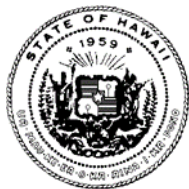


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 12, 2024

TO: The Honorable Representative Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair  
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2771 – RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.**

Hearing: Wednesday, February 14, 2024, 9:15 a.m.  
Conference Room 325, State Capitol & Video Conference

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the measure and defers to the Department of Agriculture. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

**PURPOSE:** This bill appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive dollar-for-dollar matching program helps SNAP participants double their purchasing power. Especially during this time of elevated food costs, continuing the program doubles the value of SNAP participants' benefits spent on Hawaii-grown fresh fruits and vegetables. This program also supports local farmers and keeps food dollars in the local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEXTER KISHIDA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD**  
**CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2024**  
**9:15 AM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**HOUSE BILL 2771**  
**RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY**

Chairs Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2771. This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The Department expresses our **strong support**.

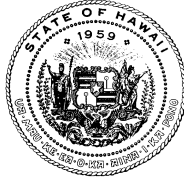
The DA BUX (double up SNAP) program is a win-win for the state. It stretches federal dollars to feed our food insecure communities and infuses these funds into our agriculture sector by incentivizing the purchase of locally produced food.

While the department has requested \$1,000,000 in its budget request, we strongly support the legislation for the \$2,000,000 which would significantly leverage federal dollars.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII  
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'



KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
P.O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov



**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 2771  
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY**

REPRESENTATIVE CEDRIC ASUEGA GATES, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Hearing Date: February 14, 2024

Room Number: Conference Room 325

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the Governor's Executive
- 2 Supplemental Budget request for fiscal implications, and the Department of Agriculture (DOA)
- 3 for implementation of the proposed appropriation.
- 4 **Department Position:** The DOH supports this measure.
- 5 **Department Testimony:** The DOH supports House Bill 2771 (H.B. 2771) that appropriates funds
- 6 to DOA for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive program and to
- 7 provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition
- 8 Assistance Program (SNAP).

9 The DOH strongly supports the public health justification for Hawaii's DA BUX Double Up  
10 Food Bucks Program (DA BUX) as one component of a comprehensive approach to improve the  
11 availability and accessibility of healthy foods to improve health outcomes for our communities,  
12 especially for people who face greater health and income disparities. The DA BUX allows a  
13 dollar-for-dollar match on locally produced fresh fruits and vegetables for SNAP recipients.

14 Major health authorities including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Centers for  
15 Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization recommend increasing fruit  
16 and vegetable intake as a means to prevent chronic disease and improve overall health.<sup>i,ii,iii</sup>

1 However, access to fresh produce for income-limited individuals can be difficult and contributes  
2 to poorer diets and higher rates of chronic disease than middle class and wealthy individuals  
3 with more options where they live, learn, work, play and gather.<sup>iv,v</sup>

4 Hawaii has the highest cost of living in the nation with food costs that are twice the  
5 national average.<sup>vi</sup> In Hawaii, less than one in five adults reported eating five or more servings  
6 of fruits and vegetable a day (2021 Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System). Data  
7 continues to show a decline in meeting these dietary recommendations for an eating routine  
8 with a healthy plate of whole fruits, a variety of vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins and  
9 dairy. Between 2019 and 2021, the percentage of adults who ate five or more servings of fruit  
10 and vegetables a day decreased from 17 to 14 percent while the percentage of adults who ate  
11 one serving or no servings increased from 7 to 8 percent.<sup>vii</sup>

12 Nutrition incentive programs similar to the DA BUX are prevalent around the U.S. and  
13 recognized as a “win-win-win” for farmers, families, and local businesses. Data from these  
14 interventions have shown improvements in dietary behaviors, reduction in household hunger  
15 and food insecurity, and increased sales of local produce by more than their dollar value  
16 alone.<sup>viii,ix,x,xi</sup>

17 The DOH urges the passage of H.B. 2771 which will allow for continued funding and the  
18 possible expansion of this extremely important program that provides much needed support to  
19 Hawaii’s families, local farmers, and the economy.

20 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

---

<sup>i</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *2020 – 2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 9<sup>th</sup> Edition. December 2020.

<sup>ii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Strategies to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases: The CDC Guide to Strategies to Increase the Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2011.

<sup>iii</sup> World Health Organization. *Healthy Diet Fact Sheet*. Web. Updated 29 September 2020.

<sup>iv</sup> Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2021.

---

<sup>v</sup> Simmet, Anja et al. *The Dietary Quality of Food Pantry Users: A Systematic Review of Existing Literature*. Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Volume 117, Issue 4, 563 – 576.

<sup>vi</sup> United States Department of Agriculture: Official USDA Food Thrifty Plan Cost Estimates; July 2023.

<sup>vii</sup> Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2021.

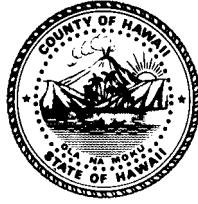
<sup>viii</sup> Fitzgerald, Katherine. *Double Up in Farmers' Markets: The Consumer Experience*. Fair Food Network, 2015.

<sup>ix</sup> Mann, J., et al. *Economics of healthy food incentives at Michigan farmers markets: Study highlights*. Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems, 2017.

<sup>x</sup> Fitzgerald, Katherine. *Double Up Food Bucks and Hunger*. Fair Food Network, 2015.

<sup>xi</sup> *Voices of Double Up in America*. Fair Food Network, June 2017.

**Susan L.K. Lee Loy**  
Council Member  
District 3



Office: (808) 961-8396  
Fax: (808) 961-8912  
Email: [sue.leeloy@hawaiicounty.gov](mailto:sue.leeloy@hawaiicounty.gov)

## **HAWAI‘I COUNTY COUNCIL**

25 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai‘i 96720

February 12, 2024

The Honorable Representative Cedric Gates, Chair  
The Honorable Representative Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Hawai‘i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

### **Re: Support for HB 2771 Relating to Food Security**

Aloha Chair Gates and Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

Mahalo for the opportunity to express support for House Bill No. 2771. This bill is of utmost importance in addressing the longstanding challenges and growing concerns surrounding our food security. This bill will provide funding for the Da Bux program, which offers a 50% discount on Hawai‘i-grown produce for SNAP participants.

This program is a “triple win” for Hawai‘i, making healthy food more accessible for families in need, supporting agriculture and farmers, and keeping money within the local economy.

HB 2771 reflects our local community’s recognition of the urgency to address the issue of food security and is a positive step towards protecting the public – especially our most vulnerable families in need. We stand ready to support the health of our next generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan L.K. Lee Loy".

Susan “Sue” L.K. Lee Loy  
Council Member, County of Hawai‘i



## HIPHI Board

Misty Pacheco, DrPH  
Chair  
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Titiimaea Ta'ase, JD  
Secretary  
State of Hawai'i, Deputy Public  
Defender

Carissa Holley, MEd  
Treasurer  
Hale Makua Health Services

Keshia Adolpho, LCSW  
Na'au Healing Center

Debbie Erskine  
ARCH-MEPS Consulting LLC, Owner

Camonia Graham - Tutt, PhD  
University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu

Jennifer José Lo, MD  
Hawai'i Health Partners

May Okihiro, MD, MS  
John A. Burns School of Medicine,  
Department of Pediatrics

Kathleen Roche, MS, RN, CENP  
Kaiser Permanente

Dina Shek, JD  
Medical-Legal Partnership  
For Children in Hawai'i

Garret Sugai  
HMSA

JoAnn Tsark, MPH  
John A. Burns School of Medicine,  
Native Hawaiian Research Office

## HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a  
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &  
Evaluation

Community Health  
Worker Initiatives

COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free  
Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging  
& Community Living

Public Health Workforce  
Development

Date: February 7, 2024

To: Representative Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair  
Representative Kirstin Kahaloo, Vice-Chair  
Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Re: Strong Support for HB2771, Relating to Food Security

Hrg: Wednesday, February 14, 2024 at 9:15 AM

---

The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition<sup>i</sup>, a program of the Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI), is in **Strong Support of HB2771**, which provides funding to the Department of Agriculture for the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program.

### **DA BUX is a triple win for families, farmers, and the local economy.**

The Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive program, or DA BUX, provides a 50% discount on Hawai'i-grown produce for SNAP recipients. Incentivizing SNAP dollars for local fruits and vegetables stretches food dollars for families, especially with increasing food costs. Through this program, SNAP participants can bring home healthy, local food; local farmers gain new customers and increase income; and more money goes into and grows our local - a "triple win."

### **The demand for DA BUX has risen significantly over the last several years.**

Year after year, this program has significantly grown its impact. Local food sales continue to increase: 2019 saw \$220,354 in sales; by December 2023, local food sales through DA BUX were projected to be \$4.7M<sup>ii</sup>. That money has brought healthy foods to homes while positively impacting our local economy.

### **DA BUX provides a strong return on investment.**

SNAP is proven to stimulate the economy by being an economic multiplier. Every SNAP dollar spent generates an estimated \$1.54 in economic activity<sup>iii</sup>. These dollars ripple out throughout the supply chain, supporting farmers, retailers, and food distributor employees; these people, in turn, spend their dollars to help support economic activity further and so on. With \$2M from the state, the program becomes eligible for an additional \$2M in federal matching funds from the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive (GusNIP) Program. State funding helps to ensure sustainable funding for DA BUX.

**A positive impact on health and food.**

DA BUX's focus on locally grown produce helps to bring healthy foods to homes and supports the local agricultural industry. Studies have found that a lack of food security is associated with diet-related chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure<sup>iv</sup>. Supporting local agriculture also aligns with the renewed calls to increase local food production and decrease Hawai'i's dependence on imported goods for a more sustainable and resilient food system.

**A \$2 million investment can help expand the program to more stores.**

The DA BUX program has seen significant growth. It started with KTA in Hawai'i County and is now accessible statewide through Times, KTA, Foodland, and participating farmers' markets. These stores are locally-based and operated, ensuring economic amplification.

The \$2M state investment will increase the program's reach and participation by engaging more people through educational campaigns in areas where there has been stalled growth, as well as provide the ability to engage more retail outlets that were unable to participate due to limited funding.

DA BUX is a triple win for farmers, families, and the local economy. This investment also supports health. We strongly support this measure and respectfully ask you to **pass HB2771**.

