

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

ROBERT YU
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
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ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 1250

February 8, 2021
1:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference

RELATING TO EMERGENCY FOOD MANAGEMENT

The Department of Budget and Finance offers comments on Senate Bill (S.B.) No. 1250.

S.B. No. 1250 establishes the Hawai'i Emergency Food Assistance Program to be administered by the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to relieve emergency food shortages during declared state of emergencies; establishes the Hawai'i Emergency Food Assistance Program Special Fund (Special Fund) that would generate revenues through legislative appropriations, gifts, donations, and interest generated by the account; appropriates \$5,000,000 in general funds in FY 22 and FY 23 for deposit into the Special Fund; and appropriates \$5,000,000 in special funds in FY 22 and FY 23 to provide an expenditure ceiling for the Special Fund.

As a matter of general policy, the department does not support the creation of any special fund which does not meet the requirements of Section 37-52.3, HRS. Special funds should: 1) serve a need as demonstrated by the purpose, scope of work and an explanation why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process; 2) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought

and charges made upon the users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and the sources of revenue; 3) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity; and 4) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining. Regarding S.B. No. 1250, it is difficult to determine whether the proposed special fund would be self-sustaining.

The department defers to DOA regarding program implementation and funding.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

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 AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2021
1:00 P.M.
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 1250
RELATING TO EMERGENCY FOOD MANAGEMENT**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 1250 to create the Hawaii emergency food assistance program special fund to be administered by the Department of Agriculture and appropriates moneys into the fund to feed Hawaii's needy population when a state of emergency has been declared.

The Department appreciates the intent of this measure as long it does not adversely impact priorities in our Executive Supplemental budget.

During times of economic crisis, natural disasters, or other emergencies, the number of Hawaii residents and families, particularly low-income families and the unemployed, who experience food insecurity increases dramatically, local charitable food organizations face insurmountable financial pressure on their limited budgets when called upon to respond to the increased demand for food, and local food producers are severely impacted by the loss of markets to sell their produce which have been shuttered by the crisis, particularly in the hospitality, travel, and restaurant industries.

Charitable food organizations can offer a dual solution to this dilemma by ensuring that families in need have access to enough food during these austere times, while simultaneously providing an economic lifeline for food producers. This measure seeks to achieve that outcome, upon an emergency proclamation from the governor or mayor, by providing funding to charitable food organizations to purchase food directly from local food producers and distribute it to those in need to sustain their household.



The Department offers the following comment on this bill. Lines 19 through 20, on page 2 states “upon an emergency proclamation from the governor or mayor...” The department suggests amending the language on page 2, line 20 by deleting “or mayor” since a state agency cannot be activated for emergency response until a state of emergency is declared by the governor.

The department appreciates the measure’s purpose to serve the critical needs of the most vulnerable segment of our society during a declared state of emergency, while simultaneously supporting the charitable local food organizations and local food producers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Monday, February 8, 2021; 1:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 1250, RELATING TO EMERGENCY FOOD MANAGEMENT.

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill No. 1250, RELATING TO EMERGENCY FOOD MANAGEMENT.

The bill, as received by your Committee, would:

- (1) Establish the Hawaii Emergency Food Assistance Program (Program) within the Department of Agriculture, to be administered during a declared state of emergency to relieve food shortages by distributing local food to low-income and unemployed families and individuals, among others;
- (2) Create the Program Special Fund (Special Fund), and provide that monies in the Special Fund not lapse into the general fund.
- (3) Appropriate \$5,000,000 in general funds for fiscal year 2021-2022, and the same for fiscal year 2022-2023 to be deposited into the Special Fund; and
- (4) Appropriates \$5,000,000 from the Special Fund for fiscal year 2021-2022, and the same for fiscal year 2022-2023, to provide immediate relief from food shortages during the declared state of emergency.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 1250
Monday, February 8, 2021; 1:00 p.m.
Page 2

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely threatened the health and welfare of our citizens, especially Hawaii's underprivileged and rural communities. With so many people unemployed, entire families are struggling to put food on the table on a consistent basis. All one needs to do is visit one of our member FQHC's food distribution events and see the line of cars stretch for miles and people wait for hours to receive some surplus food. It is shocking yet uplifting to see that people do care for their fellow citizens.

