

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

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

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2022
1:00 P.M.
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2673
RELATING TO FARMER EQUITY**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2673 that enhances farmer equity by ensuring inclusion of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in the development, implementation, and enforcement of food and agriculture laws, rules, policies, and programs of the Department of Agriculture (“Department”), and requires an annual report to legislature.

The Department supports the intent of this measure and its laudable goals to ensure that socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers are actively included and considered by the Department in carrying out its mission. The Department notes that we currently comply with Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other nondiscrimination laws and also have implemented a language access plan for farmers with limited English proficiency to ensure that those individuals have meaningful access to state-funded agricultural services and programs in Hawaii.

The Department disseminates and offers all pertinent agricultural information, services and opportunities to all sectors of the Hawaii agricultural community, to the fullest extent possible, subject to the availability of staffing and resources. According to the 2017 Agricultural Census, there are just over 7,300 agricultural producers in Hawaii. This measure’s mandates to provide additional program review and adjustment, statistical data gathering, and reporting for socially disadvantaged members of this



population requires significant staffing and resources which are currently lacking and is the single most limiting factor for maximizing and expanding this effort.

Should this Committee decide to move this measure, the Department respectfully suggests that an appropriation for additional staffing and resources be included to ensure that its purpose can be implemented effectively and fully realized.

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

SB-2673

Submitted on: 2/3/2022 5:01:48 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Barbara Barry	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support SB 2673,

Mahalo,

Barbara Barry



Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment

Monday, February 7th, 2022, 1p.m. Conference Room 224

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action Supports: SB2673

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

On behalf of the Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) I am submitting testimony in support of SB2673.

SB2673 enhances farmer equity by ensuring inclusion of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in the development, implementation, and enforcement of food and agriculture laws, rules, policies, and programs.

The historical and ongoing dispossession of Kānaka Maoli have greatly impacted their access to land and other resources. This has created ongoing barriers for Kānaka Maoli farmers. Hawaiian farming and farmers need support to restore traditional food ways and increase our food security.

Historically, immigrant farmers and farmers of color have also been deprived of equitable access to land and other farming necessities in Hawai'i.

Female farmers represent an estimated 36% of all farmers referenced as primary producers in the State. Only 25% of Hawai'i farmers referenced as principal producers are women of color ^[1].

Existing federal agricultural policies have failed to provide sufficient technical and financial support for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

Hawai'i would not be the first state to enact such legislation. Other states have passed similar measures to address disadvantaged farmers' needs. The Farmer Equity Act, for example passed in California, would pave the way to help minority and women farmers acquire the resources they need to succeed ^[2].

Please pass SB2673. Mahalo for your consideration,



Anne Frederick
Executive Director

[1] 2017 Census of Agriculture,
https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Highlights/2019/2017Census_Female_Producers.pdf

[2] A California Bill Takes Steps to End Discrimination Against Farmers <https://civileats.com/2017/08/21/a-california-bill-takes-steps-to-end-discrimination-against-farmers/>

SB-2673

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 4:01:56 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Luanna Peterson	Testifying for Weaving Our Stories	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of SB 2673. The historical and ongoing dispossession of Kānaka Maoli has greatly impacted their access to land and other resources. This has created ongoing barriers for Kānaka Maoli farmers and historically marginalized groups. Women, immigrant farmers and farmers of color have also been deprived of equitable access to land and other farming necessities in Hawai‘i. For example, female farmers represent an estimated 36% of all farmers referenced as primary producers in the State. Only 25% of Hawai‘i farmers referenced as principal producers are women of color. (Source: [2017 Census of Agriculture](#))

Existing federal agricultural policies have failed to provide sufficient technical and financial support for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

[SB2673](#) enhances farmer equity by ensuring inclusion of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in the development, implementation, and enforcement of food and agriculture laws, rules, policies, and programs.

I support the systemic change this bill will support. All peoples should have access to land and resources needed to thrive and live in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo,

Luanna Peterson

SB-2673

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 7:24:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
JarraeTehani Manasas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am submitting a testimony in support for SB2673. Existing federal agricultural policies have failed to provide sufficient technical & financial support for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, particularly Kānaka Maoli. Historical & ongoing dispossession of Kānaka Maoli has greatly impacted our acces to land and other resources. SB2673 will enhance farmer equity.



Food+ Policy Internship 2022

food@purplemaia.org

February 3, 2022

To: Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara, and members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee

Subject: Testimony in **SUPPORT of SB2673**, Relating to Farmer Equity

Aloha mai kākou,

We are writing on behalf of the Hawai'i Food+ Policy Internship to express our SUPPORT for SB2673, Relating to Farmer Equity. Thank you for allocating time to read through our testimony.

