for sustainable change.

Kahana Foundation **supports** SB2722 SD2, relating to a Food Hub Pilot Program requiring the Department of Agriculture to establish a 5-year food hub pilot program to increase access to local food. And provides for the award of grant funding to qualified applicants wishing to establish or expand a food hub, for the following reasons:

Help Achieve State Sustainability Goals

The State Department of Agriculture estimates that 80-90% of food in Hawai'i is imported at a cost of approximately \$3 billion per year.¹ However, in a state that has ten of the fourteen climates in the world and more microclimates and soil profiles than anywhere in the world, we could and should be the agricultural capital of the world.² Through the Hawai'i Green Growth Aloha+ Challenge, the State established a number of 2030 resiliency goals which included: increase access to labor and land resources, provide enough land in farms to support local agriculture while allocating significant resources to support hirings, lower the costs and prices of local food, reduce local food waste, increase the directory of available and locally sourced food to meet the demand, and increase distribution efficiency, among others.³ While these are all necessary target goals, enhanced support for those programs working to achieve these goals is necessary.

¹ http://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/op/spb/INCREASED_FOOD_SECURITY_AND_FOOD_SELF_SUFFICIENCY_STRATEGY.pdf

² <https://www.hawaiibusiness.com/the-future-of-farming/>

³ <https://aloha-challenge.hawaiigreengrowth.org/aloha-goals/local-food/>

Farmers Can't Do This on Their Own

Large obstacles currently exist for small farmers to get their food to market. A full time employee would be required to engage in market research, marketing of their farm, pitching or altering crops and services, negotiating contracts, balancing supply and demand, and maintaining relationships.⁴ Many farmers don't have the resources to showcase their products at just one farmer's market on one island, let alone connect with larger grocery chains and hundreds of restaurants, schools and businesses.

Additional resources and manpower is required for processing, certification, insurance, accounting, refrigeration, and transportation. Consolidating these efforts not only removes barriers for farmers who wouldn't have been able to scale before, while providing the economic benefit of new jobs.

Small Farms are Instrumental to Hawaii's Soil & Ecosystem Integrity

According to the 2017 USDA NASS Census of Agriculture, 66% of farms in the State of Hawaii are small, ranging between 1-9 acres.⁵ Small farms usually have a more diverse cropland, while large producers tend to focus on monoculture (single crop production).⁶ Allowing small farmers to participate in larger markets will ensure their economic survival and subsequently Hawaii's long term ecosystem survival.

The negative effects of monoculture are far reaching, compounding, economically unsustainable in the long term, and in some cases can cause irreversible damage to ecosystems.⁷ When a single crop is grown, biodiversity is compromised, crops are more susceptible to harmful organisms, pesticide and synthetic fertilizer use increases, top soil degradation occurs, groundwater pollution of chemicals is prevalent, and surrounding ecosystems are compromised. The EPA

⁴ "Food Value Chains and Food Hubs | Agricultural Marketing" <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/local-regional/food-hubs>.

⁵ "228 Hawaii 2017 Census of Agriculture - National Agricultural" https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level/Hawaii/st15_2_0008_0008.pdf.

⁶ "Crop Species Diversity Changes in the United States ... - PLOS." 25 Aug. 2015, <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0136580>.

⁷ "The Dangers of Monoculture Farming - Challenge Advisory." 7 Oct. 2018, <https://www.challenge.org/knowledgeitems/the-dangers-of-monoculture-farming/>.

reports that although coral reefs face numerous threats, many come directly from agricultural pollution.⁸

Helps Businesses & Families Choose Local

Families access to local food is limited to what items are stocked in large chain grocery stores, or select few farmers markets on certain days of the week. Virtual food hubs can be set up to allow families to order food online at one place but receive products from a variety of farmers.⁹

Barriers for businesses to source from small local farms would also be lowered. Instead of being forced to work with the products of one large supplier of often imported products, food hubs would open the doors to resources and competition from a variety of local farms.

COVID19 shows a need for Increased Investment in Agriculture

COVID19 awoke much of our state to our food security and dependency issues, while simultaneously driving an increased demand in local produce. Farm Link, one of the largest Farm Hubs in the state expanded to its full capacity given the funding and workers they had in place, but were forced to deny the demand of thousands of community members- they simply did not have the capital and man power to expand at the necessary rate. CSA's and other farm delivery services like Farm to Car began popping up left and right but constantly sold out and over promised. There was a common theme across the state- not enough farmers to harvest quickly enough, no food storage for holding fresh picked food, and not enough trucks to distribute. Volunteers rallied but there was a common pain point across the farm hubs who were doing all they could to help the struggling local farmers- they needed more money so they could hire more folks, buy trucks, and lease a storage space so that they could feed the people and make more money. But where is this initial capital supposed to come from? We have the potential to supply most if not all the food necessary to our kama'aina but farmers cannot do this alone. Management, technology, and marketing from Farm Hubs are necessary and increased funding from the state is necessary to help the hubs. While our economy was once based upon agriculture, it has since been replaced by tourism- and COVID19 has shown us what a mistake that was with our 33+% current unemployment. In fact, less than one percent of the tax-dollar funded state budget is allocated towards agriculture.¹⁰ This allocated money funds irrigation, animal disease control, plant and pest disease control, pesticides, quality and price assurance, and

