

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE**

P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

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

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2960, S.D. 1

**April 1, 2022
1:30 p.m.
Room 308 and Videoconference**

RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill No. 2960, S.D. 1, requires the Department of Agriculture to partner with the State's agricultural communities to establish and implement a food safety certification program for the purpose of providing small to medium sized farms with direct assistance to obtain a Good Agricultural Practices certification from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This bill also appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds in FY 23 to establish and implement the program.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and

- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

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

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

APRIL 1, 2022

1:30 P.M.

CONFERENCE ROOM 308 & VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**SENATE BILL NO. 2960 SD1
RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY**

Chairperson Luke and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2960 SD1. This measure requires the Department of Agriculture (“Department”) to partner with the Hawaii agricultural community to establish and implement a food safety certification training program to help small to medium sized farms comply with federal food safety certification mandates and appropriates funds for that purpose. The Department supports the intent of this measure and offers comments.

The Department has a cooperative agreement with the USDA that allows the Department, pursuant to licensing by USDA, to conduct food safety audits for Hawaii farmers statewide, on a fee-for-service basis. Adding and consolidating GAP certification training for farmers to the Department’s regulatory compliance responsibilities may create a potential conflict of interest if the training is also conducted by the same Departmental staff involved in administering the USDA Harmonized GAP certification program. Combining both the auditing and training programs in the Department could compromise the independence and objectivity of the food safety certification program’s audits. It is highly advisable that the educational functions of the



program be segregated from the enforcement and auditing functions to mitigate the risks presented by arrangement. As such, the Department supports Section 3 of the measure which provides an appropriation placed under the general administration of agriculture (AGR192) to establish and implement the food safety certification training program. This would separate funding for education from the funding for enforcement by the Quality Assurance Division.

The Department notes that UH-CTAHR Cooperative Extension Service has a food safety program to educate and train Hawaii farmers to comply with federal food safety regulations. Their Extension Agents work with farmers statewide and they have the GAP food safety technical expertise in training farmers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SB-2960-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 10:59:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/1/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglass S. Adams	Research and Development, County of Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Yamashite, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

The need to provide food safety certification training is vital to building capacity for food security on Hawaii Island and a key component of the County of Hawaii Agricultural Coalition's application to the US Economic Development Administration's Build Back Better Regional Challenge. We encourage the committee's support for and forwarding of SB2960 SD1 to the full House with a positive recommendation.

respectfully

Douglass S Adams, Director, County of Hawaii Dept of Research & Development



67-332 Kaiea Pl.
Waialua, HI 96791-9501
808-383-4481
www.NSEVP.org

March 28, 2022

House Committee on Finance
Wednesday February 2, 2022, 1:00 pm

SUBJECT: Support for SB 2960 – RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Dear Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Yamashita, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the North Shore Economic Vitality Partnership (North Shore EVP), I would like to extend our full support of SB 2960, which will require the Department of Agriculture to partner with the Hawaii agricultural community to establish and implement a food safety certification training program to help small to medium sized farms comply with federal food safety certification mandates.

North Shore EVP was formed in 2015 as a result of a comprehensive, community-based economic analysis that identified the need for a mid-scale regional food hub to fill serious gaps in the food supply chain and maintain agriculture as one of the pillars of the economy of the region. Our research coupled with the implementation of the FDA's Food Safety & Modernization Act (FSMA) indicated that new commercial and institutional markets for larger volumes of aggregated food would require FSMA compliance and/or USDA food safety certification.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of the 5,826 farms growing crops in Hawai'i are not food safety certified. Most of these farms are smaller than 10 acres and because of low volume and inconsistent production, they choose to sell directly to consumers at farmers' markets, roadside stands, or through CSA programs. Many farms we work with do not plant all of the land they have under lease because of this limited market access.

Moreover, during the pandemic, Hawai'i lost millions of dollars of direct food aid due to the lack of food safety certification required by suppliers in USDA funded food and nutrition programs. Even with federal incentives, access to larger, more consistent markets is a significant challenge for many small farms.

North Shore EVP received USDA approval for its Hawai'i GroupGAP food safety certification program in June 2018. USDA GroupGAP reduces the cost of food safety certification by spreading the training, technical assistance, and auditing costs between all farms in the group. Ours is the only GroupGAP program in Hawai'i and one of only 15 nationwide. **It is the only farm food safety training program in Hawai'i that results in USDA Harmonized GAP certification**, the most common standard required by larger commercial and institutional buyers. Hawai'i farmers now have the opportunity to economically attain their USDA Harmonized GAP certification through Hawai'i GroupGAP.

