

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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2020  
10:35 A.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 211

SENATE BILL NO. 2723  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2723 that appropriates funds for the GoFarm Hawaii program and requires GoFarm Hawaii to provide the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture with an annual report of the program's goals and a semi-annual report outlining program outputs and outcomes.

The Department supports this bill and comments that GoFarm Hawaii has been successful in providing more than 130 farmers a path leading from considering farming as a career and through a series of courses, prepared them to be a commercial farmer.

GoFarm Hawaii is a the only statewide program offering farmers the comprehensive training that includes: **AgCurious** – attracts the interested farmer; **AgXposure** – introduces the interested farmer to the aspects of farming; **AgSchool** – teaches the beginning farmer the spectrum of production topics and includes maintenance of a 1,000 square foot plot of food crops; **AgPro** – retains those beginning farmers that have decided to be a farmer and teaches business planning and practices small-scale commercial production; and **AgIncubator** – rewards the beginning farmer with a ¼ acre of land to start a business and transition off the site.



The appropriation would allow GoFarm Hawaii to meet the demand for the interested farmers as the demand for enrollment often exceeds availability. GoFarm Hawaii has earned the branding of their program as the premier training for beginning farmers and is an example of past success being an indicator of future performance.

The Department supports the bill and asks that its passage not replace or adversely impact the other priorities of the Department.



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

---

Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Thursday, February 20, 2020 at 10:35 a.m.

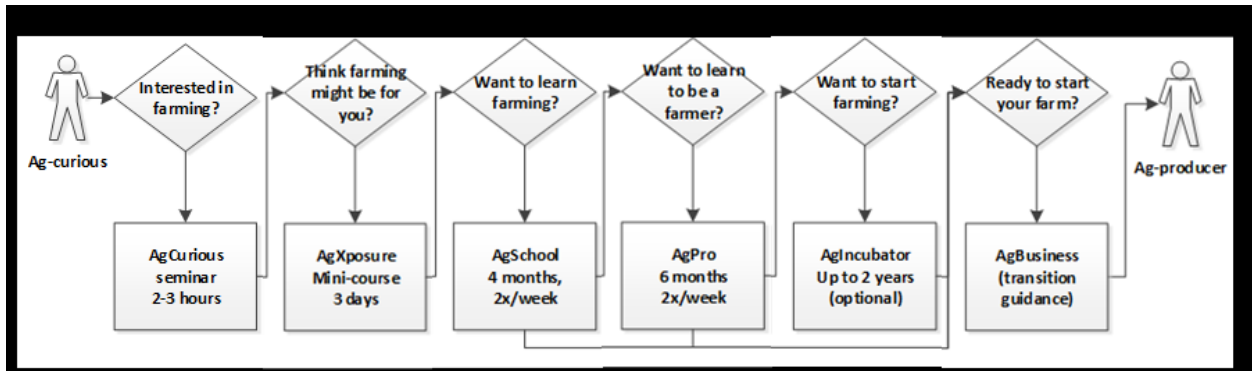
By  
Nicholas Comerford, Dean  
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources  
And  
Michael Bruno, PhD  
Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### SB 2723 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2723 that seeks to fund the GoFarm Hawai'i program. The average age of a farmer in Hawai'i is about 60 years, thus, there is a need to train future farmers for Hawai'i, but where the future farmers will come from is unclear. The College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) trains students for 4-year degrees in Horticulture, Soil Science, Entomology, Plant Pathology and Animal Science. CTAHR students typically do not go into farming, per se; but are the scientists trained to support agriculture. Of course, they have the skills to farm if they wish, but most do not consider this their future.

The GoFarm Hawai'i program is a fully grant funded, non-degree granting program associated with CTAHR. It is a successful program and its success is based on how the program is organized. The program accepts anyone interested in developing the skills to farm and offers a series of sequential programs that allows participants to proceed through the programs based on their level of interest. Below is a diagram of the series of sequential programs offered by GoFarm Hawai'i, beginning with AgCurious and culminating with AgBusiness.