⁸ "Threats to Coral Reefs | Coral Reefs | US EPA." 3 May. 2018, <https://www.epa.gov/coral-reefs/threats-coral-reefs>.

⁹ "Virtual food hubs tap into local food markets - USDA Rural" <https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/CoopMag-may11.pdf>.

¹⁰ <https://www.mauinews.com/news/local-news/2018/10/decoite-hawaii-farming-suffers-from-lack-of-state-support/>

general administration for agriculture, among other things.¹¹ We need more resources to be allocated to local agriculture to diversify our economy, create jobs, become less dependent on others, decrease our environmental footprint, increase the quality of our food, and keep the money in state.

Kahana Foundation **supports** SB2722 SD2 and thanks you for this opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully,

Alexandra Kahn
Kahana Foundation
Contact@KahanaFoundation.org

¹¹ <https://budget.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/10.-Department-of-Agriculture-FY-19-SUPP.2eM.pdf>



Pono Hawai'i Initiative

Josh Frost - President • Patrick Shea - Treasurer •
Nelson Ho • Summer Starr

Monday, June 22, 2020

Relating to a Food Hub Pilot Program
Testifying in Support

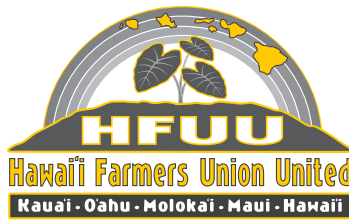
Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

The Pono Hawai'i Initiative (PHI) **supports SB2722 SD2 Relating to a Food Hub Pilot Program**, which requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a 5 year food hub pilot program to increase access to local food and provides for grant funding for qualified applicants to establish or expand a food hub.

The creation and encouragement of community food hubs could help Hawai'i meet its food sustainability goals while encouraging spending on our local economy. Food hubs help to expand market access to small and medium sized farmers creating a way for those entities to sell their products on a much larger scale. Food hubs create jobs and strengthen economies all while increasing access to fresh, healthy locally produced food. This can be a win-win scenario for our local communities.

For all these reasons, we urge you to move this bill forward.

Mahalo for the opportunity,
Gary Hooser
Executive Director
Pono Hawai'i Initiative



Vincent Mina
President HFUU-HFUF

Anny Bruch
Vice President &
Kaua'i Chapter Pres.