Hawai'i GroupGAP's 2021 USDA audit certified seven (7) new farms and an additional two (2) will be certified upon completion of corrective actions. This increases the number of Harmonized GAP farms in the state to seventeen (17), an increase of 138%! **Hawai'i GroupGAP is now**

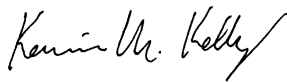
responsible for 65% of all Harmonized GAP certified farms and 23% of all GAP certified farms in the state! But we still have a long way to go to certify enough farms to meet the growing commercial and institutional market demands for locally grown produce.

Central to the expansion of farmer food safety training and certification is ensuring the success of the state's small farms by making them eligible to access new, larger, and more stable institutional and commercial markets that require food safety certification. The latest analysis from DBEDT suggests that replacing just 10% of the food currently imported into Hawai'i (Hawai'i imports over 90% of its fresh produce) would amount to an economic impact of approximately \$313 million. **Local production adds resilience to a fragile food chain** that will likely be disrupted again by hurricanes, tsunamis, or other public emergencies. In addition to import substitution opportunities, substantial shifts in state policy in 2021 will spur increases in institutional purchasing of local produce by the state and nonprofit businesses. Act 175 (2021) requires the Hawai'i Department of Education to source 30% of food served in public schools from local producers by 2030, and Act 176 mandates local purchasing goals for all state departments, aiming for 50% local sourcing by 2050. These measures pave the way for market solutions to facilitate local purchasing by all state institutions. Collectively, these actions open new market opportunities for small producers assuming they can meet the food safety criteria that may be required by these institutional buyers.

Hawai'i GroupGAP is a turnkey, scalable, and highly effective **program that gets farmers trained and certified**. The program was developed and implemented over four years and almost \$1M in grant and private funds. Although the cost to farmers has risen slightly, the program has introduced new technology that reduces the overall certification costs by minimizing the administrative burden placed on the farmer. But Hawai'i GroupGAP cannot continue to expand across the state without other avenues of support. Funding for this program through HDOA is a low-risk, high impact investment for the state that will lead to increases in farm output as farms become certified and begin entering new markets.

North Shore EVP is committed to increasing the number of certified farms in Hawai'i and assisting Hawai'i's small and medium producers access new commercial and institutional market opportunities. We strongly urge you to support this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



Kevin M Kelly, President

SB-2960-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2022 12:50:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/1/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
laurel brier	Kauai women's caucus	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Help small farmers in Hawaii get through the hurdles to the business of growing and feeding the people of Hawaii



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

April 1, 2022

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON SB 2960, SD1
RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Room 308 & Videoconference
1:30 PM

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee:

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 2960, SD1, which requires the Department of Agriculture to partner with the Hawai'i agricultural community to establish and implement a food safety certification training program to help small to medium-sized farms comply with federal food safety certification mandates.

HFB appreciates the support by the legislature in our past efforts to help Hawai'i's farmers achieve compliance with the FDA Food Safety and Modernization Act. As the actual rule has been rolled out by FDA the immensity of the task has become evident.

Foodborne illnesses can be serious, and we should seek ways to reduce risk. This bill will provide that assistance to our farmers for the costs they will incur to become food safety compliant.

The many criteria associated with FSMA to be compliant should not be an impediment for safe food. Hawai'i cannot afford to further lose farmers as we strive to increase local food production. We want to incentivize our farmers' ability to continue their operations and provide Hawai'i with abundant safe food.

Hawai'i Farm Bureau appreciates any effort which will assist farmers with expenses to become compliant with the Food Safety Modernization Act.

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

SB-2960-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 7:39:49 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/1/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
stephanie iona	kekaha agriculture assn	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Appreciate the support of this Bill needed to create a Food Safety education for farmers not only on Kauai, but throughout the State. Keeping our farmers "in the know" of a normal farm safety lifestyle is critical to providing the community with quality products. Our community deserves these assurances, and our farmers need the support to make the efforts to be certified "safe"! Thank you for your kind consideration!