Mahalo,



Peggy Mierzwa  
Policy & Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

---

<sup>i</sup> Created by the legislature in 2012, **Healthy Eating + Active Living Coalition**, formerly the Obesity Prevention Task Force, is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations and works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://dabux.org/for-advocates>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/93529/err-265.pdf?v=958.5>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4584410/>





#### 2024 Network Members

City and County of Honolulu  
County of Hawai'i  
Hawai'i Appleseed  
Hawai'i Children's Action Network  
Hawai'i Department of Agriculture  
Hawai'i Food Bank  
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance  
Hawai'i Public Health Institute  
Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Health Center  
Lanakila Pacific  
Mālama Kaua'i  
Maui Nui Food Alliance  
Parents and Children Together Supersistence  
The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank  
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i Together  
UH Center for Indigenous Innovation/ Health Equity  
Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center  
  
Hawaiihungeraction.org

## House Committee on Agriculture

February 14, 2024, 9:15AM

### **RE: SUPPORT FOR SB 2421, RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES.**

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, appreciates the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2771**. This bill would provide matching funds to support the successful Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program (better known as DA BUX), which provides a 50% discount on locally-grown fruits and vegetables for Hawai'i customers who use the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

SNAP is an economic lifeline for low-income Hawai'i residents, providing around \$60 million per month in federal dollars to purchase groceries to nearly 100,000 Hawai'i families. While this is a vital asset for Hawai'i's economy, the individual monthly allotment is often still not enough to afford fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables, which can be more expensive than imported or packaged foods. This results in most of these dollars leaving the islands—right into the pockets of major mainland food companies, rather than getting recirculated locally into our local agriculture industry.

DA BUX is an elegant and cost-effective solution. By offering a 50% discount on locally-grown produce to SNAP shoppers, the program channels more of these federal stimulus monies to our local farms and food businesses. In fact, to date, DA BUX has directly supported over 530 local farms. Local food hubs have reported a 186%

increase in local produce sales to SNAP shoppers. And the program is projected to directly result in nearly \$5 million annually (2023) in local produce sales.

DA BUX has been thus far funded almost entirely by a federal (USDA) grant program known as GusNIP, matched with philanthropic donations and in-kind support from local nonprofit organizations. While this has worked for several years, the program is in grave danger of losing its federal match unless we can prove dedicated annual match funding. This legislation would provide not just funding, but also assurance to the USDA that Hawai'i is committed to seeing this program succeed well into the future. The \$2 million proposed in this bill would be matched with another \$2 million in federal dollars, and this will allow the program to expand to even more retailers and communities across the islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. DA BUX is a rare opportunity that benefits everyone: families, farmers, and the business community. We appreciate your consideration and encourage you to pass HB 2771.



# HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
Support for H.B. 2771 – Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives  
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems  
Wednesday February 14, 2024, at 9:15AM

---

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **H.B. 2771** which would appropriate funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Hawai'i Appleseed is committed to a more socially and economically just Hawai'i, where everyone has genuine opportunities to achieve economic security and fulfill their potential. The strengthening of SNAP through incentive programs is a critical evidence-based approach to achieving this vision. **Serving more than 130,000 residents and generating \$630 million annually in our state's local economy, SNAP is an economic lifeline for Hawai'i's struggling households.**

2023 brought several devastating cuts to SNAP benefits in Hawai'i:

- 1) The end of the SNAP emergency allotments left SNAP participants facing the largest SNAP benefit cliff in history. The average household lost \$82 in monthly benefits and some of our most vulnerable households like those with kupuna lost up to \$238.<sup>1</sup>
- 2) The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) updated its estimates of how much it costs the average family to buy food in each U.S. state and territory. This data is used to set the maximum amount of SNAP EBT benefits a household can receive for groceries each month. While every other state in the nation saw an increase in their monthly SNAP benefits, Hawai'i received a 20 percent drop in its adjustment (spread over the next five years) because of gaps in Hawai'i-specific food price data available to the USDA. While local advocates and the federal delegation are working hard to inform the federal government on how to remedy this issue, the benefits cut will stay in place until federal regulations are able to be changed.

Already food insecure households are seeing hundreds of dollars less in benefits while Hawai'i residents continue to experience the highest cost of groceries in the nation.

SNAP incentives like those proposed in H.B. 2771 help increase SNAP participants' purchasing power by providing an additional subsidy for SNAP users when they purchase local fruits and vegetables. The federal program that funds this incentive requires a one-to-one match, meaning that every dollar the state invests will be matched by federal funding. Therefore, a \$2 million investment by the state would be doubled with matching federal funds. Factoring in the \$2.10 multiplier would ultimately result in more than \$8M in local economic impact.<sup>2</sup> Passing this bill would be an impact investment for the State, channeling much-needed capital into local businesses and farms.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Hunger Cliff 2023: HAWAII](#)

<sup>2</sup> For each program dollar issues for local produce incentives generate \$2.10 in Hawai'i's economy.

Hawai‘i’s existing SNAP incentive program, known as [DA BUX](#), has already been enormously successful and popular among SNAP users, retailers, and farmers alike. According to the latest program outcomes report, DA BUX has already directly supported 470 farm producers, eight distributors, and increased local produce sales by 531% at farm-direct retailers.

This small investment is a win-win-win for Hawai‘i’s families, farmers, and local economy. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of H.B. 2771.

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 3:15:14 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bev Brody	Get Fit Kauai - HEAL	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Get Fit Kauai, the Healthy Eating, Active Living Coalition of Kauai County STRONGLY supports HB2771. This program is a “triple win” for Hawai‘i: making healthy food more accessible for families in need, supporting agriculture and farmers, and keeping money within the local economy.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to submit testimony.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
Wednesday, February 14, 2024; 9:15 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325  
Via Videoconference**

**RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 2771 – RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY**

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, 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** House Bill No. 2771, RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live 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.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2024-2025, to be expended by the Department of Agriculture, for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

SNAP, formally known as the "Food Stamps Program", is the largest federal food assistance program that is currently in operation. It provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people. SNAP provided assistance to approximately 40 million persons in 2018, at an expenditure of \$57.1 billion. Approximately 9.2% of American households received SNAP benefits at some point during 2017, with approximately 16.7 of all children living in households receiving SNAP benefits.

**Testimony on House Bill No. 2771**  
**Wednesday, February 14, 2024; 9:15 a.m.**  
**Page 2**

Founded during the height of the Great Depression, SNAP is the cornerstone of our national social safety net. It is intended to prevent mass starvation precipitated from unemployment and homelessness. The program was also seen as a way of helping the poor while boosting the economy and ensuring that America's farmers would obtain a fair price for their labors by allowing government to purchase and distribute excess goods in time of crisis.

The COVID-19 Pandemic demonstrated how food scarcity and poverty threatened the health and welfare of our citizens in times of dire crisis. With so many people unemployed, entire families struggled to put food on the table on a consistent basis. Lines at the food bank and food drives stretched for miles and people waited for hours to receive surplus food.

The HPCA has strongly endorsed this Program in previous years and we continue to urge your support. Additional SNAP benefits for a recipient can mean the difference between having to decide whether someone's last amount of cash will go for food or rent or medications or other necessities.

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](mailto:eabe@hawaiiipca.net).

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 3:51:17 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nancy Redfeather	Ka Ohana O Na Pua	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Da Bux Program is the most effective and most efficient food security program for Hawai'i residents. Since Federal dollars are available with a State match, and Hawaii's farming families and vulnerable community food members will both benefit, it is a win-win for everyone, which is the intention of the bill. Mahalo for your support for HB2771.





February 13, 2024

**To:** Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and members of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

**Regarding:** Testimony in Strong Support of HB2771 “Relating to Food Security”

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony in strong support for HB2771 “Relating to Food Security,” on behalf of Farm Link Hawai‘i (FLH). We encourage you to support the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai‘i healthy food incentive program, otherwise known as DA BUX. This program benefits Hawai‘i’s food system in three vital ways:

1. Offers discounts on Hawai‘i grown fruits and vegetables to low-income SNAP recipients, allowing them to purchase more healthy food.
2. Empowers farmers compete with lower cost imported produce and increase their sales.
3. Supports the local economy, generating increased revenue for participating retailers.

Farm Link’s mission is to transform local food production into a thriving industry and make good local food accessible to everyone on O‘ahu. We work with over 200 Hawai‘i farmers, ranchers, and food makers, to serve more than 1,300 customers per month with direct home delivery of over 500 local products. To ensure equitable access, we automatically apply the DA BUX 50% discount on produce and poi for customers using SNAP and provide free delivery for their orders. In 2024 18% of our revenue was derived from customers using Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-EBT) and DA BUX to purchase their groceries. **Farm Link’s SNAP revenue grew by over 583% between 2021 and 2023. DA BUX is clearly motivating and empowering families to purchase and consume more healthy produce, while providing a steady market for Hawai‘i farmers.**

State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide positive, lasting economic and well-being impact. A \$2 million State investment will unlock a matching \$2 million in federal grant dollars from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). As the GusNIP only accepts proposals that secure 100% non-federal matching funds, a State investment is critical to the program’s FY ‘24 GusNIP application.

Mahalo for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,

Claire Sullivan, CEO

Farm Link Hawai‘i

Phone: (808) 218-0077

Email: [claire@farmlinkhawaii.com](mailto:claire@farmlinkhawaii.com)

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 4:06:52 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Doris Matsunaga	Save Medicaid Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Save Medicaid Hawaii supports HB2771

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 4:16:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Doris Matsunaga	Indivisible Hawaii Healthcare Team	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Indivisible Hawaii Healthcare Team supports HB 2771

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 4:17:41 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Maureen Datta	Adaptations Inc	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2771 and ask that our Hawaii supports Da Bux so that we can leverage a 3:1 opportunity to receive federal funds. It will provide funding for the DA BUX program, which offers a 50% discount on Hawai'i-grown produce for SNAP participants. This program is a "triple win" for Hawai'i: making healthy food more accessible for families in need, supporting agriculture and farmers, and keeping money within the local economy.

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 4:31:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Megan Fox	Malama Kaua'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a ciritcal program for supporting our food systems' growth, and our community members who need increased access to healthy food.



## **KŌKUA KALIHI VALLEY** COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY SERVICES

2239 N. SCHOOL STREET ◆ HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819 ◆ TEL: 808-791-9400 ◆ FAX: 808-848-0979 \_\_\_

Kōkua Kalihi Valley, Roots Program  
2/12/2024

### **Testimony in Support of HB 2771, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**

**Aloha Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems,**

We are writing to voice our strong support of HB 2771 and the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

KKV has learned from the community how important access to fresh, local, healthy, and cultural foods are important to the diets of native, pacific islander and low-income community residents. For the past decade, we have been working to increase access to these foods which support local farmers, ranchers and producers, while improving nutrition and health. Unfortunately, funding to promote improved access is sporadic and there is a great need for programs like DA BUX to be consistently funded so that community-based organizations can support the improvements we need in our local food system

DA BUX benefits the state's food system through three different ways. First, DA BUX offers a 50% discount on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables to low-income recipients of the SNAP program (formerly known as food stamps), allowing them to purchase more, healthy food. Second, DA BUX helps farmers increase their customer base and compete with imported produce. And third, DA BUX supports the local economy, generating increased revenue for the participating food retailers across 100+ statewide locations. Several of our member organizations offer DA BUX through their retail operations, allowing them to offer affordable local produce to all of their SNAP customers.