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly exacerbated the need for a program like this. Hawaii's families are struggling to survive. Accordingly, the HPCA urges your favorable consideration of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



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Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*

TO:
Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 8, 2021
TIME: 1pm
PLACE: Via Videoconference

RE: SB1250 Relating to Emergency Food Management

Position: Support

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

HFIA is in support of this measure. Our local food banks and food pantries have done a remarkable job of managing the unprecedented increase in demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis. This measure will make sure that these organizations have the resources they need to support Hawaii residents in times of increased food insecurity due to disasters or other emergencies. As explained in the measure, organizations like food banks can help stabilize the entire food supply chain during times of crisis. Creating and funding the Hawaii emergency food assistance program is a common sense way to make sure our state is more prepared and more resilient.



HAWAI'I COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

To: The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair
And Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

From: Micah Kāne, Chief Executive Officer & President
Hawai'i Community Foundation

Re: Testimony in Support of SB1250 Relating to Emergency Food Management

Date: Monday, February 8, 2021

Time: 1:00 P.M.

Place: Via Videoconference

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Nishihara and members of the Agriculture and Environment Committee,

My name is Micah Kāne, President & CEO of the Hawai'i Community Foundation. I am submitting this testimony in SUPPORT of SB1250 that creates the Hawaii Emergency Food Assistance Program, that upon emergency proclamation by the governor or mayor would appropriate money to fund food banks to purchase, store and distribute food that is grown or produced in Hawaii.

The Hawaii Community Foundation was directly involved in responding after the 2018 floods on the North Shore of Kauai; Hurricane Lane and the Kilauea eruption on Hawaii Island. Many organizations and agencies responded to these disasters, but only the food banks and pantries were tasked with feeding people in need. In many cases responding to these emergencies depleted the food resources they had on hand for community members who struggle daily with food insecurity.

Our experience with these disasters also revealed the critical importance of the trust and long-standing relationships that food banks and pantries have with their communities. They knew how and where to reach people, and very often facilitated the disaster response activities of larger organizations that had come from outside of the community and didn't know how to engage or best serve the community. The strength of this network was further shown throughout the COVID pandemic last year. We know our community will be faced with more natural disasters and emergencies and that the food bank network will be there to respond.

We suggest that your committee consider making the purchase of food grown or produced in Hawaii a priority instead of a mandate. As we have seen from past emergencies, including the COVID pandemic, it is not always possible to acquire Hawaii produced or grown foods to meet the immediate needs created by an emergency. We certainly agree with the intent to help our local agricultural industry to

the extent possible. However, we would not want to risk being able to provide needed food in an emergency due to a mandated limitation.

As we at the Hawaii Community Foundation work to bring the philanthropic community as a collaborative partner to the efforts of government, the private sector, healthcare and others who continue to serve those in need, we are supportive of measures like this. These collective efforts are necessary to help accelerate the recovery of our communities impacted by emergency situations.

We strongly support SB1250, and look forward to further discussion on the bill. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
In Support of SB 1250 – Relating to Emergency Food Management
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Monday, February 8, 2021, at 1:00 PM

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT** of **SB 1250**, which creates an emergency food assistance program that would authorize the purchase food from Hawai'i producers by community feeding organizations.

Hawai'i's statewide emergency food network, consisting of food banks, pantries, shelters, and commercial kitchens, is a critical system for ensuring the islands' food security during and after times of crisis. Time after time when disasters strike, these charitable organizations are called upon by authorities to respond—without compensation—taxing them beyond their usual capacity to feed our island communities.

Hawai'i would be joining more than 16 other states in having institutional support for charitable feeding programs, and one of just a handful that would dedicate this support to the purchase of local products. The way the bill is written, it would stimulate institutional purchasing of local products in the same manner as “farm to school” or “farm to state” programs, with less bureaucracy to navigate. The upside is that the emergency food network consists of non-governmental organizations that would compete for funding through a competitive procurement process.

While we understand the tight budget situation this year, it is inevitable that Covid-19 will not be the last crisis we face as a community, and when the next one comes, we will once again be in the position of struggling to feed families on the brink. Having the program in statute—even with a small appropriation—would serve as an “insurance policy” to cover future needs. The policy would kick in only upon the proclamation of a future disaster, and is a common sense safety measure.

Mahalo for your consideration of this testimony.

The Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice is committed to a more socially just Hawai'i, where everyone has genuine opportunities to achieve economic security and fulfill their potential. We change systems that perpetuate inequality and injustice through policy development, advocacy, and coalition building.



ALOHACARE

Date: Monday, February 8, 2021

To: The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Senator Clarence Nishihara, Vice-Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

From: Paula Arcena, Executive Vice President, External Affairs
Peggy Mierzwa, Senior Public Policy Analyst, External Affairs

RE: **SB1250 Support Relating to Emergency Food Management**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of **SB1250**. When people lose everything, the food banks play a critical role in their lives. This measure would help to support supplying food to people through Hawaii's foodbanks in the event of natural disasters, health crisis or other emergency.

Founded in 1994, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving 73,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating access to quality health care for all. We believe that health is about supporting whole-person care, including access to housing and food security, to build a stronger, healthier Hawaii.

SB1250 will create a Hawaii emergency food assistance program and fund Hawaii's food banks to purchase, store and transport locally grown and produced foods. On Oahu, the demand for food assistance in May 2020 was 260% higher than it was the previous year.¹ Food banks are a critical life line, ensuring our community members are fed. They help to sustain the food security system. This measure will help to support our local farmers and local economy by keeping money in the state.

Nourished people are healthy people, and without health our communities fall apart. We appreciate the Legislature's intent to ensure that Hawaii's food security systems are supported to meet the nutritional needs of Hawaii's families, including children, seniors, and low income communities. Recent health and economic events devastated people, families, health, health and our economy. This program builds resilience in each of these areas.

SB1250 is an important measure that supports Hawaii residents facing hunger, food banks needing to supply the food, and the farmers and producers needing to sell their goods. It will keep money in our economy, creating health and financial resilience. Please support the health our communities by passing SB1250.

Mahalo for this opportunity to **support SB1250** and our communities.

¹ <https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/08/the-tremendous-cost-of-feeding-the-hungry-in-hawaii/>



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT
Monday, February 8, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative strongly supports SB 1250, Relating to Emergency Food Management.

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food; renewable energy and clean transportation; and better management of freshwater and waste.

Ulupono strongly supports SB 1250, which creates the Hawai'i Emergency Food Assistance Program (HEFAP) and the HEFAP Special Fund to be administered by the Department of Agriculture, and appropriates moneys into the fund to feed communities in need when a state of emergency has been declared.

Natural disasters and state emergencies have become a harsh, consistent reality to our local community. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how vulnerable our community can be, especially regarding our local economy and food system.

Because of this health and economic crisis, Hawai'i has the highest unemployment rate in the nation at 9.3% (December 2020), versus the national unemployment rate at 6.7%. Hawai'i's unemployment rate — which has been exceptionally high since the pandemic effectively shut down tourism in March — has had the worst recovery of any state in the country.ⁱ

- According to the Hawai'i Commercial Rent survey, two in three businesses were significantly impacted or closed by government restrictions in 2020. Nearly the same number do not expect to survive this year without government-funded commercial rent relief.ⁱⁱ
- In December 2020, visitor arrivals dropped by 75.2% compared to a year ago.ⁱⁱⁱ
- According to the Chamber of Commerce of Hawai'i, 65% of the state's restaurants don't expect to survive another six months.^{iv}

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i

One of the most pressing issues to arise with local families is food insecurity. With many out of work and surviving on government unemployment support, communities have relied on the efforts of food banks and local farmers to meet their basic need to eat.

Throughout the US, food banks have turned to local sources to meet community needs. Food banks on each island have done the same, providing a lifeline to local communities and supporting farmers who lose customers every day as more restaurants close and hotels remain empty.

There are many important conversations and relationships that have been built in the last year, solidifying the connection between local farmers and ranchers and community feeding. This bill seeks to create a mechanism in which local feeding can be supported by local producers, supplying fresh, nutritious products to the community during any emergency.