SB-2960-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 9:16:27 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/1/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Braley	New Island Feed, Inc DBA: New Island Farm Solutions	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators:

My name is Jonathan Braley. I'm the CEO of New Island Farm Solutions. We provide technology-based solutions to enable our farmers and ranchers to do more with less.

From my experience in the state's agricultural industry to date, I've observed that island-based farmers and ranchers need every resource available to even make a dent in our 92% dependence on imported foods. Public and private partnerships to provide them with these resources is a key component to moving the industry toward more sustainable local food production.

I strongly support Senate Bill 2960 as this bill will give our food producers one of the most effective resources available to access markets and provide consistent and safe foods: food safety certification and training. I hope that legislation like this will be the first of many the state will pass to support the future of our food supply.

Respectfully,

Jonathan Braley

New Island Farm Solutions

www.newislandfarm.com



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

SB2960 SD1
Relating to Food Safety

Friday, April 1, 2022, 1:30 PM
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four 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 SB2960 SD1** to require the Department of Agriculture to partner with the Hawaii agricultural community to establish and implement a food safety certification training program to help small to medium sized farms comply with federal food safety certification mandates.

Achieving food safety certification is an important aspect for sustaining Hawaii's ability to provide local food. We support this assistance to producers with the costs associated with becoming food safety compliant.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director





March 29, 2022

RE: SB 2960

To Whom it May Concern:

Kekaha Agriculture Association SUPPORTS SB 2960.

If the State of Hawaii is truly going to have a successful small and medium sized agricultural community, Good Agricultural Procedures (GAP) and food safety standards. This allows our farmers to sell to producers and big box stores, as well as to meet the State's "Farm to Schools" initiatives.

We also support language that amends the bill to say *"requires the Department of Agriculture to partner with the Hawaii agricultural community to establish and implement a food safety training **AND** certification program to help small to medium sized farms comply with federal food safety certification mandates"*.

This is an important clarification to assist farmers with training programs to assist them with implementing food safety practices, including developing SOPs, writing a farm food safety plan, and engaging in record keeping, and are then prepared to obtain full food safety certification when and if they need it

Supporting this *food safety training AND certification program* is a low-risk, high impact investment for the state. More farms become certified, more farms begin entering new markets, and our state begins to achieve resiliency.

Food safety practices benefit all consumers. With more interest in getting local food into schools and state institutions, the State must appropriately and adequately support our farmers and our consumers by providing this technical assistance.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Michael A Faye, Manager
Kekaha Agriculture Association
mike@kekahaagriculture.org

Mail
P.O. Box 940
Waimea, HI 96796

(808) 337-9262

Office
8297 Kekaha Road
Kekaha, HI 96752



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

Executive Officers

Charlie Gustafson, Tamura Super Market, *Chair*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Vice Chair*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Secretary/Treas.*
Lauren Zirbel, HFIA, *Executive Director*
John Schliff, Rainbow Sales and Marketing, *Advisor*
Stan Brown, Acosta Sales & Marketing, *Advisor*
Paul Kosasa, ABC Stores, *Advisor*
Derek Kurisu, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Finance
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: April 1, 2022
TIME: 1:30pm
PLACE: Via Videoconference

RE: SB2960 SD1 Relating to Food Safety

Position: Support

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

HFIA is in support of this measure requiring the Department of Agriculture to partner with the Hawaii agricultural community to establish and implement a food safety certification training program to help small to medium sized farms comply with federal food safety certification mandates. Increasing local food production is a goal we all share. Our local farmers and food producers face a range of challenges and need the support of our State to succeed. This program is a common sense way to ensure that our small and medium sized local farms have the resources they need to meet Federal requirements and continue to grow local food for Hawaii consumers. We encourage you to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Friday, April 1, 2022 — 1:30 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports SB 2960 SD 1, Relating to Food Safety.

Dear Chair Luke 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; and better management of freshwater and waste.

Ulupono supports SB 2960 SD 1, which requires the Department of Agriculture to partner with the Hawai'i agricultural community to establish and implement a food safety certification training program to help small- to medium-sized farms comply with federal food safety certification mandates.