David Case
Secretary

Annie Alvarado
Treasurer

~~~~<>~~~~

**Christian Zuckerman**  
Wai'anae, O'ahu

**Vincent Kimura**  
Waimanalo, O'ahu

**Brynn Foster**  
North Shore, O'ahu

**Kaipo Kekona**  
Lahaina, Maui

**Bobby Pahia**  
Kahalawai, Maui

**John Dobovan**  
Haleakala, Maui

**Matthew Van Paepeghem**  
Hana, Maui

**Dash Kuhr**  
Kohala, Hawai'i  
Legislative Chair

**Maureen Datta**  
Kona, Hawai'i

**Steve Lund**  
Puna, Hawai'i

**Drake Weinert**  
East Hawai'i

**Matt Drayer**  
Ka'u, Hawai'i

**Dr. Saleh Azizi**  
Policy Chair

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2722 SD2  
before the House Committee on on Economic Development and Business  
Monday 06/22/20 at 11.00 AM in House conference room 329.

Aloha Chair McKelvey and Members of the House Committee on Economic Development and Business.

HFUU is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy, nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters organized as 13 Chapters in the four Hawai'i Counties. Food Hubs have been a strategic initiative of HFUU since 2015, we are committed to having a network of interconnected food hubs throughout our existing 13 chapters, being in relationship with one another, as a cooperative aggregation and distribution of locally produced food across the islands.

Before COVID-19, a survey of 8 food hubs by Hawaii Farmers Union United shows that they represent over 650 small and medium farms and generate 2.7 million in income annually in local food sales. Almost all food hub developments in Hawaii are operated by family farmers to alleviate the need for small farmers to do their own marketing, distribution and sales.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Hawaii's residents looked for alternative ways to get their food as most restaurants closed and families were isolated at home in order to contain the spread of the virus. Multiple existing and new Hawaii food hubs stepped up and formed a reliable alternative inter-island distribution network by offering locally grown produce boxes for home delivery. In the last three months, Hawaii's existing food hubs have expanded exponentially and dozen new food hubs have been formed to serve as Essential Workers in these times of distress. Instead of selling to restaurants, food hubs now sell directly to households.

Food hubs are entities in or nearby farm communities that support small farmers with aggregation, processing, marketing and sale of locally grown food. SB2722 SD2 would initiate a Food Hub Pilot program. This measure has never been so urgent to support Hawaii's Food Security and Resilience of Hawaii's Local Food Systems.

HAWAII FARMERS UNION UNITED  
HAWAII FARMERS UNION FOUNDATION

Vincent Mina, President

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 2:44:45 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Cindy Evans         | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

This measure is important to the development of an agriculture industry in Hawai'i. The ability to aggregate produce, meet food safety guidelines, and provide a reliable supply of food are reasons to support the food hub pilot program. Additionally the public wants local grown food. The public cares about food security and nourishment. Too many people have diabetes.

Mahalo for your support.

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 2:53:25 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Barbara Best        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

- This bill addresses Hawaii's urgent need to diversify our economy and reduce our dependence on imported foods.
- Food hubs are critical to expanding farm to school/farm to state by allowing small farmers (95% of Hawaii's farms) to aggregate, store, wash/process, pack, market, and distribute produce and other foods and to bid on larger contracts offered by state institutions (schools, hospitals, prisons). Food hubs support existing and new farmers by relieving/sharing the burden of these significant challenges.
- This bill is needed to expand current efforts and increase government investment in farm to school/farm to state and the regeneration of Hawaii's community food systems toward achieving food security and self sufficiency in Hawai'i.

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 2:54:27 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Helmut Klauer       | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 3:00:07 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Marie P Fitzsimons  | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2722 SD2 before the Committee on Economic Development and Business, Chairman Angus McKelvey, Vice Chair Lisa Kitagawa

Marie Fitzsimons,

1390 A Olinda Rd,

Makawao, HI 96768

(808) 344-3379

mariefit@hawaii.edu

Aloha Chairman McKelvey, Vice Chairman Lisa Kitagawa and and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Business,

I am writing to give testimony in strong support of SB2722 SD2, which creates a food hub program in Hawai'i. My name is Marie Fitzsimons and I live in Upcountry Maui. I am a member of Hawai'i Farmers Union United and I am also a social worker in Maui and a graduate of the Master of Social Work program at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I write to you today as a supportive citizen, as an ally to local organic farmers, as a social services provider who recognizes food insecurity in our community, as a mother and as a member of the Maui community who enjoys the privilege of eating locally grown food with my family. I support this bill because it will enhance the work of our local farmers, while simultaneously increasing community access to healthy, locally grown food.

Food hubs are facilities that support small farmers by consolidating their efforts to aggregate, process, store, distribute and market locally grown food. Small farmers

rarely have the tools or the time to dedicate to all these aspects of bringing their food to market. Thus food hubs are an important missing link in the agricultural infrastructure here in Hawai'i. By reducing barriers to bringing local produce to market, food hubs increase food security and reduce dependence on imported foods. The abundance created by our local farmers is thereby shared with our local consumers, increasing the health and wellbeing of our community.

Food hubs support livelihoods and nourishment in our rural communities, enhancing economic, cultural and social wellbeing. In addition to bringing food to market, food hubs can also supply fresh produce to state schools and hospitals, thereby bringing healthy food directly to our children and our most vulnerable people. By bringing local food to local families, food hubs promote a way of life that restores abundance and increases self-reliance, contributing to a better future for all.