This bill does an excellent job of outlining the success of this program, which we will not reproduce here. The program has a high rate of success as measured by the number of participants that proceed to farm on their own land, or work on farms. GoFarm Hawai'i has also expanded its program to meet special needs. One example is working with prison inmates to train them to be Agricultural Technicians, with the hope of reducing recidivism.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 2723 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.



February 17, 2020

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committees,

***RE: Support for SB2723 – GoFarm Hawaii Program (Date/Time of Hearing: 2/20/2020; 10:35am)***

On behalf of the The Kohala Center, I would like to extend our full support of SB 2723, which will appropriate funds to the GoFarm Hawai'i program.

The Kohala Center is an independent, community-based center for research, conservation, and education located on Hawai'i Island. By focusing on the needs of island residents and the research interests of our university and agency partners, we work on three core areas: energy self-reliance, food self-reliance, and ecosystem health.

Our organization has worked closely with both the GoFarm Hawai'i (GFH) beginning farmer training program and the AgBusiness Team since 2012. Their practical approach to teaching and supporting farmers have increased the number and viability of agricultural businesses throughout the State. The GFH program is the only business development program in the state dedicated to working with and elevating the success of Hawai'i's agricultural entrepreneurs; they are a critical component in Hawai'i's agricultural landscape, providing technical assistance in farmer training, business planning, marketing, production planning, succession planning, and more. GFH piloted its beginning farmer training program on Hawai'i Island at The Kohala Center's Demonstration Farm. We are committed to supporting the success and growth of this program on Hawai'i Island and across the state.

The Kohala Center strongly encourages the support of this valuable program.

Sincerely,

Nicole Milne, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Programs  
Director of Food and Agriculture Initiatives  
The Kohala Center

**From:** [John Dobovan](#)  
**To:** [WAM Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** SB2723  
**Date:** Monday, February 17, 2020 5:59:41 PM

---

Dear Senators:

I am a commercial farmer and graduate of the GoFarm program and I want you to know that I strongly support this program. My farm received an excellent start thanks to GoFarm and I continue to rely heavily upon GoFarm for continued success. Please help Hawai's farmers and pass SB2723.

Sincerely,  
John Dobovan

-----  
John Dobovan  
President,  
Kulahaven Farms LLC  
PO Box 901301  
Kula, HI 96790  
(808) 955-0955  
[jd@kulahavenfarms.com](mailto:jd@kulahavenfarms.com)  
<http://www.facebook.com/Kulahaven>  
<http://www.kulahavenfarms.com/>



---

February 18th, 2020

**Emily Emmons**  
Executive Director, Ho`ōla Veteran Services  
37 Kaikuono St.  
Hilo, HI 96720

---

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Jeanna Rimmer**  
President

**Lani Weigert**  
Vice President

**Rochelle Akoni**  
Treasurer

**John Emmons**  
Secretary

**Lito Arkangel**  
Board Member

**SUBJECT:** Support for SB2723 – GoFarm Hawaii Program (Date/Time of Hearing: 2/20/2020; 10:35am)

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committees,,

Ho`ōla Veteran Services is pleased to submit testimony strongly supporting SB 2723, which will appropriate funds to the GoFarm Hawaii program.

Ho`ōla Veteran Services provides agriculture training and hands-on experiences for veterans and their families, along with the community in hopes of creating a more sustainable future & well-being for all. Our goal is to increase the number of veterans seeking and securing educational, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities in the food and agriculture sector in Hawaii.

Our organization has actively partnered with GoFarm Hawaii to provide agriculture training and business education for transitioning veterans interested in a career in agriculture production. For over two years, we've worked together to support veterans going through GFH program, and are looking forward to the expansion of programs to include Hawaii Island veterans.

The GoFarm Hawaii program is an essential part of expanding our local agricultural network. They are educating the next generation of farmers, providing needed support for existing farmers, and helping to develop the overall industry and food security for our future. We look forward to our continued partnership with GoFarm Hawaii and strongly encourage your support for this Bill.