A \$2 million State investment will serve as significant match funds needed to unlock federal

grant dollars from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). As the GusNIP only accepts proposals that secure 100% non-federal matching funds, a State investment will strengthen the program's FY '24 GusNIP application. State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide positive, lasting impact both for the economy and the well-being of individuals across the state.

Sincerely,

Jesse Lipman  
Roots Program Director  
Kōkua Kalihi Valley  
[Jlipman@kkv.net](mailto:Jlipman@kkv.net) - 808.554.7916



## House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

### Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: HB2771

Wednesday, February 14th, 2024 9:15am, Conference Room 325

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committees,

HAPA strongly supports HB2771 that appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB2771.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is written over a light gray horizontal line.

Anne Frederick  
Executive Director





February 14, 2024

The Honorable Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair  
The Honorable Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Re: HB 2771 – RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2771, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

HMSA recognizes the impact that healthy foods have on a person's overall wellness. Conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity can be positively impacted by maintaining a healthy diet. We support this effort to increase affordability and accessibility to healthy foods in Hawaii, especially to individuals and families who could truly benefit. An added benefit to this program is that it also serves to support our local agricultural sector and farmers as we take steps towards food security in our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2771.

Sincerely,

Dawn Kurisu  
Assistant Vice President  
Community and Government Relations

Testimony of  
Jonathan Ching  
Government Relations Director

Before:  
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems  
The Honorable Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair  
The Honorable Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair

February 14, 2024  
9:15 a.m.  
Conference Room 325 & Via Videoconference

**Re: HB 2771, Relating to Food Security.**

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2771, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawai‘i Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

**Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i SUPPORTS HB 2771.**

Kaiser Permanente is one of the nation’s largest not-for-profit health plans, serving 12.6 million members nationwide, and more than 274,000 members in Hawai‘i. In Hawai‘i, more than 4,200 dedicated employees and more than 650 Hawai‘i Permanente Medical Group physicians and advanced practice providers work in our integrated health system to provide our members with coordinated care and coverage. Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i has more than 19 medical facilities, including our award-winning Moanalua Medical Center. We continue to provide high-quality coordinated care for our members and deliver on our commitment to improve the health of our members and the 1.4 million people living in the communities we serve.

Kaiser Permanente supports policies that ensure all Hawaii residents have access to affordable, high-quality health care. Further, Kaiser Permanente supports “whole-person care,” including the provision of access to services and resources that address beneficiaries’ physical health, mental health, and social needs.

Kaiser Permanente prioritizes food security as an area of community health focus, meaning that all people, in all communities, have access to sufficient, affordable, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy lifestyle. However, we know that food insecurity has increased due to the effects of inflation and the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, Kaiser Permanente provides grants to Hawai‘i food banks administering The Emergency

Food Assistance Program's (TEFAP) Farm to Food Bank Program, which serves a critical role for many families facing food insecurities.

The grant funds served a twofold purpose through the food purchasing program. First, the funds are used as a match to draw down Federal funds, which require a 1:1 match. Additionally, Kaiser Permanente's grant funds support farm-direct bags of fresh produce for low-income seniors receiving a monthly supplemental food box through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), a USDA program that Hawai'i Foodbank runs in partnership with the Office of Community Services.

To ensure communities have reliable access to healthy food, Kaiser Permanente supports policies that minimize barriers to and maximize enrollment in federal nutrition assistance programs, such as SNAP, and support for federal nutrition standards for school meals, including meals with more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and less sodium and trans fats.

Our work is guided by our belief that access to nutritious food plays a critical role in supporting community health. Kaiser Permanente has also piloted interventions using medically tailored meals and launched a prescription produce program to help patients access fresh produce. By studying the effectiveness of these programs, Kaiser Permanente is building an evidence base for future policy interventions that reduce healthcare costs and improve patient outcomes.

We support HB 2771 because it will continue to fund the continued administration of the much-needed Hawaii healthy food incentive program which helps to continue to meet the food security needs of the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



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

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS  
Wednesday, February 14, 2024 — 9:15 a.m.

**Ulupono Initiative strongly supports HB 2771, Relating to Food Security.**

Dear Chair Gates 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 the 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 choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**Ulupono strongly supports HB 2771**, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and provides matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Ulupono strongly supports the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program within the DOA because of the program's transformative effects on community hunger and health, local agriculture, and overall economic vitality. At the heart of this program is the highly impactful "DA BUX" Double Up Food Bucks Program, ran statewide by The Food Basket and representing a triple-win solution for our communities. Through the program, SNAP-eligible participants are empowered to double their purchasing power toward healthy, locally grown fruits and vegetables, concurrently benefitting local farmers. Importantly, these dollars stay within our state, which benefits our local economy.

Furthermore, this program's leveraging of federal funding at a 1:1 match demonstrates a prudent approach to maximizing resources for optimal impact.

**The impact is clear:** Hawai'i residents have faced a 26% increase in food prices since January 2020. Through DA BUX, \$10 of SNAP benefits transforms into \$20 of Hawai'i-grown produce for individuals and families who most need it (Last year, 160,000 Hawai'i residents received SNAP assistance).

**The impact is far reaching for local farmers:** Since 2020, DA BUX purchases have benefitted more than 470 farm producers and eight distributors through farm product sales. This facilitates the expansion of markets for local ag producers.

**The impact is growing:** Local produce sales to SNAP shoppers at participating farm direct retailers increased an average of 531% from 2019 to 2021. These numbers substantiate the need to support our local community as food insecurity continues to increase.

Additionally, DA BUX directly supports the Maui community recovery from the August 2023 wildfires.

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*

- Prior to the wildfires, Maui County experienced the largest increase in poverty in the state as the percentage of households in Maui County living below the federal poverty line rose from 6% in 2018 to 16% in 2022.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 11% of Maui County residents face food insecurity, resulting in \$17 million in annual costs to address food insecurity and hunger in the county, based on data from Feeding America.<sup>2</sup>
- As of August 2023, there were 14,540 SNAP participants or 7,921 SNAP households on Maui Island. DA BUX alleviates food insecurity by reducing hunger and improving the overall well-being of Maui families by doubling their purchase power for fresh locally produced fruits and vegetables at 13 DA BUX retail locations across Maui Island, including grocers, food hubs, and farmers markets.
- DA BUX also expands the customer base of Maui Island producers, many of whom struggled with market closures following the wildfires.<sup>3</sup> There are currently 72 Maui farmers/producers that are supported by the program with increased sales and farm profits. Food sales driven by the program on Maui Island has increased from \$97,661 in 2020 to \$768,225 projected in 2023 (based on the latest data)—nearly a 700% increase.

We are hopeful the State will consider a \$2 million appropriation, per year, for the DOA program to support DA BUX. A \$2 million investment by the State would receive a direct match of \$2 million in federal funding. Furthermore, our analysis shows that, with that level of state funding in place, the potential economic impact created by DA BUX in Hawai'i reaches nearly \$13 million.

We appreciate the Legislature's attention to this highly impactful program and look forward to sustained funding to support our SNAP community and our local producers.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Director of Government Affairs

Attachment

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mauinews.com/news/local-news/2022/12/52-of-maui-county-homes-live-below-alice-threshold/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2021/overall/hawaii/county/maui>

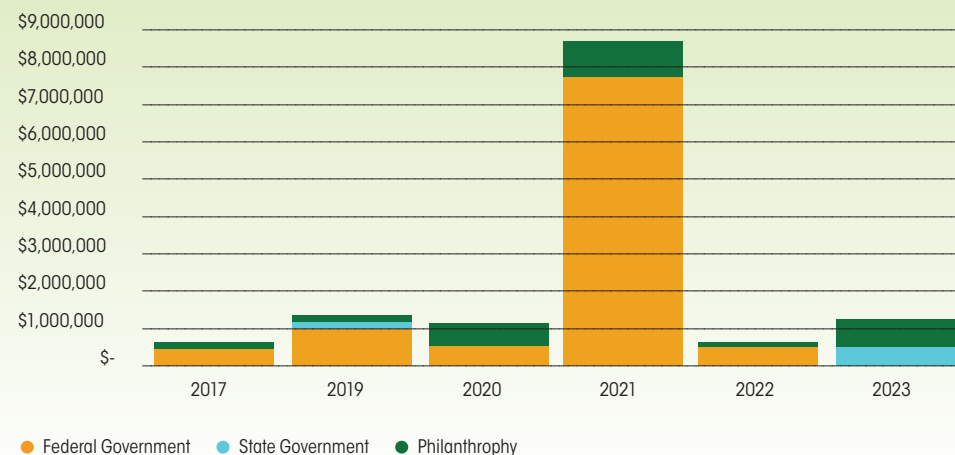
<sup>3</sup> 80% of farmers lost their markets and half of them lost between 75% and 100% of their customers, based on a post-fire survey conducted by Hawai'i Farmers Union United.

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2023/11/hawaiis-food-banks-need-far-more-funding-before-the-next-disaster/>

# Opportunity to Expand a Proven, Highly Impactful Program

## DA BUX FUNDING BY SOURCE (2017 - 2023)

State funds have historically represented just 4% of total funding to DA BUX



## \$2 MILLION IN STATE FUNDING HAS A POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF \$12.8 MILLION

Historically, the DA BUX program has been primarily funded by federal grants and philanthropic/private funding (representing almost all of total program funds). Since its inception, DA BUX has received **\$13.7 MILLION** in funding. The State funding of \$594,000 represents **4%** of total funding to the program to date.

Secure and sustained State funding for DA BUX program is the key to federal and philanthropic funding matches. An appropriation of \$2 million in State funds can generate significant leverage:

- Stimulate economic activity of about \$13 million (6.4x State funding) while increasing local food production for local consumption.
- \$2 million in State funds can be matched by \$2 million in federal dollars from a Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) grant, as well as \$4 million from SNAP purchases, resulting in \$8 million going toward local food purchases and supporting local farmers.
- Given the impact achieved and successful track record, State funding will be a worthwhile investment and position the DA BUX program for future federal funding.
- Other states have recognized the benefit and impact of Double Up Food Bucks programs by investing their state funds in expanding and sustaining their programs. There are 24 states that have invested state funds in their Double Up Food Bucks programs, totaling approximately \$158 million from 2015 through 2024.

## HAWAII BY THE NUMBERS

**16TH** HIGHEST POVERTY RATE (10.0% OF THE POPULATION LIVING AT OR BELOW THE POVERTY LINE)

**22X** INCREASE IN THE ANNUAL TOTAL OF DA BUX DISCOUNTS ISSUED TO SNAP SHOPPERS

DA BUX continues to be an amazing way to connect our farm directly to the consumers who need it most. Being able to offer the best quality fresh locally grown food in a very affordable way removes a big hurdle for people ... [DA BUX] helps to make feeding them and their families easy.