I respectfully request that you please pass this bill as an essential next step towards the support of small farm success, the provision of local produce for local people, and the realization of food self sufficiency here in Hawai'i.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Yours sincerely,

Marie Fitzsimons



**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 3:09:39 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| marcy cayton        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 3:14:18 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Bodhi Be            | Doorway Into Light  | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Please support this bill. It so important, maybe critical to the successful growth of the islands people. Supporting local agriculture, farmers markets, food hubs, and on, make so much sense on so many levels, especially when we see how precarious our food supply can become in a short time. The health and security of the population is directly tied to access to good food and fresh food. Please support this bill and every initiative that supports local agriculture in the islands.

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 3:26:24 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Havilah Mills       | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

As a member of the Hawai'i Farmers Union United, I stand behind them and strongly support SB2722 SD2

SB2722 SD2 would initiate a Food Hub Pilot program. This measure has never been so urgent to promote Food Security and Resilience of Hawaii's Local Food Systems!

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 3:34:55 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Rob Weltman         | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

The COVID-19 pandemic with its crushing effect on Hawaii's economy, particularly tourism, reinforces the importance of diversifying our economy and increasing agriculture, food sovereignty and food security. One of the proven means of supporting small farmers is community-supported food hubs. They provide a cost-efficient and mutually beneficial means of distribution of small farmers' output to consumers. Over time they may provide additional benefits in refining the outputs through drying, canning or other processing that is often prohibitive for a small farmer to invest in. SB2722 promotes the establishment and spread of food hubs in Hawaii and I support it.

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 3:50:53 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Renee Riley         | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Aloha: As a Maui resident (and voter) since 1985, I realize how isolated we are and depended on imports for an estimated 90-95% of our food and energy. Such reliance on ships and planes make us very vulnerable in the event of any kind of crisis. We know Climate Change is a fact; we had the North Korean missile scare a few years ago. Now we are in the midst of a pandemic.

Hawaii needs to develop our own sustainable, local food sources.

During this time of COVID-19 danger, I have been relying on my Maui Food Hub orders. I can get fresh, locally grown food and some value-added products easily and dependably. If I'd had to travel to each of the farmers separately to get their products, I am unlikely to take the time or trouble even to know what each has to offer. But I can make my Maui Food Hub order and be confident that the products are healthy and pickup is nearby and easy to do.

Please support SB2722 in making the Maui Food Hub last and grow. We need the food hub to help support the good work of our farmers and to have a sustainable local food supply.

Please vote YES in support of SB2722. Thank you for all you do to support Hawaii and its people.

Mahalo, Renée (UHMC English Associate Professor - retired, mom, Hawaii voter, and volunteer)

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 4:41:35 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Lehn Huff    | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

June 21, 2020

Aloha e Chair Gabbard and Members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Business

**SB2722 SD2 RELATING TO FOOD HUBS PILOT PROGRAM TO INCREASE LOCAL FOOD**

As the former Director of the Maui School Garden Network and present member of the Hawaii Farmers Union United as well as the Hawaii Farm Bureau, I strongly support this piece of legislation that will move us **finally** as a state into the much needed expanded use of Food Hubs to best keep our food spending here at home, help our institutions supply their food needs from LOCAL markets, and increase access to local, nutritional produce here in our state.

During the COVID-19 pandemic I have been receiving information from HFUU and MCFB about the successes they have been having with food hubs established on maui. In addition, I have been participating via ZOOM on the Maui Nui Food Alliance Steering Committee. The pandemic has moved our people to action with regard to the need which we have known for some time now to lessen our dependency on imported foods in hawaii.

Food hubs are critical to expanding farm to school/farm to state programs which I have been working with over the past ten years. Ninety-five percent of our farmers are in the small farmer category and we need to help maximize their potential to aggregate, store, wash/process, pack,

market, and distribute produce and other foods and to bid on larger contracts offered by state institutions (schools, hospitals, prisons). Even our large farms have been feeling the pressure of trying to bring enough produce to market to meet the needs of institutions by providing them with local food. In addition, almost all food hub developments in Hawaii are operated by family farmers to alleviate the need for small farmers to do their own marketing, distribution and sales.

In the past three months Hawaii food hubs have stepped up and formed a reliable alternative inter-island distribution network by offering locally grown produce boxes for home delivery. Our existing food hubs have expanded exponentially and dozens of new food hubs have been formed to serve as Essential Workers in these times of distress. Instead of selling to restaurants, food hubs now sell directly to households.