Hawai'i has a long history of Native Hawaiians being dispossessed and excluded from the opportunity to freely farm ancestral lands (1964). This trend has continued to the present and Kanaka Maoli are still currently facing significant structural obstacles and barriers when attempting to obtain land for cultivation in order to make a living and feed 'ohana (2019, May 2).

In addition, many migrant farm workers, farmers of color, and women have experienced inequities when attempting to access lands for agricultural cultivation (1993). Female farmers make up an estimated 36 percent of primary producers in Hawai'i, and only 25 percent of principal producers here are women of color; 0.1 percent of "female producers" in the US are Native Hawaiian (2017).

Federal agricultural policies currently in place fail to provide adequate technical and financial support for farmers considered to be socially disadvantaged and we believe SUPPORTING SB2673 can help create greater equity within the current food system. We at Hawai'i Food+ Policy appreciate the committee taking the time to read this testimony, mahalo nui loa.

Me ke aloha,

loane

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

In 2022, the cohort of interns are undergrads and graduate students from throughout the UH System. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



Food+ Policy Internship 2022

food@purplemaia.org

Lead Advocate,
Hawai'i Food+ Policy Interns
#fixourfoodsystem

References

- 2017 census female producers - USDA. (n.d.). Retrieved February 5, 2022, from https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Highlights/2019/2017Census_Female_Producers.pdf
- Hofschneider , A. (2019, May 2). This Native Hawaiian Taro Farmer Has Been Fighting A&B For Decades. *Honolulu Civil Beat*. Retrieved February 4, 2022, from <https://www.civilbeat.org/2019/05/this-native-hawaiian-taro-farmer-has-been-fighting-ab-for-decades/>.
- Kent, N. J. (1993). *Hawaii: Islands under the influence*. University of Hawaii Press.
- Liliuokalani. (1964). *Liliuokalani: Hawaii's story by Hawaii's queen*. Tuttle.

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

In 2022, the cohort of interns are undergrads and graduate students from throughout the UH System. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

SB2673
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Monday, February 7, 2022, 1:00 PM
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the five county level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB2673** to establish provisions within the department of agriculture to enhance farmer equity by ensuring inclusion of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in the development, implementation, and enforcement of food and agriculture laws, rule, policies, and programs. Many farmers and ranchers in Hawaii are from a socially disadvantaged sector of society, and we support equity in access to resources to pursue and maintain agricultural operations. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council is currently partnering with Oahu RC&D, the Oahu Agricultural and Conservation Association, Go Farm Hawaii, Pacific Gateway Center, and the Kohala Center to implement a Farm Service Agency grant to ensure socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers have awareness, access, and assistance to current programs that can assist them.

However, SB1416 and SB2673 are similar bills that accomplish the same task. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director



SB-2673

Submitted on: 2/5/2022 6:49:28 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Fiona Fong Weingartner	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of SB2673. Including more types of voices in the development of agricultural laws may lead to agricultural laws that benefit more people. Sometimes you come across historical policy and scratch your head thinking, wow, that was clearly written by extra privileged people to reinforce the power structures of their own group. You know? I would be curious as to how the products and outcomes of the local food system shift if this power balance shifted over time. Mahalo for your consideration - Fiona in Honoka'a

SB-2673

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 10:00:49 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support



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

FEBRUARY 7, 2022

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 2673
RELATING TO FARMER EQUITY

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:00 PM

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

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

The Hawaii Farm Bureau certainly supports farmer equity and recognizes the negative impacts to native Hawaiians and others regarding access to land and resources to conduct farming. We respectfully offer the following comments on SB 2673, which would establish provisions within the state department of agriculture in an attempt to better serve socially disadvantaged groups.

HFB believes that the best way to support these socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, or members of these groups who would like to start agricultural ventures, is to provide funding to help them be in a better position to generate a realistic business plan, to obtain grants and loans, etc. The department of agriculture currently has limited resources to conduct and implement its many responsibilities, much less the extensive new ones proposed by this measure. Rather than provide preferential treatment to those who may not have the qualifications due to lack of experience, knowledge, or resources, it may be more expedient and result in a higher likelihood of success to provide the underserved through a dedicated and funded department position and program to help ensure they achieve their goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments and thank you for your continued support of Hawaii's agricultural community.

SB-2673

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 12:03:26 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Momi Ventura	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha my name is Momi, for as long as I've known buying food in Hawai'I is a choice between paying rent or bills, and buying food for many families. This should not be happening in such a beautiful, tropical place. Hawai'I has long been strong in self-sufficiency and food production For millions. Unfortunately that was long long time ago, pre-contact.!! Kauai for instance means - villages (kau) of food (ai,) although now they still are reigning in the Poi production, and boy is it tasty. For far too long we've been supporting mega-supermarkets and Not our family farms and our own backyard gardens for fresh food. This is tragic should something happen to these mega-grocery store chains in Hawai'I Nei. Please Support these bills concerning Food Sovereignty.. Mahalo