Sincerely,

*Emily Emmons*

Executive Director  
Ho`ōla Veteran Services 501c3 d.b.a. Ho`ōla Farms

**Executive Director**  
Emily Emmons  
808-494-2613  
[emily@hoolafarms.org](mailto:emily@hoolafarms.org)

**Subject: Support for SB2723—GoFarm Hawaii Program (2/20/2020; 10:35 am))**

Dear Chairs Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committees,

I am in strong support of SB2723, which appropriates funds to the GoFarm Hawaii program. As a former and current student, the GoFarm Hawaii program is a beginner's farmer training program that teaches students practical skills on becoming a farmer such as crop planning, irrigation, pest and disease management, soil amendments, farming goals, marketing, and production. These are skills that are not taught anywhere else in the state. GoFarm Hawaii has been honing their training program for almost a decade and is beginning to see the rewards of their efforts as more students transition from the incubator stage of the program to becoming independent farmers.

In addition to the practical skills gained, GoFarm Hawaii places a strong emphasis on building a network in the farming and agricultural industry—coordinating field visits to other farms, sponsoring agricultural events such as the Variety Showcase Oahu, and encouraging mentorship programs between established and beginning farmers. As a beginning farmer, the connections made are invaluable.

During the program, I have not only been able to learn about farming, I am actively managing a plot of GoFarm Hawaii land, marketing and selling products, developing a business plan, and looking closely at the financial viability of specific crops and my business. After graduating, I hope to find land to begin to manifest my dream and place all my acquired skills to practice.

For Hawai'i, whose goal is to increase local food production dramatically, GoFarm Hawaii is the first step to obtaining that goal. Farmers face huge challenges in this state. For me, GoFarm Hawaii mitigates some of those challenges through education. Please give your support to GoFarm Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Tina Bushnell  
Wiko Farms  
[kwbushnell@gmail.com](mailto:kwbushnell@gmail.com)  
808-218-0663





**O'AHU  
RESOURCE  
CONSERVATION &  
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

PO Box 209, KUNIA, HAWAII 96759 ♦ 808-622-9026 ♦ [WWW.OAHURCD.ORG](http://WWW.OAHURCD.ORG)

**BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS**

February 18, 2020

**Taylor Kellerman**  
President

**SUBJECT: Support for SB2723 – GoFarm Hawaii Program (Date/Time of Hearing:  
2/20/2020;10:35am)**

**Ethan West**  
Vice President

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committees,

**Mark Phillipson**  
Treasurer

Please recognize O'ahu RC&D's strong support of SB 2723, which will appropriate funds to the GoFarm Hawaii program.

**Melissa Z. Rhoden**  
Secretary

**Yarrow Flower**

Our organization, which has a 20 year track record supporting Hawaii's farms, ranches and rural communities, has actively and successfully partnered with GoFarm Hawaii on many initiatives. The GoFarm AgBusiness team recently partnered with us to update the Hawaii Agribusiness Guidebook, a publicly-available online guide featuring important points and tips for operating a farm business in Hawaii. They have been active partners in our Parade of Farms events, the statewide Women Farmers Workshop series, and various training events that support local farmers..

**EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR**

**Dave Elliott**

The GoFarm Hawaii program is an essential part of expanding our local agricultural network. They are educating the next generation of farmers, providing needed support for existing ones, and helping to develop the overall industry. We look forward to our continued partnership with GoFarm Hawaii and strongly encourage your support of this Bill.

Sincerely,

Dave Elliott  
Executive Director  
Oahu Resource Conservation & Development Council

**From:** [Chris Kaiakapu](#)  
**To:** [WAM Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** Measure SB 2723; 2/20/2020; 10:30am  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 18, 2020 8:51:10 PM

---

February 18, 2020

Support for SB2723 – GoFarm Hawaii Program; 2/20/2020; 10:35am

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committees,

As a current Full-time Farmer on Kaua'i and an alumni of the GoFarm Hawaii Beginning Farmer Training Program, I strongly support this bill, which appropriates funds to the GoFarm Hawaii program.