Please help us support food resiliency in our state. We need to take a realistic look at our future in terms of radical changes we are experiencing within including environment, weather systems, and diseases for which we have no immediate protection. Feeding our people begins in Hawai'i Nei.

Malama Pono,

Lehn Huff

lhuff002@hawaii.rr.com (808) 250-8323, msgn@hawaii.rr.com

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 5:50:22 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| Submitted By    | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Hunter Heavilin | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

Aloha Chair McKelvey and Members of the House Committee on Economic Development and Business.

HFUU is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy, nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters organized as 13 Chapters in the four Hawai'i Counties. Food Hubs have been a strategic initiative of HFUU since 2015, we are committed to having a network of interconnected food hubs throughout our existing 13 chapters, being in relationship with one another, as a cooperative aggregation and distribution of locally produced food across the islands.

Before COVID-19, a survey of 8 food hubs by Hawaii Farmers Union United shows that they represent over 650 small and medium farms and generate 2.7 million in income annually in local food sales. Almost all food hub developments in Hawaii are operated by family farmers to alleviate the need for small farmers to do their own marketing, distribution and sales.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Hawaii's residents looked for alternative ways to get their food as most restaurants closed and families were isolated at home in order to contain the spread of the virus. Multiple existing and new Hawaii food hubs stepped up and formed a reliable alternative inter-island distribution network by offering locally grown produce boxes for home delivery. In the last three months, Hawaii's existing food hubs have expanded exponentially and dozen new food hubs have been formed to serve as Essential Workers in these times of distress. Instead of selling to restaurants, food hubs now sell directly to households.

Food hubs are entities in or nearby farm communities that support small farmers with aggregation, processing, marketing and sale of locally grown food. SB2722 SD2 would initiate a Food Hub Pilot program. This measure has never been so urgent to promote Food Security and Resilience of Hawaii's Local Food Systems



**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 7:03:08 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jennifer Rodwell    | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Thank you for hearing thsi Bill. As a long time Hawaii resident, teacher and food grower on these islands I stand in strong support of this Bill to aid in sustainable food potentials for Hawaii, local economy and local community - needed now more than ever with the realization that we cannot expect the world to continue to behave in ways we expect it to and that resilience is key in staying stable and sustainable. Thank you!

June 21, 2020

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & BUSINESS



HEARING DATE:

Jun 22, 2020 11:00 AM

PLACE:

Conference Room 329

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

***Testimony in support of SB2722 SD2***

Farm Link Hawai'i is a food hub that directly supports over 100 farmers, ranchers and producers throughout the state of Hawai'i. Since 2015, Farm Link's online marketplace and delivery service have been making it easy to support local farms. Farm Link currently delivers to commercial buyers, including Foodland and Whole Foods Market in addition to 100+ restaurants, caterers, and schools. We also allow household buyers to order for pickup at designated locations around O'ahu.

I am writing in strong support of SB2722 SD2 to establish a five-year food hub pilot program to increase access to local food. Food hubs operate on extremely thin margins. Establishing and growing a food hub require an extraordinary amount of capital and support to have a chance at survival. The proposed SB2722 SD2 would provide grant assistance to food hubs to reduce risk and increase their impact.

Farm Link Hawai'i has relied heavily on federal and state grants to launch and continue to scale. We would not exist without such assistance and are continually looking for additional support in order to reach financial viability. Please consider passing SB2722 SD2 to help us continue to do work to increase local food production and consumption.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R Barreca", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Robert Barreca

Founder and CEO

Farm Link Hawai'i

[rob@farmlinkhawaii.com](mailto:rob@farmlinkhawaii.com)

(808) 201-5252

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 8:03:49 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b>                                   | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Harriet Witt        | Hawaii Farmers Union<br>United - Haleakala<br>Chapter | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

We need this bill if we want to eat. Food grown on farms needs to be channeled to citizens through food hubs, and farmers cannot do all this organization themselves while they are focused on farming. We also need this bill to diversify - salvage - our economy. Please support this bill.



67-332 Kaiea Pl.  
Waiialua, HI 96791-  
9501  
808-383-4481  
[www.NSEVP.org](http://www.NSEVP.org)

June 21, 2020

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

**SUBJECT:** Support for SB2722 – Food Hub Pilot Program

(Date/Time of Hearing: 6/22/2020 at 11:00a.m.)

Dear Chairs McxKelvey and Kitagawa and members of the committee on Economic Development & Business,

On behalf of the North Shore Economic Vitality Partnership (North Shore EVP), I would like to extend our full support of SB2722, which will establish a five-year food hub pilot program within the Department of Agriculture.

The North Shore EVP was formed in 2015 as a result of a comprehensive, community-based economic analysis that identified the need for a food hub to fill serious gaps in the food supply chain of the North Shore region of Oahu. Our non-profit organization worked with community leaders to develop realistic strategic plans focused on securing that critical infrastructure and providing new opportunities for ag and ag-tourism businesses and creation of new jobs in agriculture in the region.