**This program helps to support local agriculture so we can more easily compete with imported food and gives us farmers a big incentive to produce more fruits and vegetables to satisfy the increased demand for our goods."**

– Ryan Earehart, Farm Owner, Oko'a Farms (Maui)



# 'DA BUX' Double Up Food Bucks Provides a Triple-Win



## HOW 'DA BUX' WORKS

The DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks program offers each Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participant a DA BUX Access Card or voucher to be used at point of sale to double their purchasing power when they buy locally grown fruits and vegetables — \$10 of SNAP benefits is worth \$20 of Hawai'i grown produce. Thus, each \$1 funded into the program provides \$2 worth of local food purchases.

## THE CHALLENGE

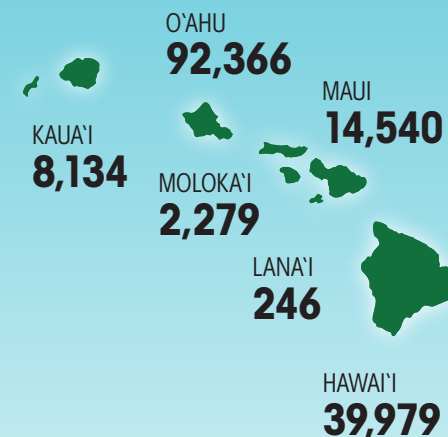
In fall 2023, the program was denied federal funding primarily due to a lack of a sustained State funding. Based on the projected spend down rate, current funding of the DA BUX program will only last through August 2024. Hawai'i SNAP beneficiaries have been hit with both increasing food costs and decreasing SNAP benefits. This situation creates a significant need to help feed low-income families AND support local agricultural food producers.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

DA BUX is a triple-win solution because it doubles the purchasing power of low-income SNAP families for healthy, Hawai'i-grown produce; it supports local farmers with an increased customer base; and it benefits the entire island community by keeping dollars in the local economy. **AN APPROPRIATION OF \$2 MILLION IN STATE FUNDS WILL BRING IN ADDITIONAL FEDERAL FUNDS TO SUSTAIN, EXPAND AND EXTEND THE STATEWIDE DA BUX DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS PROGRAM.** Given the broad benefits of DA BUX for our state, it is imperative to secure sustained funding for DA BUX and ensure it is a staple service providing economic relief to SNAP households and directly supporting local agricultural food producers across the islands.



## ISLAND BREAKDOWN OF SNAP PARTICIPANTS (as of August 2023)



## HAWAII BY THE NUMBERS

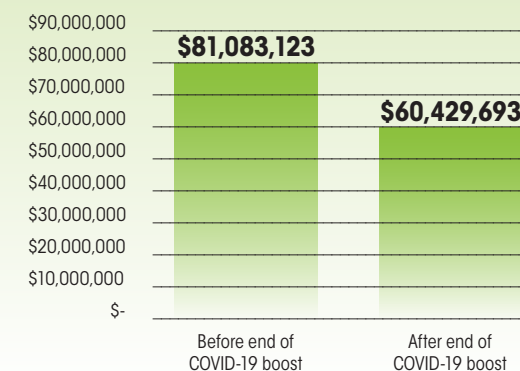
**90%** IMPORTED FOOD

**91%** HIGHER FOOD COSTS

**26%** INCREASE IN FOOD PRICES SINCE JANUARY 2020

With the highest cost of living in the nation, Hawai'i faces growing food costs and food insecurity. About 160,000 residents received SNAP assistance 2023.

## THE END OF PANDEMIC-ERA FUNDING IN 2023 HAS DECREASED BENEFITS FOR HAWAII SNAP PARTICIPANTS BY 25%



# State Support is Key to Federal and Philanthropic Funding



DA BUX has become a critical service for low-income SNAP beneficiaries struggling with economic hardship and food insecurity. There has been significant growth and demand for the program due to the increase in SNAP participation and participating DA BUX retail locations across the state.

	State Investment of \$2M	
State Funding	\$ 2,000,000	<b>a</b>
Federal GusNIP Grant	\$ 2,000,000	<b>b</b>
Total Funding for DA BUX Discounts	\$ 4,000,000	<b>c = a+b</b>
Economic Multiplier on DA BUX Discounts <sup>1</sup>	1.7	<b>d</b>
Potential Economic Impact of DA BUX Discounts	\$ 6,798,308	<b>e = c*d</b>
<hr/>		
Federal SNAP Benefits	\$ 4,000,000	<b>f = c</b>
Economic Multiplier on SNAP Benefits <sup>2</sup>	1.5	<b>g</b>
Potential Economic Impact of SNAP Benefits	\$ 6,000,000	<b>h = f*g</b>
<hr/>		
<b>Total Funding for SNAP &amp; DA BUX</b>	<b>\$ 8,000,000</b>	<b>i = c+f</b>
<b>Potential Economic Impact</b>	<b>\$12,798,308</b>	<b>j = e+h</b>
<b>Economic Impact Multiplier of State Funding</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>k = j/a</b>

<sup>1</sup> Based on the "The Economic Contributions of Healthy Food Incentives" report, prepared by Colorado State University, and the percentage of 2021 DA BUX discounts issued via farm-direct outlets and food retailers.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the "The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Economy: New Estimates of the SNAP Multiplier" report, prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service.



For over a century, KTA Super Stores has strived to serve as an essential source for locally grown produce for our Hawai'i Island community. DA BUX provides us the opportunity to support our local growers.

Since launching DA BUX in Sept 2017, we have seen transactions associated with the DA BUX program more than quadruple at our seven store locations. We see this as positive sign that DA BUX is motivating families to purchase and consume more healthy fruits and vegetables and that this increased demand will drive increases in agricultural production for the state. //

- Toby Taniguchi, President, KTA Super Stores (Hawai'i Island)



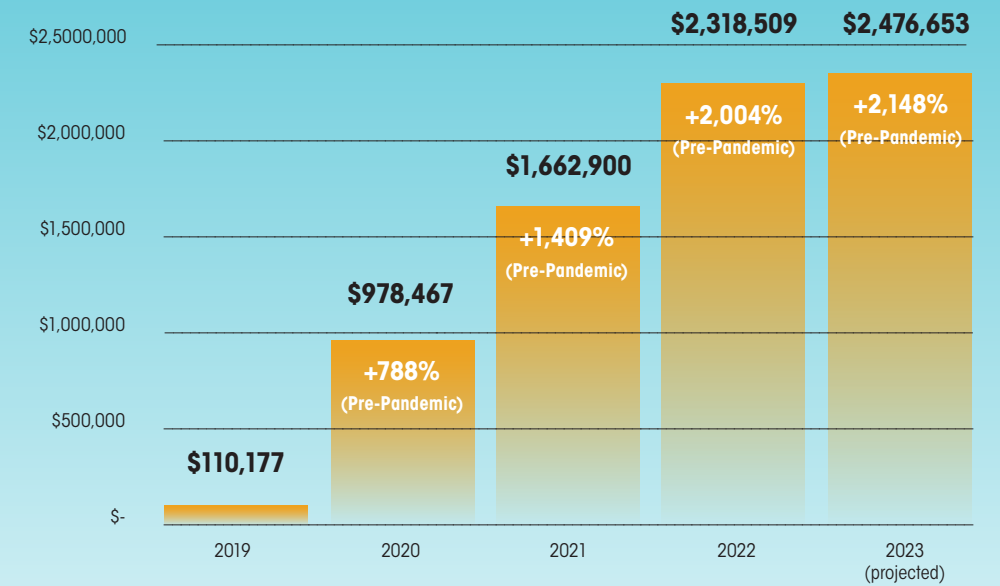
I really love this program because I am diabetic and need fresh veggies and fruits to help keep me healthy.

Mahalo for this amazing program. Also, DA BUX helps me with my kids too. They love looking for the DA BUX label on produce and can choose what they want. They love to eat! Carrots, cabbage and cucumbers are their faves as well as local apple bananas to name a few. //

- Dawn Marquez, SNAP Shopper, Waimānalo (O'ahu)

## ANNUAL DA BUX DISCOUNTS ISSUED TO SNAP SHOPPERS

Participation has steadily increased in Hawai'i



- From 2020 through 2021, DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors by incentivizing the sale of their farm products sold at participating farm direct retailers.
- In January 2022, local produce sales to SNAP shoppers at participating farm direct retailers increased an average of 531% from 2019.
- Since the pandemic, DA BUX discounts have increased by 2,148%, totaling more than \$2.4 million.

## LOCAL FOOD SALES DRIVEN BY SNAP DA BUX\*

Local food sales driven by DA BUX has also steadily increased, especially on Maui

Projected growth in local food sales driven by DA BUX decreased due to a lack of sustained State funding

County	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Annualized)
<b>Honolulu</b>	\$ -	\$ 929,217	\$ 1,659,101	\$ 2,443,673	\$ 2,499,684
% Increase	-	100%	79%	47%	2%
<b>Hawai'i</b>	\$ 220,354	\$ 842,483	\$ 1,125,573	\$ 1,238,329	\$ 1,295,901
% Increase	-	282%	34%	10%	5%
<b>Kaua'i</b>	\$ -	\$ 87,574	\$ 191,309	\$ 224,094	\$ 229,990
% Increase	-	100%	118%	17%	3%
<b>Maui</b>	\$ -	\$ 97,661	\$ 349,817	\$ 730,922	\$ 927,732
% Increase	-	100%	258%	109%	27%
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>\$ 220,354</b>	<b>\$ 1,956,934</b>	<b>\$ 3,325,800</b>	<b>\$ 4,637,018</b>	<b>\$ 4,953,307</b>

\*50% of the sales include DA BUX incentives and the remaining 50% is comprised of SNAP



To: The Honorable Cedric Gates, Chair  
The Honorable Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President  
Mike Nguyen, Public Policy Manager

Hearing: Wednesday, February 14, 2024, 9:15 AM, Conference Room 325

RE: **HB2771 Relating to Food Security**

---

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB2771**. This measure appropriates funding to the Department of Agriculture to restore state funding for the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 84,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 40 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

AlohaCare's commitment to whole-person care and health equity includes addressing social determinants of health, including housing, language access, and nutrition among other factors. We understand that without access to affordable, healthy food, the health and well-being of our communities is negatively impacted. For example, researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that food insecurity is associated with obesity among U.S. adults in Hawai'i and 11 other states.<sup>1</sup>

AlohaCare is proud to be an early supporter of this program through our grant funding to Kōkua Kalihi Valley and others, and we endorse continued State investment. The Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program is an innovative and successful solution, which supports local farmers, low-income families who receive double the purchasing power for Hawai'i-grown fresh fruits and vegetables, and our entire community by keeping dollars in the local economy. This program is particularly important during this time of rising costs for food among other necessities.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of HB2771**.