As a student of the GoFarm Hawaii program, I learned the production and business skills necessary to operate a successful commercial farm. After graduating, I partnered with a fellow Native Hawaiian farmer and began working for Kuamo'o farm. We utilize a commercial Aquaponics operation, microgreens, in-ground vegetables, as well as kalo and other native food crops to sustain our livelihood and enrich our community with affordable, sustainable, locally grown food. We are currently based in Kalaheo, selling produce and value-added products to restaurants, catering companies, and direct to local families via a CSA program. I currently work full-time to maintain the operation in Kalaheo while helping to expand and develop our new property on 5 acres in the Hanapepe Valley. On this new property we are expanding our aquaponics operation, clearing zones for in-ground row crops, and restoring Lo'i Kalo that has been neglected for years. We work with schools and youth programs to bring education and hands-on experiences to instill the values of agriculture and conservation in our keiki.

Farming is the cornerstone of Hawaii's roots in self-sufficiency. Our culture, new and old, and indeed our identity, whether Kanaka or Hawaii resident, is intertwined with the unique crops and methods found in Hawaii agriculture. In today's society Farmers are under-valued and need support to learn, grow, and thrive. The GoFarm Hawaii program has given me and hundreds of others the skills, network, and support needed to start farming and pursue a career in agriculture. The program is an essential tool for

strengthening the agriculture industry in Hawaii, which is in turn essential for keeping our economy diversified and resilient. Please support this valuable program that develops and nurtures farmers for the State of Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Christopher Lono Ka'iakapu  
B.S. Environmental Science  
Farmer  
Kuamo'o Farm, Hanapepe, Kaua'i



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

February 17, 2020

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

**SUBJECT:** Support for SB2723 – GoFarm Hawaii Program  
(Date/Time of Hearing: 2/11/2020 at 3:00 p.m., Room 229)

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and members of the committee,

On behalf of the North Shore Economic Vitality Partnership (EVP), I would like to extend our full support of SB2723, which will appropriate funds to the GoFarm Hawaii program.

The North Shore EVP was formed in 2015 as a result of a comprehensive, community-based economic analysis that identified the need for a regional food hub to fill serious gaps in the food supply chain of the region. Our non-profit organization worked with community leaders to develop realistic strategic plans focused on securing that critical infrastructure and providing new opportunities for business and creation of new jobs in agriculture in the region. Currently, our major projects include 1) statewide expansion of our GroupGAP (Good Agricultural Practices) farmer training program and 2) developing a food hub on the North Shore of Oahu.

In December 2019 two more farms were USDA Harmonized GAP certified through our GroupGAP program and earlier this month our program passed its USDA External audit with flying colors. Our continued success is due in part to our collaborations across the state, including Go Farm.

During the past year we have participated in Go Farm seminars and workshops to bring on-farm food safety expertise to the trainees. We value the opportunity to get on front of new farmers, providing food safety training, and interacting with these aspiring farmers. GoFarm Hawaii graduates and clients have been members of our GroupGAP program, showing their dedication to quality and food safety, looking to increase production and sales, and seeking access to larger markets that often require food safety certification.

GoFarm Hawaii is developing commercial farmers on the North Shore and across the state that are prepared to supply food for local communities. We look forward to these farmers actively contributing to sustainable agriculture in their communities. We will continue to work together in areas of mutual interest especially in areas where we can leverage each other's expertise in support of Hawai'i agriculture. The North Shore EVP strongly supports this measure that will ensure that the GoFarm Hawaii program continues its work to support local farmers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kelly  
President & CEO  
North Shore EVP



*Farmer owned, 'āina grown –  
from our trees to your table.*

February 18, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Support for SB2723 – GoFarm Hawaii Program

Dear Chairs Gabbard and Kim, Vice Chairs Ruderman and Kidani, & members of the committees,

We would like to extend our full support of SB2723 that would appropriate funds to the GoFarm Hawai'i program.