As we started planning for a food hub we became aware of the Food Safety & Modernization Act (FSMA) and the impact that law would have on the operations of the facility. Specifically, we anticipated that the target markets of the food hub (commercial and institutional buyers) would eventually require documentation of food safety practices from the growers. USDA and Hawaii Department of Agriculture data indicated that very few farms in Hawaii had such training and documentation.

We subsequently started a USDA GroupGAP program in 2017 that allows groups of farms to work together to obtain their USDA Harmonized GAP certification and spread the cost savings across all members of the group. In December 2019 we certified 2 more farms on Oahu and in January 2020 the program successfully passed its USDA Harmonized GAP audit. We are now working with farms on Oahu, Hawaii Island, and Kauai and after only 3 years are responsible for 8% of all USDA GAP certified farms in the state. We are the 15<sup>th</sup> GroupGAP program in the country and are currently the only food safety training program focused on farm certification and FSMA compliance in Hawaii.

With the GroupGAP program operating statewide we turned our attention back to the North Shore regional food hub in the summer of 2019. Our research indicates that in Hawaii a viable food hub will require approximately 7,500ft<sup>2</sup> of floor space (2,000ft<sup>2</sup> refrigerated), 7-10 employees, 1-2 trucks and gross revenue of ~\$1.5 million or more. Contrary to the legislature's findings stated in SB2722, there are in fact several avenues of federal funding available for construction of such facilities including USDA Rural Business Development grants, USDA Community Facilities grant/loan packages, and USDA Rural Energy grants to name but a few. In addition, the state has several programs that would directly benefit a food hub project including Enterprise Zones and DBEDT's Manufacturing Assistance Program (MAP).

While we applaud the legislature for its recognition of the role food hubs can play in meeting state goals of doubling the food supply and promoting food resiliency in Hawaii, we also recognize that regions across the state have similar challenges and that there is not a silver bullet that will address the needs of every community. We therefore ask that this bill be amended to include funding for food hub planning as one of the initial start-up grant priority areas. As alluded to above, funding and construction of a food hub at the scale needed to insure profitability requires significant coordination of stakeholders and resources and in this time of collapsing tax revenue the focus on federal assistance should be paramount.

Furthermore, Hawaii's small farms , CSA programs and packing houses cannot continue to avoid compliance with the Food Safety & Modernization Act (FSMSA). We suggest that the senate link any funding for food hubs to food safety compliance. With the attention on local food supply chains during the COVID-19 pandemic, citizens of Hawaii deserve no less.

SB2722 is a positive step in the right direction for establishing a network of food hubs across the state that can open new markets for small farms, increase the availability of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables and expand the tax base through new job creation and import substitution. North Shore EVP strongly supports this bill.

Sincerely,

*Kevin M Kelly*

Kevin Kelly  
President & CEO  
North Shore EVP

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 8:41:40 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| David B. Fisher     | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Dear Chair McKelvey and Committee Members

I am writing in strong support SB2722 SD2 which provides grants to support food hubs. Food hubs are critical for food security providing small growers and potential growers efficient access to markets and in doing so provide incentives to grow more.

I have thirty years experience working with small businesses in Hawaii (via the UH Small Business Development Center on Maui, and in the last ten years, helping with business planning for the Hawaii Farmers Union and its members, as well as other businesses). Before moving to Hawaii in 1989, I worked for Queen County Economic Development Corp. helping small manufacturing firms collaborate and so become competitive.

Very few small growers are profitable and need other jobs and/or sources of revenues to grow food. The costs of growing more are not justified by the marketing expenses and risks. In the last four months I have had an in-depth look at the finances and operations of the HFUU Maui Food Hubs in Central Maui and Hana as well as the finances of several of the farmers providing food. I have also been teaching potential farmers business planning in the HFUU Farm Apprenticfe Mentoring Program.

The HFUU food hubs have made a big difference in keeping small growers afloat and actually expanding their production as well as inspiring future farmers. They have also provided an important service to the community. This has been made possible by the support of Maui County and other philanthropies. This project also received guidance from Farmers Union members who are also hub operators on Oahu and the Island of Hawaii.

The food hubs are also able to help provide a more reliable supply of food to the community. The biggest complaint of both chefs and grocery store buyers is reliatibility--without it, they default to buying from overseas. If our hubs become equipped with vaue added capabilities they can buy all that can be supplied, minimize waste and create new income streams.

I suspect that future hub operations - especially those not supplying high end restaurants - will need to be subsidized. Understanding the micro-economics of both

hub operations and small growers should be an important part of the State's pilot program.

Regardless of the micro economics, at this time - hubs in the short term, and most likely the long term will be critical for food security and so I strongly support this bill.

Mahalo and aloha,

David B. Fisher, MBA

Huelo, Maui

[dfisherhi@gmail.com](mailto:dfisherhi@gmail.com)

808-269-1031

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 9:34:14 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Claudia Kamiyama    | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2722 SD2 before the House Committee on Economic Development and Business. [Monday 06/22/20 at 11.00 AM](#) in House conference room 329.

Aloha Chair McKelvey and Members of the House Committee on Economic Development and Business. I would like to extend my strong support for food hubs in Hawaii as a way to increase food security for the residents of Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Claudia Kamiyama