---

<sup>1</sup> J Acad Nutr Diet. 2012 Sep; 112(9): 1403–1409. Accessed at:  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/eutils/elink.fcgi?dbfrom=pubmed&retmode=ref&cmd=prlinks&id=22939441>





To: The House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems (AGR)  
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org  
Date: Wednesday, February 14, 2024, 9:15 am

**In strong support of HB2771**

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and AGR Committee members;

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **strongly supports HB2771.**

The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program helps keep federal funding circulating in the local economy and incentivizes the use of SNAP benefits for the purchase of fresh local produce. HB2771 will help low-income families bring home more healthy food, area farmers gain new customers and make more money, and more food dollars stay in the local economy.

Supporting this successful program makes good sense. It promotes good health for families and our local economy, as well as improving the health of our planet by avoiding the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping produce in.

Please pass HB2771 so that we can reap all these benefits!

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on this very important bill.

Sherry Pollack  
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



# THE FOOD BASKET

## HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

February 13, 2024

To: The Honorable , Chair Cedric Asuega Gates  
The Honorable , Vice Chair Kirstin Kahaloa  
Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

From: Kristin Frost Albrecht  
Executive Director, The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

Subject: **Testimony in Strong Support of HB2771, Relating to Food Security**

EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST  
ALBRECHT

BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS

ANN EBESUNO  
BOARD CHAIR

Aloha Chair Gates and Vice Chair Kahaloa,

MARK  
KRZYZANOWSKI  
VICE-CHAIR

We are in strong support of HB2771 and the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

DENNIS LIN  
TREASURER

In keeping with The Food Basket's (TFB) overarching mission to "end hunger", we are the statewide administrator for DA BUX. TFB established DA BUX as a statewide program in partnership with the Hawai'i Good Food Alliance upon receiving a \$985K federal grant through the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) in 2019. Additionally, we secured the 100% non-federal matching funds that GusNIP requires. We scaled the program in 2021 after receiving two additional GusNIP awards totaling \$7.6M in federal dollars. Today, TFB administers DA BUX at 59 food retailers across 100+ locations statewide, including grocery stores, farmers markets and food hubs, providing support to more than 530 farms. DA BUX partner retailers continue to offer 50% discounts on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables solely to low-income customers paying with SNAP food dollars (formerly known as food stamps).

JULIA ZEE  
SECRETARY

STEPHEN UEDA

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA  
COLLINS

Philanthropy has largely carried the weight of our GusNIP match needs over the years; however, we cannot expect philanthropy to meet this need over the long term. We are humbly requesting the State to invest \$2M per year in DA BUX to support program sustainability and continuous affordable healthy food access to SNAP recipients. Furthermore, a State commitment will be leveraged in our FY '24 GusNIP application to unlock \$2M in federal funds to meet the grant's requirement of a 100% non-federal match.

WWW.HAWAIIIFOODBASKET.ORG

Administration and East Hawai'i Warehouse  
40 Holomua Street, Hilo, HI 96720  
808-933-6030 Phone | 808-934-0701 Fax

West Hawai'i Warehouse  
73-4161 Ulu Wini Place, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740  
808-322-1418 Phone | 808-322-7373 Fax

While a wide range of financial support and programs were available during the pandemic, Hawai'i's low-income residents are perhaps now more in dire need of this support as pandemic relief wanes and inflation rates have soared above historical averages. Sustained high participation in SNAP above pre-pandemic levels and climbing food insecurity in Hawai'i are indicative of the widespread economic hardship residents continue to face. The Food Basket remains steadfast in our commitment to ensuring DA BUX savings for local fruits and vegetables will be continuously available for these households.

We respectfully ask your committee to pass this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

*Kristin Frost Albrecht*

Kristin Frost Albrecht  
Executive Director

WWW.HAWAIIFOODBASKET.ORG

Administration and East Hawai'i Warehouse  
40 Holomua Street, Hilo, HI 96720  
808-933-6030 Phone | 808-934-0701 Fax

West Hawai'i Warehouse  
73-4161 Ulu Wini Place, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740  
808-322-1418 Phone | 808-322-7373 Fax



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 14, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 2771**  
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference  
9:15 AM

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice-Chair Kahaloa, 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 HB 2771**, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and provides matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

SNAP offers nutrition assistance to eligible, low-income individuals and families, increasing their food purchasing power and improving their nutrition. SNAP also provides economic benefits to farmers participating at farmers' markets, roadside stands, CSA programs, grocery stores, and other food retailers.

Some of HFB's farmers' markets participate or have participated in the SNAP program. We believe that access to locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables, and protein to low-income individuals and families provides benefits to both SNAP participants and Hawai'i farmers and ranchers.

The Double Up Food Bucks program works by doubling the value of federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits spent on locally grown fruits and vegetables at participating farmers' markets, grocery stores, food hubs, and community-supported agriculture projects. In Hawai'i, the Double Up Food Bucks program is managed by The Food Basket and is known as "DA BUX" Double Up Food Bucks. The DA BUX program presents a "win-win" scenario by supporting local farmers with an increased customer base and low-income families who receive double the purchasing power for healthy, Hawai'i-grown produce.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



# PUKALANI SUPERETTE

February 13, 2024

To: Representative Cedric Gates, Committee Chair  
Representative Kirstin Kahaloa, Committee Vice Chair  
Agriculture & Food Systems Committee

Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of HB2771

I am in strong support of bill HB2771 that appropriates funds to the State Department of Agriculture (DOA) for the implementation of Act 153, SLH 2019. This law authorizes DOA as the administering agency of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program (HHFIP), otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

DA BUX benefits many aspects of the state's food system. By offering a 50% discount on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables for low-income SNAP-EBT shoppers, DA BUX helps farmers increase their customer base and compete with imported produce, while also supporting the local economy, generating increased revenue for 59 participating food retailers across 100+ statewide locations. Additionally, DA BUX is stretching the food budgets of low-income households and increasing their consumption of Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables.

DA BUX is also providing critical support for Maui's economic recovery from the Maui wildfires. DA BUX has already proven it can increase sales and profits for Maui County farmers. Three Maui County food hubs report an average 114% increase in local produce sales to SNAP shoppers over the past two years. Statewide, a \$2 million State investment has the potential to generate \$12.8 million in economic activity.

As a small locally owned grocery store located in Upcountry, Maui, we are committed to supporting our local farmers – many who are our friends and long time business partners. We are not able to participate in the DA BUX program as it is currently funded. Regardless if we ever get to participate, we can see the value in this program and what it is doing to help our community. We need the DA BUX program more than ever now.

Furthermore, a **\$2M per year recurring State investment will ensure the survival of the DA BUX program, which is currently set to expire on August 31, 2024.** State funding will be leveraged to request matching federal funds from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) in the 2024 funding cycle. State funding has the potential to unlock these federal GusNIP dollars, as the GusNIP requires funding requests to include documentation of 100% non-federal match as well as a "sustainable funding plan." State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide a positive, lasting impact economically, for farmers, and for the well-being of individuals across the state.

Sincerely,



Megan Nakashima  
President



February 14, 2024

House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

**RE: Testimony in support of HB 2771, Relating to Food Security**

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I **support HB 2771**, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

Food security is a critical issue in Hawai'i, where one in six residents lacks comprehensive access to healthy, nutritious food. SNAP is one of our most important anti-hunger programs, offering choice and healthy options for families who need extra support putting food on the table. We strongly support DA BUX, which doubles the purchasing power of SNAP when it is used for locally produced food.

- **DA BUX increases consumer purchasing power.** Locally grown produce is often more expensive than imported items. DA BUX stretches dollars farther and makes it possible for more people to choose local.
- **DA BUX advances nutrition, health and well-being.** Healthy food can also be more expensive, and we consistently hear requests for more produce and healthy proteins from our distribution partners and the people we serve. DA BUX makes these desired, healthier food items more affordable.
- **DA BUX invests in farmers and statewide food security.** With an estimated 85%-90% of our food imported, programs that support Hawai'i farmers are important to us all. Hawai'i Foodbank regularly purchases from local farmers, and programs that invest in local production capacity help us better support those we serve.

Hawai'i Foodbank is Hawai'i's largest hunger relief organization, fiercely dedicated to our mission of nourishing our 'ohana today while working to end hunger tomorrow. We work with a network of 200 partner agencies across O'ahu and Kaua'i to provide food assistance to an average of more than 150,000 people each month. Last year, we distributed food for more than 16.2 million meals across the islands we directly serve, including 5 million pounds of fresh produce. Together with the Maui Food Bank, serving Maui County, and The Food Basket, serving Hawai'i Island, our network of food banks and partner agencies provide food assistance to all those facing hunger across the State.

Mahalo for your consideration.

With aloha,

Amy Miller  
President and CEO  
Hawai'i Foodbank



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

BILL HB2771  
POSITION: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: February 14, 2024

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloe, and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way supports HB2771, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In addition, this bill declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded, and makes locally-grown produce affordable to Hawaii's low-income residents.

Food insecurity has doubled since the pandemic, making 1 in every 6 individuals in our state food insecure. This not only impacts those in poverty, but our ALICE households as well. Recent data shows that 44% of our community is living below the ALICE threshold. **ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed**, and refers to households who are employed but whose incomes are not sufficient to meet their basic costs.

Aloha United Way's 211 Information & Referral call center has been the primary entity conducting SNAP prescreening in our community since FY2018. Food as a category remains the second highest requested need from 211 callers after affordable housing. Access to healthful food that is also affordable is a rare commodity for SNAP beneficiaries. This measure not only benefits the SNAP consumers, but also serves to support our local farmers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your action to support Hawaii's households with this lifesaving program. We urge you to pass HB2771.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kayla Keehu-Alexander".

Kayla Keehu- Alexander  
Vice President, Community Impact  
Aloha United Way

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Suzanne Skjold".

Suzanne Skjold  
Chief Operating Officer  
Aloha United Way



**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 9:21:38 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee,

The Green Party of Hawai'i stands in strong support of HB 2771. Our local farmers market acceptance of the SNAP program dollars makes my heart sing when I see the signs .

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Susan RobertsEmery

Co chair GPH

Your Name, Town

February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024

To: Cedric Gates, Chair  
Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair  
Agriculture & Food Systems Committee

**LATE**

From: Cali Nicholle Hasegawa  
Associate Director  
Elepaio Social Services

Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of SB2771

I am in strong support of bill SB2771 that appropriates funds to the State Department of Agriculture (DOA) for the implementation of Act 153, SLH 2019. This law authorizes DOA as the administering agency of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program (HHFIP), otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

DA BUX benefits many aspects of the state's food system. By offering a 50% discount on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables for low-income SNAP-EBT shoppers, DA BUX helps farmers increase their customer base and compete with imported produce, while also supporting the local economy, generating increased revenue for 59 participating food retailers across 100+ statewide locations. Additionally, DA BUX is stretching the food budgets of low-income households and increasing their consumption of Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables.