As a client of GoFarm Hawai'i, the AgBusiness Team has assisted our organization, the Hawai'i 'Ulu Producers Cooperative (HUPC), with business planning, financial analysis, project development, and marketing initiatives for multiple businesses. The services offered by the program have provided our management and board with useful tools developed for our unique business operation. The team has always been willing to provide valuable guidance to help our business grow and succeed.

HUPC is an 85-member farmer-owned and -operated business. Over 80% of our membership is comprised of socially disadvantaged minority farmers. Growing a business in Hawai'i is challenging and we greatly appreciate the ongoing support we receive from the GoFarm Hawai'i team. There is no way our business would be where it is today if not for the support services provided by GoFarm Hawai'i.

In conclusion, we enthusiastically encourage you to consider supporting this valuable and much needed program! Please contact me directly should you have any questions about our unyielding support for GoFarm Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Dana Shapiro  
Manager



**Hawai'i 'Ulu Producers Cooperative**

P.O. Box 1203, Captain Cook, Hawai'i 96704 | 808-238-8869 | [eatbreadfruit.com](http://eatbreadfruit.com) | [info@eatbreadfruit.com](mailto:info@eatbreadfruit.com)



Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS  
Thursday, February 20, 2020 — 10:35 a.m. — Room 211

**Ulupono Initiative supports SB 2723, Relating to Agriculture.**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz 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 waste and fresh water resources.

**Ulupono supports SB 2723, which appropriates funds for the GoFarm Hawai'i Program (GFH).**

Since 2013, Ulupono has provided \$250,000 in grant funding to GFH for infrastructure and development of operations on Hawai'i Island, Maui, O'ahu, and Kaua'i. With funding from Ulupono and others, we are excited about the growth of the GFH training program.

According to the USDA-NASS Census of Agriculture, there are 7,300 estimated farms in Hawai'i, of which more than 75% earn less than \$25,000 per year. Additionally, of those farms that generate over \$25,000 per year, 65% have principal farm operators that are at least 55 years old. With the high costs of agricultural production here in Hawai'i and the average age of the local farmer climbing, it is of utmost importance for the State to invest in the next generation and to provide a financially viable future for those agricultural operations.

We appreciate that GFH has developed a broad spectrum of classes designed for those with an interest in agriculture. GFH offers the most comprehensive new farmer training program in Hawai'i, including classroom education, hands-on training, business planning, and incubation opportunities.

GFH has a well-received reputation with training the next generation of local producers in the State. Over the past 3 years, 58% of the 127 program graduates have either started their own agricultural businesses (60 graduates) or began working in (14 graduates) the agricultural industry. By training the future agricultural workforce, GFH is directly supporting the State's local food production goals and the creation of a more sustainable Hawai'i.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

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

*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](mailto:info@hfbf.org); [www.hfbf.org](http://www.hfbf.org)

February 20, 2020

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2723**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Room 211  
10:35 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, 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 1,800 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.

**The Hawaii Farm Bureau strongly supports SB 2723**, which appropriates funds for the GoFarm Hawaii program. Requires GoFarm Hawaii to provide the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture with an annual report of the program's goals and a semi-annual report outlining program outputs and outcomes.

Hawaii's farmers and ranchers are aging. The average age exceeds 60 years old and if they were in other professions would be retired. Yet many of these farmers are those that provide to KTA, Safeway, Times, Costco, restaurants, and hotels and truly make a difference in reducing imports. Unfortunately for many, succession plans do not exist and as they retire, the lands go out of agricultural production. To maintain and expand production levels, it's clear that we need a new generation of farmers and ranchers equipped to assume the task of growing crops and livestock. There is an urgent need for interns or apprentices that are willing to not only work on these farms but take over their operations.