**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/21/2020 10:28:26 PM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Raphiell Nolin      | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

I strongly support food hubs on Maui. During the pandemic, they were a crucial source of fresh, locally grown food for me and my family. Going forward in these rapidly changing times we must move toward more food self sufficiency and Food Hubs are a critical part of connecting small farmers with the community. Living on a relatively remote island, with disruptions in the supply chain more and more likely, we must do all we can to provide for our own needs here in Hawaii.



# Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

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Monday, June 22, 2020

Senate Bill 2722 SD2, Relating to Food Hub Pilot Program  
Testifying in Support

Me ke Aloha, Chair McKelvey, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and members of the Economic Development and Business Committee

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party **strongly supports the intent of SB2722 SD2, Relating to a Food Hub Pilot Program**. This bill fits the initiative to embrace Aloha 'Aina through a Green New Deal for Hawaii working families. It is altogether fitting that your committees hear this important bill to build resilience of Hawaii agriculture, supporting infrastructure for a community-based food hub network to provide more nutritious food and greater self-reliance on local agriculture. Universal support in the agricultural community is testament to the necessity of this kind of program.

The Environmental Caucus is aware that a fine-grained network is necessary to create a community-based food economy, which is uniquely vulnerable submerged in a global economy organized around speculation and affluence. The Caucus is not clear that the Department of Agriculture, with its traditional emphasis on corporate, export-led, premium-earning crops has the interest or expertise to build a local food economy. We find ourselves at a strange time, however, on the margins of a pandemic that has depressed the general economy and purchase power of tens of thousands of working families who have lost jobs and income. It may be the perfect time to act in support of this bill, when communities have been scrambling to create a network between producers, distributors, and consumers to keep us all alive.

The Caucus understands that a fine-grained network must provide education, training, support services, material support, and ancillary industry, as well as the basic infrastructure of a food hub. Ultimately, the success of a food hub derives from the strength of community cooperation and vitality, rather than government largesse, and a tightly integrated local economy buffered against the global economy.

And while fresh food is the staple we rely upon, the vagaries of the market suggest that preservation is an important feature of a strong community-based food economy. This would be promoted by the capacity to process excess field production through canning or flash-freezing, even to be offered to a reopening tourism industry through the production of local favorite dishes. It is not only a protective shield for local working families against economic hardship, it is an example to our visiting world of community-based resilience.

It will become increasingly essential for Hawaii to prepare for disruptions to our far-flung imported food supply. This bill represents a 21<sup>st</sup> Century effort to restore ancestral abundance, modesty, prosperity, and resilience, to care for our land and people directly rather than through profit-based development.

As an element of the initiative to assure a stable and productive environment for all Hawaii working families, the Environmental Caucus Green New Deal Working Group strongly urges consideration of this bill.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify,

/s/ Charley Ice, Green New Deal Working Group, Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/22/2020 7:17:53 AM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Karen Winslow       | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Food Hubs are a necessary and supportive adjunct to the community at all times, not only in times of distress.

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/22/2020 7:44:46 AM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mary Lacques        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SB 2722 SD2 to establish a five-year food hub pilot program to increase access to local food. Now more than ever, Hawai'i's food insecurity vulnerabilities are exposed in these uncertain times, and since food hubs already operate on extremely thin margins, this bill would provide crucial assistance to increase their impact on local food distribution to Hawai'i residents.

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/22/2020 7:54:20 AM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jordan Smith        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair Representative Lisa Kitagawa, and all members of the Committee on Economic Development and Business,

I am submitting testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of SB2722 SD2**. This Food Hub pilot program is essential to helping Hawaii recover and grow more resilient in the future. This bill addresses Hawaii's urgent need to diversify our economy and reduce our dependence on imported foods as well as it will help expand current efforts and increase government investment in farm to school/farm to state and the regeneration of Hawaii's community food systems toward achieving food security and self sufficiency in Hawai'i. As a member of the Hawai'i Farm to School Hui, I ask you all to pass and fund SB2722.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Jordan (House District: 27, Senate District: 13)

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/22/2020 8:05:29 AM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jennifer Milholen   | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Though it has been predicted for some time, we have finally gotten a real glimpse into the fragility of our current system of access to fresh food. Investing in programs that bolster and create security in our food systems is crucial. Mahalo for passing this bill.

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/22/2020 8:08:29 AM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Thema Black         | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