We recognize that you face many difficult decisions this year to balance the budget in the midst of this economic crisis, but we hope that this support for local agriculture and those suffering from hunger in our community can be considered. While this measure does include general fund appropriations, we hope that this committee, and all future committees, will consider the establishment of this program, with or without any general funds, as this formally creates a process to support any future emergency feeding with local products from Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

ⁱ <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2021/01/15/breaking-news/survey-finds-most-hawaii-businesses-still-struggling-to-make-rent/>

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- ii <https://www.civilbeat.org/2021/01/new-wave-of-federal-stimulus-money-is-hitting-hawaii/>
- iii <https://www.hawaiiitourismauthority.org/media/6395/december-2020-visitor-statistics-press-release-final.pdf>
- iv <https://www.civilbeat.org/2021/01/new-wave-of-federal-stimulus-money-is-hitting-hawaii/>



Food+ Policy Internship 2021

food@purplemaia.org

February 7, 2021

To: AEN Committee

Subject: Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1250

Aloha,

My name is Rayleen Egami and I am writing to support SB1250 – Relating to Emergency Food Management. I am deeply committed to increasing food security in our state; I feel the inherent need to pass this bill due to the provisioning that supports those that suffer high food insecurity in emergency situations, as well as those that provide the essential service of cultivating locally grown and sourced foods. In a time of emergency, like we saw during the COVID pandemic, it is of the utmost importance that the residents of our State remain confident that there will be no risk of starvation in the case that we will need to quarantine or shelter-in-place. I feel this bill also ensures confidence for farmers who have lost business due to emergency restrictions, and will keep the allocated funds within our state economy. This is a sustainable solution in response to some of the most important issues residents and lawmakers have faced during this pandemic. I feel that an emergency proclamation will justify the release of these funds. We are all willing to ‘auamo kuleana.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,

Rayleen M L Egami & Food + Interns

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai‘i communities.

In 2021, the pilot cohort of interns are juniors, seniors, and recent graduates of the University of Hawai‘i West O‘ahu’s Sustainable Community Food Systems program. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, and Hawaiian culture.



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

February 8, 2021

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 1250
RELATING TO EMERGENCY FOOD MANAGEMENT

Via Videoconference
1:00 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 1250, which creates the Hawai'i emergency food assistance program special fund to be administered by the department of agriculture and appropriates moneys into the fund to feed Hawai'i's needy population when a state of emergency has been declared.

The COVID-10 Pandemic saw the State of Hawai'i's unemployment rates climb astronomically – over 244,000 unemployment claims since March 1, 2020. Much of Hawai'i's workforce is in the tourism and retail industries, arguably the hardest-hit businesses since the COVID-19 crisis began. Families that had relied on free or discounted meals at schools or work, still need to eat. Non-profit organizations that provide community meals and produce realize that demand is outweighing their supply. Food banks and non-profits struggled and continue to struggle to feed Hawai'i families on a massive scale – especially those most impacted by this crisis — all while their normal sources of funds and donations are diminished. This has resulted in a lot more residents in need of food.

In response to the COVID-19 health crisis and in line with its ongoing efforts to ensure Hawai'i's food assistance system remains resilient, the Hawai'i Farm Bureau, with support from the Ulupono Initiative, created the Farm to Non-Profit Program (F2NP). The BRIDGES (Big Island Rural Agricultural Industries, Distribution, and Growing Enterprises Strategies) Program, our Hawai'i Island F2P program was developed with Councilmember Tim Richards and supported by the County of Hawai'i. The Hawai'i Farm

Bureau also partnered with the Hawai'i Foodbank to create the Farm to Foodbank Program, which connects local producers that have lost markets and revenue sources due to COVID-19 with the Hawai'i Foodbank to meet the increased demands of feeding Hawai'i's communities economically impacted by the pandemic. The F2NP, BRIDGES, and Farm to Foodbank Programs partners with philanthropic entities, non-profit organizations, the State, and County governments to purchase produce from Hawai'i farmers and ranchers to bolster and sustain local food growers and supply and distribution chain to meet the needs with fresh, locally grown food as the people of Hawai'i unite to overcome the novel coronavirus.

HFB's Farm to Foodbank, F2NP, and BRIDGES programs has purchased nearly 100,000 lbs of produce and proteins every week. Through its food distribution programs which include the Farm to Nonprofit Program, Farm to Foodbank, and BRIDGES Program which started on April 11, 2020, the Hawai'i Farm Bureau has effectively leveraged over \$4 million to purchase locally grown and produced food for 371,581 Hawai'i residents.