GoFarm Hawaii's farmer-training program has been training new farmers since 2012. They have grown to become one of the largest and most successful beginning farmer development programs in the Nation. The GoFarm Hawaii program is helping to address Hawaii's agriculture labor shortage by recruiting and training new farmers. This is critical to achieving Hawaii's goal of doubling food production.

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

**SB-2723**

Submitted on: 2/19/2020 7:28:12 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/20/2020 10:35:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jerry Ornellas	Testifying for Kauai County Farm Bureau	Support	No

Comments:



Committee on Ways and Means

Time: 10:35 a.m.  
Date: February 20, 2020  
Room: State Capitol Room 211



**TESTIMONY**

Submitted by the undersigned organizations

To: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee

**RE: In Support of SB2723, Relating to GoFarm Hawai'i**

The undersigned organizations are writing to **SUPPORT SB2723**, which proposes to appropriate funds out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii for the GoFarm Hawai'i program to provide agricultural workforce development and support services in business consulting, technical assistance, and beginner farmer training.

Since 2013, GoFarm Hawai'i has trained 330 aspiring farmers at five training sites on four islands. The program has five key activities: 1) Support agribusiness development statewide; 2) Educate agribusinesses and create industry tools; 3) Develop new farmers for Hawai'i; 4) Incubate program graduates; and 5) Train agricultural workers.

GoFarm Hawaii graduates engage throughout Hawai'i's food system as trained producers, informed consumers, and passionate advocates. This growing critical mass of producers will provide not just the agricultural produce, but also the know-how and collaboration for building the systems for processing, manufacturing, specialization, technology, aggregation, scaling, and other efficiencies in support of a robust agricultural industry in Hawai'i.

Farmers and food production activities are the essential building blocks in transforming and sustaining the local food system in Hawai'i. It is of tremendous importance to everyone who eats in the State—government employees as well as private citizens, working adults, school children, the house-less, the military, the visitor industry, the incarcerated and more. A successful GoFarm program contributes to the larger work of our organizations, and we wholeheartedly support this bill and urge the Committee to **PASS SB2723**.

Hawai'i State Future Farmers  
of America (FFA)

Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation

Waimānalo Market Co-op

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui  
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

Kamehameha Schools

Feb 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

**LATE**



HEARING DATE:  
Feb 20, 2020 10:35 AM

PLACE:  
Conference Room 211  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

***Testimony in support of SB 2723 – GoFarm Hawaii Program***

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committees,

Please recognize my strong support for SB 2723, which appropriates funds to the GoFarm Hawai'i program. Shortly after graduating from the program in 2015, I started a farm in Hale'iwa called Counter Culture Organic Farm on five acres of Kamehameha Schools agricultural land. Primarily due to the experience and connections gained through the GoFarm Hawai'i, I was able to secure that initial lease, a second Kamehameha Schools lease for an additional five acres in 2017, and a few months ago signed a 30 acre lease in Waialua to significantly expand our certified organic produce operation.

Counter Culture Organic Farm currently has about five acres in cultivation, selling \$120,000 in certified organic produce to local restaurants and households through Farm Link Hawai'i and the Kaka'ako Farmers Market. Our farm employs 3 full-time and 2 part-time people. Our impact on the food system and local economy will continue to grow as we expand into our new 30 acre lease in 2020.

I would not be where I am today without GoFarm Hawai'i. The program gave me the appropriate mix of theory, hands-on practice, and, most importantly, a connection to a strong network of resources to draw upon indefinitely. Since graduating, I've regularly communicated and partnered with GoFarm staff and other alumni to increase our impact on local agriculture.

The GoFarm Hawai'i program is a needed and valuable program for the state of Hawai'i. Their ongoing support, educational opportunities, and network continues to provide a valuable support system for my business.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my support for this Bill.