DA BUX is also providing critical support for Maui's economic recovery from the Maui wildfires. DA BUX has already proven it can increase sales and profits for Maui County farmers. Three Maui County food hubs report an average 114% increase in local produce sales to SNAP shoppers over the past two years. Statewide, a \$2 million State investment has the potential to generate \$12.8 million in economic activity.

Furthermore, a **\$2M per year recurring State investment will ensure the survival of the DA BUX program, which is currently set to expire on August 31, 2024.** State funding will be leveraged to request matching federal funds from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) in the 2024 funding cycle. State funding has the potential to unlock these federal GusNIP dollars, as the GusNIP requires funding requests to include documentation of 100% non-federal match as well as a "sustainable funding plan." State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide a positive, lasting impact economically, for farmers, and for the well-being of individuals across the state.

Sincerely,

*Cali Nicholle Hasegawa*

Cali Nicholle Hasegawa



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

#### Executive Officers

**Gary Okimoto**, Safeway Hawaii, *Chair*  
**Maile Miyashiro**, C&S Wholesale Grocer, *Vice Chair*  
**Kit Okimoto**, Okimoto Corp., *Secretary/Treas.*  
**Lauren Zirbel**, HFIA, *Executive Director*  
**Paul Kosasa**, ABC Stores, *Advisor*  
**Derek Kurisu**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*  
**Toby Taniguchi**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*  
**Joe Carter**, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*  
**Eddie Asato**, Pint Size Hawaii, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

**LATE**

DATE: February 14, 2024  
TIME: 9:15am  
PLACE: Room 325

RE: HB2771 Relating to Food Security

Position: Support

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

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, Members of the Committee,

HFIA is in strong support of this measure. The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program, also know as Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX, is a way combat food insecurity, support healthy eating, and support Hawaii's agricultural sector.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis, food insecurity in our state soared to unprecedented levels, at the same time the local agricultural sector suffered disproportionate economic losses. The Double Up Food Bucks program has been a vital tool to increase the produce buying power of Hawaii consumers who use the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and helps grow our local agricultural sector. Continuing to fund this important program will ensure that the many benefits continue.

Fruits, vegetables, and healthy proteins tend to be more expensive per calorie than less healthy foods, which makes eating healthy a challenge for those with limited food budgets. Doubling the purchasing power for SNAP users makes it easier to choose fruits, vegetables, and healthy proteins when shopping. Data has shown that families use the Double Up Food Bucks Program eat more fruits and vegetables, a greater variety of fruits and vegetables, and fewer unhealthy foods. Getting more fruits and vegetables for each SNAP dollar also means that low-income families will have more in their budget to spend on things like housing and healthcare.

By prioritizing locally grown agricultural products this program also helps Hawaii farmers and encourages retailers to stock Hawaii grown produce and protein. This helps promote a resilient food economy where local farmers are selling to local stores that sell to local customers.

This Double Up Food Bucks program also brings vital funds into our state. The program is supported by GusNIP grants and other funding sources. By investing in this program the state is encouraging continued support and funding from other sources and pulling resources into Hawaii's food systems. Each dollar spent in this program goes into Hawaii's agricultural sector and circulates from there into the larger local economy. This is a win for SNAP users, a win for Hawaii farmers, a win for Hawaii retailers, and a win for Hawaii's economy.

We urge you to vote yes on this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



1809 Bachelot Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

**LATE**

February 12, 2024

**Testimony in support of HB2771, Relating to Food Security**

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Committee Members:

I am testifying on behalf of Lanakila Pacific.

I support HB2771, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and matching funds for individuals who participate in SNAP through the Double Up Food Bucks – Da Bux program.

Supporting local agriculture to feed vulnerable populations while leveraging federal funding is a triple win for food security in Hawaii. Lanakila Pacific uses the program to deliver fresh local produce to homebound seniors and people with disabilities. Our The Green Bag program piggy backs on the Lanakila Meals on Wheels service to deliver the produce. These individuals would otherwise have very limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables and in many cases are not able to afford the locally grown produce if not for Da Bux.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,

Rona Yagi Fukumoto  
President and CEO

Lanakila Pacific Board  
Matt Miller, *Chair*  
Savan Patel, *Vice Chair*  
Alton Murakami, *Treasurer*  
Dawn Hirano, *Secretary*  
Maria Borje-Bonkowski  
Cleo Brown  
Paige Heckathorn Choy

Joy Ishiara  
William H. Kern  
Sean Mochizuki  
Michael Morales  
Lacey Shimabukuro  
Ryan Yamamoto

Lanakila Pacific  
Foundation Board  
Emmit Kane, *Chair*  
Keith Suzuka, *Vice Chair*  
Bryan Kapeckas,  
*Treasurer/ Secretary*  
Cecilia Fong  
Kira Higa  
Scott Kavanaugh

Derek Mizuno  
Scott Nahme  
Kristi O'Heron  
Sharon Paris  
Mike Robinson  
Ryan Shiroma  
Dwayne Takeno

President and CEO  
Rona Yagi Fukumoto



**LATE**

To: House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
Re: **HB 2771 – Relating to Food Security**  
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference  
February 14, 2024, 9:15 AM

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB 2771**. This bill appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program ("DA BUX") and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Investing DA BUX is investing in our keiki, as nearly two-thirds of SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) participants in Hawai'i are in families with children.<sup>1</sup> Especially with highest cost of living and the second-most expensive groceries in the nation,<sup>2</sup> it is nearly impossible for the low-income families in Hawai'i who qualify for SNAP to afford to buy healthy food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

That's where DA BUX comes in. It is designed to help low-income families afford fresh produce, by doubling the value of their SNAP benefits when they purchase Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables.

DA BUX truly is a triple-win for our state. First, it **helps families** afford fresh produce, which benefits their health and well-being.<sup>3</sup> Second, it **helps local farmers** by increasing their sales. And third, it **helps our local food stores and markets** by bringing more dollars to them and keeping those dollars in the local economy.

SNAP shoppers' local produce purchases at DA BUX grocery stores nearly tripled in January 2022 compared to 2019, and at DA BUX farm direct retailers those sales were more than five times larger.<sup>4</sup> In addition, every \$1 spent on DA BUX is estimated to create \$2.30 in local economic activity.<sup>5</sup>

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony. Please pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Nicole Woo  
Director of Research and Economic Policy

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap\\_factsheet\\_hawaii.pdf](https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_hawaii.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://meric.mo.gov/data/cost-living-data-series>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/vegetables-and-fruits/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://dabux.org/for-advocates>

<sup>5</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oU3wNy7IKmJ4ITLEgR6Td-o1\\_DscDPzX/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oU3wNy7IKmJ4ITLEgR6Td-o1_DscDPzX/view)



# Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

*The Voice of Business*

**Testimony to the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
Wednesday, February 14, 2024, at 9:15AM  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference**

**RE: HB2771 Relating to Food Security**

**LATE**

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports HB2771**, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

The Chamber supports legislation that benefits the local community and our quality of life. Hawaii's high cost of living is a challenge identified by the Chamber's 2030 Blueprint Hawaii strategic plan to improve economic competitiveness. Many ALICE families in Hawaii experience food insecurity but do not currently qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). They stand to benefit from the passage of this measure.

In the Blueprint plan, careful planning and collaboration among government, businesses, and communities to foster sustainable economic development was identified as a clear way forward to address this problem. Another recommendation identified in the 2030 Blueprint Hawaii initiative was to diversify the economy by expanding access to local food products. This measure, if passed, would support the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program, which incentivizes local food production while mitigating our food insecurity dilemma.

It's important to note that SNAP does not just benefit SNAP recipients. By injecting consistent and predictable Federal and state funds into our local food systems SNAP helps keep the whole food system stable for all consumers as well as local providers. Support for increased access to SNAP is support for Hawaii's entire food system including local farmers, diversification of our economy, local food and beverage producers and manufacturers, local retailers, and all Hawaii customers. The Chamber is in alignment with the incentives and positive impacts that come with the passage of this measure.

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**LATE**

**RECEIVED**  
**Date & Time**  
Feb 14, 2024, 10:56 am

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/14/2024 5:35:33 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Matthew B. Johnson	Oahu Fresh	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oahu Fresh, a food hub aggregator and distributor of locally grown and made food products since 2009, strongly supports HB 2771

Officers

Kaipo Kekona  
State President

Anabella Bruch  
Vice-President

Maureen Datta  
Secretary

Reba Lopez  
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents

Clarence Baber  
Kohala, Hawai'i

Odysseus Yacalis  
East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Andrea Drayer  
Ka'u, Hawai'i

Kona, Hawai'i

Fawn Helekahi-Burns  
Hana, Maui

Mason Scharer  
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros  
Mauna Kahalawai,  
Maui

Kaipo Kekona  
Lahaina, Maui

Rufina Kaauwai  
Molokai

Negus Manna  
Lāna'i

India Clark  
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman  
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich  
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kauai

**RECEIVED**  
**Date & Time**  
Feb 14, 2024, 10:55 am



**LATE**

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

The Hawaii Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports HB2771.**

The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program has been instrumental in enabling SNAP beneficiaries to access more fresh, locally-grown produce. By providing matching funds to SNAP participants, this program not only increases their buying power but also encourages healthier food choices. This has resulted in the increased purchasing of nutrient-rich fruits, vegetables, and other agricultural products from our hardworking farmers.

The financial support provided to SNAP beneficiaries will not only help families put food on the table but also contribute to the profitability and vitality of our local farms. Furthermore, funding for this program is critical to attain federal funding matches. The state needs to ensure that this critical support for local families, and subsidy for local farmers, is fully funded and continues to deliver critical relief to both parties.

This program has proven to be a win-win for our farmers and SNAP beneficiaries, and its continuation will foster a healthier, more sustainable future for the people of Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 1:17:44 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kristin Mills	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2771. The Da Bux program needs more funding so low income people can eat healthier with more fruits and vegetables. The Da Bux program also supports our local economy.

And further down the line, with people eating healthier, we can save money in the long term by saving money in healthcare costs.

Please support HB2771.

Kristin Mills,

Maui resident, parent, and health educator

Honorable Members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

I am writing to express my strong support for DA BUX program (HB2771). This innovative program has demonstrated immense potential in addressing food insecurity, promoting healthy eating habits, and supporting local farmers and communities.