Ulupono supports food safety certification training across the State for small to medium sized famers. According to the 2017 USDA NASS Census of Agriculture, of Hawai'i's 7,328 farms statewide, 66%, or 4,868 farms, are between 1–9 acres and 78%, or 5,701 farms, produce less than \$25,000 in sales. Hawai'i's agricultural producer majority is small farmers. Many of these small farmers struggle to enter the marketplace that is heavily driven by food safety compliance. Working off of such tight profit margins, local farmers are in need of support to meet grocer and food distributor demands such as food safety. Measures such as this seek to provide local producers with an opportunity to earn the necessary certifications in order to provide communities with fresh, Hawai'i grown products.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



Testimony Presented to
House Committee on Finance
April 1, 2022 1:30pm Conference Room 308
by

Ron Weidenbach, Co-owner/President, Hawaii Fish Company Inc., Waialua, HI

SUBJECT: Support for SB2960 SD1 – RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair, Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, members of the Committee:

Hawaii Fish Company (HFC), established in 1978, is Hawaii's oldest commercial fish farm. In recent years, we have been integrating aquaponics production of leafy greens into our farming efforts to increase our company's sustainable local food production.

In 2021, HFC obtained food safety training and USDA GroupGAP food safety certification through the North Shore EVPs exceedingly beneficial and supportive GroupGAP program, opening additional market opportunities for our farm and enabling us to provide locally-grown, food safety-certified produce for our State. As such, HFC strongly supports SB2960 which requires the Department of Agriculture (HDOA) to partner with the Hawaii agricultural community to establish and implement a food safety certification training program to help small to medium sized farms comply with federal food safety certification mandates.

USDA GroupGAP is gaining momentum across the nation as a resource for smaller sized operations who need food safety certification, and is the perfect mechanism for many of Hawaii's producers, because it provides a system of shared costs and a supportive network within a group of producers seeking certification. In Hawaii, many small- and mid-size producers can use food safety certification to gain market access but are still hindered by challenges including individual audit costs and staff to manage their operations' food safety practices, write a food safety plan, etc. At this time, there are only 30 operations whose growing and/or packing procedures are certified USDA GAP/GHP or USDA Harmonized GAP compliant in Hawaii.

Dedicated funding to enable HDOA to partner with the Hawaii agricultural community to provide training and support to implement a food safety certification training program to help small to medium sized farms comply with federal food safety certification mandates is greatly needed to

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P.O. Box 740 | Waialua, HI 96791 USA | info@hawaiifishcompany.com | hawaiifishcompany.com

make food safety certification more accessible for all of our producers. This is a timely market advantage that should be developed to spur local food production and rural development in Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald P. Weidenbach". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Ronald P. Weidenbach
Co-owner and President
Hawaii Fish Company Inc.

Sustainability. Innovation. Quality.

P.O. Box 740 | Waialua, HI 96791 USA | info@hawaiifishcompany.com | hawaiifishcompany.com



Email: nmilne@kohalacenter.org

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Friday, April 1, 2022 – 1:30 p.m.

Nicole Milne, personal testimony, in strong support of SB 2960 SD1, Relating to Food Safety.

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my personal testimony in strong support of SB 2960 SD1 which creates a Food Safety Certification Training Program for Hawai'i producers.

My name is Nicole Milne and I am the Vice President of Food and Agriculture Initiatives at The Kohala Center (TKC). TKC is a non-profit, statewide organization for research, education, and 'āina stewardship that has supported the growth and development of Hawai'i's producers and community food systems since 2011, serving as Hawai'i's only cooperative development center, specializing in financial capitalization for agricultural and food businesses.

Food safety is an important concern for all Hawai'i residents. Hawai'i's 52-week growing season makes this a year-round, day-to-day activity for island producers. For some farmers implementing federally-mandated food safety measures is new and financially cumbersome, and for others it's easy—especially producers just starting out and building in these procedures from day one. As our agricultural support community works together to bring all farmers into compliance, providing *sufficient, equitable, and affordable* access to education and certification programs is critical.

For small and mid-sized farms with thinner margins, implementing food safety measures can be more challenging as they often do not have an individual dedicated to farm food safety. While existing programs provide food safety training and assistance in preparing for certification, broader partnerships with additional community organizations working full-time in food safety—such as North Shore Economic Vitality Partnership, can provide more robust one-on-one farmer coaching to ensure producers are prepared for and able to pass food safety audits.

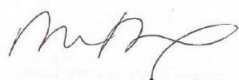
Please note the following desired amendment in bold below to the existing legislation in Section 2 that would facilitate compliance with federal food safety mandates.