Sincerely,



Robert Barreca  
Owner  
Counter Culture Organic Farm  
[rob@counterculturehawaii.com](mailto:rob@counterculturehawaii.com)  
(808) 224-1905

**SB-2723**

Submitted on: 2/18/2020 8:36:29 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/20/2020 10:35:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
elizabeth hansen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support HB 2568 so we can continue to fund this GoFund Hawaii Program. This funding is essential because the Go Farm Program teaches its students to have effective and realistic goals that make a farm profitable. Unless we continue to support GoFarm Hawaii, this important way to increase agricultural knowledge will be lost. As you know, the average age of a farmer in the state of Hawaii is over 60 years old. We must continue to provide useful and comprehensive knowledge of farming techniques and agricultural business planning to our younger generation.

Thank you for support of this bill.

Elizabeth Hansen  
Kua Aina Farm

**From:** [Rose Matthews](#)  
**To:** [WAM Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** Support for SB2723 – GoFarm Hawaii Program (Date/Time of Hearing: 2/20/2020; 10:30am)  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 18, 2020 8:31:31 PM

---

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committees,

Please recognize my strong support for SB 2723, which appropriates funds to the GoFarm Hawaii program. I started the Windward GoFarm program in 2015. Upon completing the program, I established a small farm business, Bear Claw Farm LLC, in 2016 which currently grows diversified vegetables on 1 acre of land in Waimanalo. I sell produce to local restaurants and via farm stand pop-ups in Waimanalo, Kahalu'u, and Kalihi each week. The GoFarm program solidified my production skills, provided business support, and gave me a network that allows my business to continue growing. I would not be where I am today without the GoFarm program. I am currently on incubator land rented from GoFarm. Without this land option, I would not have been able to start my farm business as the investment and risk would have been essentially impossible. I am now working on my business full-time, happily self-employed, growing hundreds of pounds of produce each month, and am looking forward to a long term commitment of growing food for Oahu.

The GoFarm Hawaii program is a needed and valuable program for the state of Hawaii. Their ongoing support, educational opportunities, and network continues to provide a valuable support system for my business.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my support of this Bill.

Sincerely,  
Rose Matthews

Bear Claw Farm LLC  
[bearclawfarm.com](http://bearclawfarm.com)  
[rose@bearclawfarm.com](mailto:rose@bearclawfarm.com)  
517-402-6551

**SB-2723**

Submitted on: 2/18/2020 8:38:56 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/20/2020 10:35:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Rodger Hansen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I own and operate a small farm in Hakalau HI which supplements my family income. Over the last five years I have hired several former GoFarm Students to work on our farm because of their diverse and deep agricultural knowledge about farming in Hawaii. All these workers learned these skills from the GoFarm Hawaii Program. I feel that GoFarm Hawaii is a true benefit to the goals of improving agricultural output in Hawaii.

Your consideration is appreciated.

**SB-2723**

Submitted on: 2/18/2020 9:15:06 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/20/2020 10:35:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Augusto Decastro	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, & members of the committees,

Please recognize my strong support for SB 2723, which appropriates funds to the GoFarm Hawaii program. Since graduating from the program, I started a small farm business. The program taught me production skills, provided business support, and a gave me a network that allowed my business to grow.

The GoFarm Hawaii program is a needed and valuable program for the state of Hawaii. Their ongoing support, educational opportunities, and network continues to provide a valuable support system for current and future GoFarmers. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my support of this Bill.

Sincerely,

Augusto Decastro

Personal Testimony Submitted to the  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair  
Thursday, February 20, 2020, 10:35 AM

By Charles Kinoshita

Support for SB 2723, Relating to Agriculture

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

My name is Charles Kinoshita. I retired from the University of Hawaii, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, less than two month ago, and I'm submitting testimony as a private citizen in support of SB 2723, which calls for appropriation of funds to support the GoFarm Hawaii (GFH) Program.

Decades ago, prior to joining the University of Hawaii, I was an engineer for, and part of the management team of, the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association (HSPA) Experiment Station. When I first joined HSPA, sugarcane was being cultivated on four Hawaiian islands, covering more than 200,000 acres, and yielding roughly one million tons of sugar per year. Today, no cane is grown in Hawaii for the manufacture of refined sugar.