The DA BUX Program is a win-win solution that benefits both low-income families and local agricultural producers. By providing matching funds for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients when they purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers' markets and grocery stores, the program effectively doubles the purchasing power of these families. This means that individuals and families who are struggling to make ends meet can access more nutritious foods, improving their overall health and well-being.

Furthermore, the DA BUX Program supports local farmers and strengthens regional food systems. By incentivizing SNAP recipients to buy fresh produce directly from local farmers, the program creates new markets for small-scale producers and helps to keep food dollars circulating within the local economy. This not only benefits farmers financially but also contributes to the vitality and resilience of rural and urban communities alike.

In addition to its immediate benefits for individuals and communities, the DA BUX Program also aligns with broader public health and economic development goals. By encouraging the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, the program helps to reduce the prevalence of diet-related diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. This, in turn, can lead to lower healthcare costs and improved quality of life for individuals and families.

Moreover, the program has the potential to create jobs and stimulate economic growth in the agricultural sector. By expanding access to fresh, locally grown produce, the DA BUX Program creates demand for agricultural products, supporting farmers and food-related businesses throughout the supply chain. This not only creates employment opportunities but also fosters a more sustainable and resilient food system for future generations.

In conclusion, I urge you to support SB2421. By doing so, we can make significant strides towards addressing food insecurity, promoting healthy eating habits, and strengthening local economies. Together, let us build a future where everyone has access to nutritious food and the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jean Butel".

Jean Butel

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 2:56:00 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jodi Robinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support double bucks for local food purchases and urge the full funding for DA BUX program. This is a win-win policy to support farmers and our local economy, while also providing healthy and fresh produce to SNAP recipients. Mahalo.

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 2:57:02 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michelle K.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I am **strongly supportive** of this bill because many folks on SNAP will continue to benefit when the DA BUX program is sustain to feed them while at the same time, encouraging healthy eating from consumption of fruits and veggies. In addition, local businesses including 470 farm producers and 8 distributors also benefit from this program. Please do the right thing by providing funding because this program is a win-win for everyone participating. Thank you for your kind consideration!

Mahalo,  
Michelle K.

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 3:00:34 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Napua Canales	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2771 because I'm a Hawaii resident who cares deeply about sustaining localized food systems. It allows for three streams of communal support: those in need of nutritional assistance, supports local agricultural farmers, and stimulates cash flows within Hawaii's economy. Mahalo for this opportunity.

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 3:03:03 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
RoAnn Viloría	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my support for HB 2771, which proposes the implementation of the Double Up Food Bucks program in Hawaii. This program has garnered success in numerous states across the nation, and I firmly believe that its adoption in our state will significantly benefit our communities, particularly those facing food insecurity.

The Double Up Food Bucks program presents a proactive approach to addressing the issue of food insecurity by providing matching funds for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients when they purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. By leveraging these funds, individuals and families with limited financial resources can affordably access nutritious food options, promoting not only their physical health but also their overall well-being.

Furthermore, HB 2771 aligns with our state's values of aloha, kūleana, and 'ohana by ensuring that all members of our community have equitable access to essential resources, such as healthy food choices. This program not only supports local farmers and strengthens our economy but also fosters a sense of unity and support among residents. By investing in initiatives like Double Up Food Bucks, we demonstrate our commitment to creating a more inclusive and resilient Hawaii.

In conclusion, I urge you to support HB 2771 and take decisive action to implement the Double Up Food Bucks program in our state. By doing so, we can make a meaningful impact on the lives of our fellow residents, enhance the health and vitality of our communities, and uphold the values that make Hawai'i such a special place.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.



**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 3:09:04 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shelly Ogata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Honorable Representative Cedric Gates, Chair

The Honorable Representative Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair

Members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Hawai'i State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Honolulu, HI 96813

**Re: Support for HB 2771 Relating to Food Security**

Aloha Chair Gates and Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

Mahalo for the opportunity to express support for House Bill No. 2771. This bill is of utmost importance in addressing the longstanding challenges and growing concerns surrounding our food security. This bill will provide funding for the Da Bux program, which offers a 50% discount on Hawai'i-grown produce for SNAP participants.

This program is a "triple win" for Hawai'i, making healthy food more accessible for families in need, supporting agriculture and farmers, and keeping money within the local economy.

HB 2771 reflects our local community's recognition of the urgency to address the issue of food security and is a positive step towards protecting the public – especially our most vulnerable families in need. We stand ready to support the health of our next generations.

Sincerely,

Shelly Ogata, RN, MPH

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 3:15:22 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rochelle Somerville	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a Registered Nurse who works primarily with the Medicaid population it is my professional opinion that the Da Bux program is absolutely necessary for those persons eligible for SNAP. It is imperative that we make healthy food choices affordable and discourage less healthy choices which are often more affordable. It would be wonderful if this were extended to proteins.

Thank you,

Rochelle (Shelly) Somerville

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 3:34:43 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mary Christa SMith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill for the Da Bux program for funding 50% off locally grown produce for SNAP beneficiaries. It supports the health of our community members by making the most nutrient dense food affordable, it supports our farmers and leads to a more sustainable future for Hawai'i.

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 3:35:11 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Stephanie Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill which provides local families with locally grown fruits and vegetables - this supporting their health, and our Hawaii farming community!

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 3:37:33 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elizabeth Lynch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

Putting more food on the tables of local families in need

Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food

Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i

Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 Mahalo for your consideration!

E. Lynch, Honolulu

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 3:39:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of HB2771. Thank you.



Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 Mahalo for your consideration!

Robert H. Pahia  
Maui, Hawaii

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 4:09:53 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anna Ezzy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and honorable members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT of HB2771**, to fund and grow the DA BUX program. This program is building a more food-secure future in Hawai'i. By enabling families to more easily purchase healthy, nutrient-dense foods produced by over 500 local farmers across the state, DA BUX has proven its effectiveness as a solution to multiple food system problems (DA BUX 2020-2021 Impact Report).

Importantly, by allocating \$2M for DA BUX, Hawai'i is eligible for an additional \$2M in federal matching funds. This bill is an opportunity to increase economic growth in Hawai'i as well as reduce negative health outcomes and diet-related chronic illnesses among Hawai'i families. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today, please pass HB2771 favorably out of committee.

Mahalo,

Anna Ezzy

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 4:17:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robert Barreca	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We operate a 35-acre certified organic banana farm on Oahu that primarily sells wholesale.

Most other banana farms in the state have gone out of business, largely due to the price that most retailers would pay being too low to operate a banana farm. DA BUX has been a vital part of our farm's continued survival as many of the retailers we sell to (including Farm Link) offer DA BUX to their SNAP customers and therefore can pay us a fair price per pound. We would have sold approximately 30% less volume and gotten 40% less per pound if DA BUX was not around.

Please ensure DA BUX has continued funding to spur more local food production

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 4:27:45 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hayley Peter-Contesse	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 Mahalo for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Hayley Peter-Contesse, PhD

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 4:30:44 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bernadette Kaleinani Tom	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB2771 must be considered necessary for the poorest and the lower middle class income families post-Covid, which had an extremely huge impact on the average Hawai'i household financial situations; pre-Covid, the middle class was already struggling to make ends meet and lived from paycheck to paycheck with multiple jobs or living on credit cards.

Please consider supporting HB2771 in order to help those less financially fortunate.

We are truly grateful for the small stipend (EBT) that you provide to our only disabled child that helps him live his best normal. Thank you so very very much for your support. GOD bless you all.

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 4:59:01 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.

Appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawaii healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 5:36:42 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Nihipali	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Families Eat Healthy**

- DA BUX discounts are encouraging low-income SNAP-EBT shoppers to buy more local fruits and vegetables.
- In 2023, SNAP-EBT shoppers participating in DA BUX reported consuming more fruits and vegetables than the average U.S. adult.

**Supports Local Farmers and Businesses**

- DA BUX supports over 530 farms across the state.
- In 2023, participating food hubs, including farmer’s markets, increased local produce sales to SNAP shoppers by 186% on average.
- Grows the scale of our local food demand.
- Farmers have the opportunity to feed local residents rather than exporting products to out of state markets.

**Positively Impacts Hawai‘i’s Economy**

- DA BUX program has a positive financial effect. For every SNAP dollar spent, an additional \$1.54 goes into the local economy.
- [A \\$2M investment in DA BUX would result in over \\$12.8M in economic activity.](#)

**Opportunity for Federal Match**

- By allocating \$2M for DA BUX, Hawai‘i is eligible for an additional \$2M in federal matching funds from the [Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program \(GusNIP\).](#)
- State funding supports the program’s “sustainable funding plan,” a requirement of proposals for federal GusNIP funding.

This is a greaat bill that will provide much needed healthy food for Hawaii's SNAP program participants. The opportunity to get fresh local food is imperative for the health of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717



**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 6:00:14 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patti Hatzistavrakis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi, Patti Hatzistavrakis, fully support Bill 2771 HB RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY. The Da Bux program is a “triple win” for Hawai‘i: making healthy food more accessible for families in need, supporting agriculture and farmers, and keeping money within the local economy. Continued funding is needed to support this important program. By allocating \$2M for DA BUX, Hawai‘i is eligible for an additional \$2M in federal matching funds. Again, I fully support Bill 2771 HB RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY and urge the committee to pass it. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration.

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 6:00:22 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bethan Pualani Baptista	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators,

Please make every effort to protect the people of Hawaii you are sworn to serve by doing all you can to go above and beyond what this bill is asking you to do and insure the health and well-being of each and everyone of us. Controled substances should be closely monitored and regulated because of their far reaching capabilities of negatively impacting each one of us. Mahalo Nui for your consideration and effort to provide the necessary control over all toxic chemicals used for agriculture and management of farm crops. Aloha Mai,

Bethan Pualani Baptista

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 6:11:26 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2136 HD1.

Pesticide exposure can cause significant harm to public health and the environment. Restricted use pesticides have been deemed to have a high potential to cause harm to surrounding communities, farm workers, pollinators, the environment, and other crops

As such, comprehensive pesticide use data is essential to accurately assess risks and ensure that communities are protected from adverse impacts. The US regulatory system often acts after an overwhelming amount of harm has occurred and been proven through long-term studies. The current reporting system in Hawai'i does provide geographically specific enough data to conduct credible public health studies.

HB 2136 HD1. amends the contents of reports to include specific geospatial data and information, site information, and increased detail on the amount of restricted use pesticides used. Currently the full data has only been accessible via a formal UIPA request. By requiring the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture to develop an online reporting tool for restricted use pesticides, the bill importantly removes an additional barrier for residents seeking transparency.

Please support HB 2136 HD1. Mahalo for your consideration!

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 6:20:09 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
mary reilley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloe and Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 Mahalo for your consideration!