Hawai'i is located approximately 2,506 miles from the continental United States. About 85-90% of Hawai'i's food is imported which makes it particularly vulnerable to natural disasters and global pandemic events that might disrupt shipping and the food supply. Creating a Hawai'i emergency food assistance program that will provide funds to Hawai'i's foodbanks, non-profit and community feeding programs that provide community meals during emergencies is a win-win for everyone, as it will keep Hawai'i's farmers farming while also providing nutritional food to those who need it most. More than ever, the State of Hawai'i needs to assure local food production to meet the needs of the hundreds of thousands of Hawai'i families affected by this emergency and future emergencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 1/29/2021 3:54:49 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/8/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Fully support. Makes sense to have a state agency coordinate this effort.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 1/30/2021 6:56:45 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/8/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michael deYcaza	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 1:02:20 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/8/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Momi Ventura	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Alohamai My Name Is R.Momi Ventura, I Currently Live In Kihei, Maui. My Parents And Now Myself Have Found That We Are Constantly Worrying About When's The Next Time The Barges Can't Make It To Hawai'I Again Because Of Some Reason Or Another. Hawai'I Was Serious About Growing Foods For Their Community's, It' Was The Land Of Milk And Honey Before Greed And Profit Took A Hundred Years Away From Us Kanaka Maoli. We Need More Than Ever To Be A Sustainable Country. Mahalo For Your Time And Consideration. R. M Ventura

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 7:00:33 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/8/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jeri Di Pietro	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

February 6, 2021

In Support of SB 1250

RELATING TO EMERGENCY FOOD MANAGEMENT

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support SB 1250 to create an emergency food assistance program administered by the Department of Agriculture to feed people in need when a state of emergency is declared. The crisis that we face with job loss and the Covid-19 pandemic shows the critical importance of having a system in place that can be implemented. Many organizations are doing this now and do it already on a consistent basis. These good Samaritans do this on a shoe-string budget or out of the kindness of their hearts and kitchens, because it is right to fill the need for anyone without food. We certainly as a governing body should have these measures in place and be prepared at all times to the best of our ability.

Sincerely,

Jeri Di Pietro

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 12:18:47 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/8/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dr. Kioni Dudley	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

SB-1250

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 12:59:55 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/8/2021 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard and Committee Members,

SB1250 is a critical step to support communities during trying times. I strongly support this bill but ask for more consideration of where the fund is housed and the how it is administered.

Mahalo,

Hunter Heavilin



Feb. 8, 2021

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Lauren Zirbel
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Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony *in strong support of SB 1250*, which creates the Hawaii emergency food assistance program special fund, which will be administered by the department of agriculture and appropriates moneys into the fund to feed Hawaii's needy population when a state of emergency has been declared.

Hawaii Foodbank helps provide food to 1 in 6 Hawaii residents, including 90,000 keiki. In fiscal year 2019-2020, we distributed just more than 12 million pounds of food on Oahu (10.7 million) and Kauai (1.3 million), a majority of which is donated (89 percent). The COVID-19 pandemic caused a 53 percent increase (18.3 million pounds) in food distribution last fiscal year. Hawaii Foodbank also experienced a reduction in food donations, leading us to almost double our food purchases (80 percent increase) from the previous year just to meet the needs of the community.

Our organization has a strong reputation for stepping up to serve Hawaii in times of need. Since 2018, Hawaii Foodbank and its network of food banks across Hawaii have provided more than 450,350 pounds of food and supplies toward disaster relief efforts on Kauai, Hawaii Island and Oahu. This includes response to the April 2018 storm that affected Kauai and Oahu, the Kilauea eruption (2018), the partial government shutdown (Dec. 2018-Jan. 2019), and Hurricane Lane (2018). Since the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in March 2020, we have distributed 24.2 million pounds of food.

There are organizations that specialize in disaster response but only food banks have existing infrastructure, networks, logistical expertise and other resources already in place—allowing them to effectively respond to mass feedings in a way no one else can. We have proven experience responding to crisis, relationships with a national network of food banks, and the trust of local communities that uniquely positions us to respond swiftly when disaster strikes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us of the fragility of Hawaii's food system and supply chain. Hawaii Foodbank will respond to all events, but like all food banks, we do not have the inventory in place to respond to major disasters and sustain that response.

With help from the State we can better prepare for future disasters.

With much respect and aloha,

Laura Kay Rand
Hawaii Foodbank
Vice President & Chief Impact Officer

Marielle Terbio
Hawaii Foodbank
Director of Community Engagement & Advocacy