While commercial sugarcane has disappeared from our landscape, the majority of the lands that once supported cane, now fallow, still are zoned agricultural and have great potential for diversified crops. These lands can be brought back into commercial agriculture to create the green landscape that is important to the health of our environment and our visitor industry, and support our local economy and food security, if new farmers are able to cultivate those lands skillfully and profitably. In order to increase the number of farmers in Hawaii's diversified agriculture and ensure their success, we need to provide aspiring farmers with the knowledge and skill sets to grow crops better and to operate their agribusinesses more profitably.

GoFarm Hawaii has assembled infrastructure and professionals to grow new farmers on all four islands that previously grew commercial sugarcane. GFH, which offers training in both crop production and business management quite likely is the largest and most successful new farmer training program in the nation. In the last three years, more than 100 trainees graduated from the GFH training program, approximately 60% of the graduates started farm businesses or are supporting other agribusinesses in Hawaii, and 18 farm businesses were incubated on our own program lands. Complementary to the highly successful new farmer training program, the GoFarm Hawaii AgBusiness consulting arm provides one-on-one support to new and existing farmers statewide, and in 2019 helped more than 60 farmers apply for loans, leases and grants, and develop business plans and value-added products.

Let's be clear... to achieve such high levels of success and positive impacts is costly. GFH has been highly successful in competing for contracts and grants at the national, state, and local

levels, and has garnered strong support from generous and committed partners in the private sector, government agencies, and philanthropic organizations, but additional funding, as called for in SB 2723, is needed to continue this successful farmer-training and agribusiness-support program and ensure GFH some level of stability.

In closing, I'd like to point-out that I believe so strongly in GFH that, in retirement, I have volunteered to be an uncompensated part of the GFH team so that I may make my own small contribution to the future success of agriculture in Hawaii. I ask you to support SB 2723 and help GoFarm Hawaii train and provide consulting services to our state's future successful farmers and agripreneurs.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my views.



February 19, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Support for SB 2723 – GoFarm Hawaii‘ Program  
(Date/Time of Hearing: 2/20/2020; 10:30am)

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committee,

Thank you Senators Dela Cruz and Keith-Agaran for working to provide more land with long-term leases for small commercial farmers. I believe it is also important for the State to help fund the training for people who wish to farm those lands.

That is why I am writing in support of SB 2723, which appropriates funds to the GoFarm Hawaii‘i program. As a 2020 graduate of GoFarm’s AgSchool (along with my 27-year-old son Tom), we learned hands-on, agriculture production and marketing skills and also how to build a network that will support our future in the agricultural industry.

I am a retired State of Hawaii‘i employee and can not afford to return to the university to get another degree in agriculture. The GoFarm program provided Tom and I with an affordable and practical education that has given us more confidence to farm his grandfather’s land.

During the program, we had a weekly, evening class about farming subjects with guest speakers, while during the day we managed (seed, weed, harvest) a plot of land, marketed and sold our vegetables, developed a future crop plan, and examined the financial viability of specific crops and our business.

If we are accepted into and complete the next, six-month phase of GoFarm (called AgPro), my son and I then plan to start a farm on his grandfather’s land and will continue using the support services and network that the program offers.

The GoFarm Hawaii program is a needed and valuable program for the State of Hawaii‘i that remains too dependent on imported food. Right now, GoFarm’s costs are mostly funded by and dependent on federal government grants that are competitive and require reapplication.

GoFarm’s ongoing support, educational opportunities, and network are essential to develop more small, family farm businesses, which will provide more food security for our community. Food security for Hawaii‘i is more likely with GoFarm’s training programs and support services. Please pass SB 2723.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support of this Bill.

Sincerely,

Jay Hartwell  
GoFarm AgSchool Graduate (Windward O‘ahu Cohort 10)  
hartwell808@gmail.com  
808-373-4891