Mary Reilley, Kailua

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 7:16:29 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
KIMI ABBOTT- JACKSON	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill as a low income elderly without this program I could not have afforded the fresh fruits and vegetables that has helped me reverse my diabetes. I am healthier because of this program. Thank you

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 7:38:11 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Lieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I wholeheartedly support HB 2771, a bill that seeks to provide essential funding for the DA BUX program. This initiative, offering a 50% discount on Hawai'i-grown produce for SNAP participants, is a remarkable "triple win" for the state. By making healthy food more accessible to families in need, the program addresses crucial health disparities and promotes overall well-being. Simultaneously, it provides crucial support to local agriculture and farmers, encouraging sustainability and growth in the sector. Additionally, the DA BUX program ensures that money circulates within the local economy, fostering community resilience and economic stability. This bill is a testament to the commitment to both public health and the vitality of Hawai'i's agricultural landscape, and I urge the full support and passage of HB 2771.

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 7:45:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Eliel Starbright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ioha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2136 HD1.

Pesticide exposure can cause significant harm to public health and the environment. Restricted use pesticides have been deemed to have a high potential to cause harm to surrounding communities, farm workers, pollinators, the environment, and other crops

As such, comprehensive pesticide use data is essential to accurately assess risks and ensure that communities are protected from adverse impacts. The US regulatory system often acts after an overwhelming amount of harm has occurred and been proven through long-term studies. The current reporting system in Hawai'i does provide geographically specific enough data to conduct credible public health studies.

HB 2136 HD1. amends the contents of reports to include specific geospatial data and information, site information, and increased detail on the amount of restricted use pesticides used. Currently the full data has only been accessible via a formal UIPA request. By requiring the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture to develop an online reporting tool for restricted use pesticides, the bill importantly removes an additional barrier for residents seeking transparency.

Please support HB 2136 HD1. Mahalo for your consideration!

Eliel Starbright ,Kapa'a

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 7:58:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jari S.K. Sugano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB2771-DA BUX Program**

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems. Thank you for this opportunity to provide personal testimony in **strong support of HB 2771** relating to ongoing support DA BUX Program.

The University of Hawai‘i, at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) offers Hawaii’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed, formerly Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program) which provides practical nutrition education for Hawaii’s low-income households. SNAP-Ed and the University of Hawaii Cooperative Extension Service jointly facilitates nutrition education service delivery with support, guidance, and a memorandum of understanding with the USDA-FNS Hawaii Council, and United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Programs.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Programs works to ensure access to nutritious, healthy diets for all Americans. Therefore, food assistance paired with nutrition education programs for low-income Americans helps to advance the promotion and selection of healthy foods in our local diets.

Offering a 50% discount on locally grown produce for SNAP participants will help: to make healthy food options more accessible to low-income families, support our local farmers and keep state dollars within our island state.

**I believe that bill HB 2771 has much merit. Thank you for the opportunity to express my strong support for HB 2771**

Jari Sugano, Personal testimony, UH CTAHR, O‘ahu County Administrator



**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 8:03:00 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Barbara Barry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee,

As a small organic farmer on Maui, I am testifying in strong support of HB 2136 HD1.

Pesticide exposure can cause significant harm to public health and the environment. Restricted use pesticides have been deemed to have a high potential to cause harm to surrounding communities, farm workers, pollinators, the environment, and other crops

As such, comprehensive pesticide use data is essential to accurately assess risks and ensure that communities are protected from adverse impacts. The US regulatory system often acts after an overwhelming amount of harm has occurred and been proven through long-term studies. The current reporting system in Hawai‘i does provide geographically specific enough data to conduct credible public health studies.

HB 2136 HD1. amends the contents of reports to include specific geospatial data and information, site information, and increased detail on the amount of restricted use pesticides used. Currently the full data has only been accessible via a formal UIPA request. By requiring the Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture to develop an online reporting tool for restricted use pesticides, the bill importantly removes an additional barrier for residents seeking transparency.

Please support HB 2136 HD1. Mahalo for your consideration!

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 8:28:26 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sven Sorge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 Mahalo for your consideration!

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 8:30:33 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB2771.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

Putting more food on the tables of local families in need

Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food

Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i

Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB2771 Mahalo for your consideration!

me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili, O'ahu

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 9:04:34 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The federal food stamp program—better known as SNAP—is vital for alleviating hunger in low-income Hawai‘i households. However, the household monthly benefit is often still not enough to afford fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables. This results in most of these dollars leaving the islands—right into the pockets of major mainland food companies, rather than getting recirculated locally into our local agriculture industry.

DA BUX offers a huge return on a very modest investment. The \$2 million proposed in this bill would be matched with another \$2 million in federal dollars, and this will allow the program to expand to even more retailers and communities across the islands.

This program is truly a win for everyone—families, farmers and local businesses. There is no downside. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 9:44:00 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mary Lu Kelley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771. This program is so essential to so many families here.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Do the right thing. Please support HB 2771

Mahalo for your consideration!

Mary Lu Kelley

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 10:20:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2136 HD1.

Pesticide exposure can cause significant harm to public health and the environment. Restricted use pesticides have been deemed to have a high potential to cause harm to surrounding communities, farm workers, pollinators, the environment, and other crops

As such, comprehensive pesticide use data is essential to accurately assess risks and ensure that communities are protected from adverse impacts. The US regulatory system often acts after an overwhelming amount of harm has occurred and been proven through long-term studies. The current reporting system in Hawai‘i does provide geographically specific enough data to conduct credible public health studies.

HB 2136 HD1. amends the contents of reports to include specific geospatial data and information, site information, and increased detail on the amount of restricted use pesticides used. Currently the full data has only been accessible via a formal UIPA request. By requiring the Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture to develop an online reporting tool for restricted use pesticides, the bill importantly removes an additional barrier for residents seeking transparency.

Please support HB 2136 HD1. Mahalo for your consideration!

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 11:15:50 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KEALA FUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

The DA BUX program is so important to me because it is really the only way I can afford to buy fresh local produce. It is important for me to eat local because where my food comes from matters, and I want money to stay here in Hawaii and support local farmers and vendors.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 Mahalo for your consideration!

Keala Fung, Honolulu

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 11:51:01 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Thomas Brandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support!



**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 8:09:39 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Natasha Woodward	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill, as it helps local farmers and brings MUCH healthier options for low income folks who are on SNAP. In the long run, it will also save on health care costs.

Thank you,

Natasha Woodward

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 8:37:41 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 8:45:48 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
William Greenleaf	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm in full support of HB 2771 i

Stating clearly what is permitted clears up possible confusion of what is allowed...all Regenerative Agriculture requires feeding the microbes in the soil...using farm waste to create compost is how nature processes dead leaves, sticks, non food plants...don't mess with Mother Nature

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 8:53:19 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 8:59:58 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Barbara Best	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support local food production and help families access quality fresh food by supporting this bill. Mahalo

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 9:53:41 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Karen L Worthington	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to urge you to support HB2771 to fund Hawai‘i’s Double Up Food Bucks program, which makes locally-grown produce affordable for Hawai‘i’s low income consumers. The household monthly benefit through SNAP is often still not enough to afford fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

DA BUX is a win-win way for families to receive the nutrition they need and for our state to support our local farmers and local businesses. Please keep money for food within our island economy and increase access to healthy, locally grown produce by supporting this bill.

Best regards,

Karen Worthington

karen@karenworthington.com

**LATE**

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 10:57:29 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771.

Mahalo for your consideration!

**LATE**

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 12:22:48 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Opal Buchthal	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I am writing you in very strong support of HB 2771, which will help to fund Hawai‘i’s Double Up Food Bucks program and continue to make locally-grown produce affordable for Hawai‘i’s low-income families.

I am an Associate Professor of Public Health at UH Manoa. My research focuses on examining approaches to reducing hunger/malnutrition in order to improve health outcomes in Hawaii's low-income communities. I have researched factors related to Hawaii's SNAP program for the last 15 years, and have solid experience with the USDA's federal GUSNIP Double-Bucks nutrition incentive grant program, and the development of national Double Bucks incentive programs.

Over the last decade, the USDA's Economic Research Institute has extensively studied SNAP (food stamp) Double-Bucks nutrition incentive programs like Da Bux. There is solid evidence that subsidizing fruit/vegetable purchasing improves dietary quality and health outcomes for SNAP-participating households, AND benefit local agricultural producers. Because of this, the USDA developed the GUSNIP grant program to support programs like DA BUX Double-Up Food Bucks.

Da Bux is an outstanding example of a GUSNIP-funded nutrition incentive program. They have built a strong network of partnerships with producers, supermarkets, and community agencies, expanded program access across the state, and have research evidence showing that they are improving dietary quality and food security among low-income Hawaii families.

However, one major factor that GUSNIP grant review panels weigh in awarding future funding is program sustainability -- especially state-level support for double-bucks programs. GUSNIP grants require 50% matching funds, and state-level funding is a priority in the review of larger programs. As programs mature, those without state-level financial support are becoming less competitive for GUSNIP funding.

In summary, I strongly support HB 2771, which provides critical state support for Hawaii SNAP nutrition incentive programs like Da Bux, and recommend that it be passed by this committee.

Dr. Vanessa Buchthal



The federal food stamp program—better known as SNAP—is vital for alleviating hunger in low-income Hawai‘i households. However, the household monthly benefit is often still not enough to afford fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables. This results in most of these dollars leaving the islands—right into the pockets of major mainland food companies, rather than getting recirculated locally into our local agriculture industry.

DA BUX offers a huge return on a very modest investment. The \$2 million proposed in this bill would be matched with another \$2 million in federal dollars, and this will allow the program to expand to even more retailers and communities across the islands.

This program is truly a win for everyone—families, farmers and local businesses. There is no downside. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**LATE**

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 1:48:13 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Abigail Rose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

Please support HB 2771 Mahalo for your consideration!

Abigail Rose, Kapolei

**LATE**

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 3:02:37 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pamela burrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee,

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB2771

Mahalo for your time,

Pamela Burrell

Kalihiwai, Kaua'i

**LATE**

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 3:57:39 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elizabeth Winternitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB2771.

This program is a “triple win” for Hawai‘i: making healthy food more accessible for families in need, supporting agriculture and farmers, and keeping money within the local economy.

Mahalo,

Elizabeth Winternitz

Kula, Maui

## Testimony of Kiana Otsuka in Support

### Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

February 14, 2024 at 9:15AM

Conference Room 325

HB 2771

### Relating to Food Security

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloe and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kiana Otsuka, and I am passionate about sustainable food systems and improving food equity in Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support of HB 2771**, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Mahalo,  
Kiana Otsuka

**RECEIVED**  
**Date & Time**  
Feb 14, 2024, 10:57 am

**LATE**

**HB-2771**

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 7:54:08 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/14/2024 9:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Felicia Linton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. It allows more local food to our local families and it supports local agriculture. This benefits Hawaii in so many ways.