As a sheep farmer on the Big Island, I see the infrastructure to market sheep, lambs and goats is being strengthened but has a long way to go. Many Hawaii sheep and goat producers along with the beef and hog industry have lacked processing facilities to create value-added products.

For more than two years I've hauled sheep to be processed at Hawaii Island Meat Coop's mobile slaughter unit (HIMC). There is insufficient USDA approved cold storage to keep the carcasses long enough in order to supply farmer's markets, restaurants and stores in bulk. Funding to build a cold storage and cut and wrap facilities is being sought again, but I feel that the red tape to getting our mobile slaughter unit approved took too long and consequently the previously procured grants and funding sources expired.

This year, I slaughtered sheep at HIMC and shipped via barge to Molokai Livestock Coop which can cut and wrap the whole carcasses. Interisland barging with Young Brothers is not stable due to their reducing the sailing schedule and their attempt to refuse less than container size loads; this only highlights our Big Island's need to increase slaughter capacity for pigs, sheep, and goats beyond the aging meat processing facility at Kulana Foods.

Getting funding is not the only barrier as you see from the story of HIMC which is developed to be mobile slaughter unit to help the small farmers but cannot do so because of the length of time to get permits for waste water and the disposal of animal offal and skins. Rules that apply to large processing facilities are burdensome for a small operation like HIMC and increases cost of production.

Two requests. 1. Funding to be made available for cold storage and processing for the livestock industry. 2. Cooperation among state agencies to speed the meat processing permitting process and tailor it to HIMC and similar ventures' size.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Thema Black

Owner, HI 1992 Sheep Co.



**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/22/2020 8:40:11 AM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Dennis F Lokmer     | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/22/2020 9:05:41 AM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Anna Barbeau        | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Food Hubs r needed. This is a no brainer. Less tourism related development and more support of residents who support Hawai'i. Food Hubs r a necessary positive tool which will also create employment.



# Hawai'i Island Food Alliance

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2722 SD2 before the House Committee on on Economic Development and Business Monday 06/22/20 at 11.00 AM in House conference room 329.

Aloha Chair McKelvey and Members of the House Committee on Economic Development and Business.

Hawaii Island Food Alliance (HIFA) is composed of nonprofit organizations, private businesses, higher education, and government officials throughout Hawaii County. HIFA facilitates food system partnerships and collaboration in Hawaii County to share knowledge and opportunities, catalyze action, influence policy, and initiate projects. Many HIFA members are also HFUU members and all Hawai'i County Food Hubs are represented within HIFA.

Before COVID-19, a survey of 8 food hubs statewide by Hawaii Farmers Union United showed that they represent over 650 small and medium farms and generate 2.7 million in income annually in local food sales. Almost all food hub developments in Hawaii are operated by family farmers to alleviate the need for small farmers to do their own marketing, distribution and sales.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Hawaii's residents looked for alternative ways to get their food as most restaurants closed and families were isolated at home in order to contain the spread of the virus. Multiple existing and new Hawaii food hubs stepped up and formed a reliable alternative inter-island distribution network by offering locally grown produce boxes for home delivery. In the last three months, Hawaii's existing food hubs have expanded exponentially and dozen new food hubs have been formed to serve as Essential Workers in these times of distress. Instead of selling to restaurants, food hubs now sell directly to households.

Food hubs are entities in or nearby farm communities that support small farmers with aggregation, processing, marketing and sale of locally grown food. SB2722 SD2 would initiate a Food Hub Pilot program. This measure has never been so urgent to promote Food Security and Resilience of Hawaii's Local Food Systems.

Mahalo,

HAWAI'I Island Food Alliance

June 21, 2020

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF  
SB 2722D2

Submitted by Luciano Minerbi  
Professor of Urban and Regional Planning (retired)  
As an individual and as an expert in my field

I support to advance procurement of locally produce food.

I have followed in recent years dissertation research locally and abroad on food policies and for many years studied local farmers and rural community economic development need and potential in all our islands.

I am quite convinced that the state and counties can be much more proactive in support and in enabling food hubs to enhance linkage between small producers and consumers in rural, suburban, and urban areas thus mobilizing hidden human and unused farming resources. The food hubs are a missing link in the island local food chain.

Food hubs are the key element of the needed infrastructure together with workers' housing for rural poor to enter in and be a new productive part of the local small scale diversified farming that, at the capillary level, helps lift poverty and improve quality of life locality by locality. I sense that public opinion is now favorable at these proactive initiatives for small scale, quality, and healthy island food production and distribution.

Respectfully submitted.



Luciano Minerbi  
2444 Hihwai St Apt 2005  
Honolulu, Hi 96826  
lucianominerbi@gmail.com

**SB-2722-SD-2**

Submitted on: 6/22/2020 10:18:07 AM

Testimony for EDB on 6/22/2020 11:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| petra zoeller       | Individual          | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Aloha Kakou,

I strongly support SB 2722 SD2. As we have seen during this pandemic, we need to make sure that we can support more of our local food needs through local agriculture. It also is very important to support the individual farmers with distribution means. a five year food hub pilot program will be essential in helping us move forward toward food sustainability.

Sincerely,

Petra Zoeller