*"The department of agriculture, in partnership with Hawai'i's agricultural community, shall establish and implement a food safety training **and certification program to help small to medium sized farms comply with federal food safety certification mandates.**"*

I strongly support the State's efforts to deepen their involvement and investment in increasing the number of producers that are trained in food safety *and* compliant with federal food safety regulations. Moreover, by working in partnership with organizations providing food safety education and outreach, the department will be able to reach a greater number of producers farming throughout the islands. This initiative comes at an opportune time, as FDA resumes on-island inspections and local markets recover and increasingly require suppliers to be food safety compliant. This initiative also shows respect and aloha for those who have chosen a hard job—growing food in Hawai'i—at a time when sound federal regulations are adding to farmer's challenges.

I respectfully request your support of SB 2960 SD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Nicole Milne, Vice President, The Kohala Center
Personal Testimony

Testimony of Bruce Silverglade in Support of Passage of SB 2960 SD1

April 1, 2022

I am Bruce Silverglade, former legal director (retired) of the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) writing in support of SB 2960 SD1.

This testimony is submitted in my personal capacity (I now consult on food and agriculture legal and regulatory issues).

CSPI helped lead the fight for the enactment of the federal Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), including provisions dealing with produce safety. CSPI is the nation's leading independent non-profit consumer advocacy organization in the field of food safety and nutrition. I served as legal director of CSPI from 1981 to 2010.

FSMA modernized food safety protection and promises a safer food supply. The enactment of FSMA's produce safety provisions followed numerous food safety outbreaks in which dozens of Americans died and thousands were stricken ill. FSMA was strongly supported by numerous non-profit consumer and environmental protection organizations.

The intention of the FDA's produce safety regulation was to bring FDA food safety regulation into the 21st century. In that sense, FSMA has been successful.

In retrospect, however, it is clear that supporters of FSMA like me, did not fully appreciate the economic and social impact that the FDA's produce safety regulation would have on small to very small farms including more than 6,500 such operations in Hawaii.

As a permanent full-time resident of the State of Hawaii since 2019, I can now understand first-hand the unintended consequences of FSMA's produce safety rule on the State's economy. If the clock could be turned back, I would have used my best efforts to see that FSMA provided sufficient technical assistance to small and very small farms to ensure that they could comply with the FDA's produce safety regulation that is mandated by FSMA.

That is why the passage of SB 2960 SD1 is so important. The legislation fills many of the gaps in the federal law regarding the need for technical assistance. The bill is a "win-win" for both the public which deserves safer

produce, and the thousands of Hawaiian farms that need to modernize in order to succeed and thrive in today's marketplace.

I urge the committee to ensure that this bill is enacted. Thank you for consideration of my views.

Bruce Silverglade

3920 Wyllie Road, Unit 12

Princeville, HI 96722

SB-2960-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2022 3:41:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/1/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gary R Ueunten	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ueunten Farm supports SB2960 Relating to Food Safety. As a small family farm striving to increase our contribution to our local food supply we recognize the need to produce health and safe produce. Complaine with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is a big hurdle for small farms and requires support of local government.

Mahalo

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
MAR.16, 2022, 9:30AM, RM. 325

BY : DEAN J. OKIMOTO

SUBJECT: Support for SB2960 ---RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

To: Chair Sylvia Luke, Vice Chair Kyle Yamashita and members of the House Finance Committee

My name is Dean Okimoto and I was president of Nalo Farms, Inc, and a farmer for 35 years. I was also President of the Hawaii state Farm Bureau from 2003-2014, and I currently work as an Ag consultant for a couple of farms, and am Chair of the Hawaii Agricultural Foundation. My testimony reflects my experiences as a farmer and I do NOT represent the Farm Bureau or the Hawaii Agricultural Foundation. When I quit farming in 2018, we were one of only about 60 farms that were food safety certified and compliant. Today there are only about 50 farms that are food safety certified out of over 5,000 farms in Hawaii.

There has been an increased demand for more locally grown farm products across the state, and we constantly hear about how we need to make our state more sustainable and not so dependent on importing over 85% of our food. I feel so frustrated when I hear this, as there is such a lack of understanding of agriculture when people say this without understanding that the first step to increasing our locally grown food supply, after getting the land, water, and labor is to obtain food safety certification and knowledge. Increasingly the buyers such as Hawaii Food Industry Alliance (which all the supermarkets), and distributors such as Y. Hata, not to mention most of the hotels and an increasing amount of restaurants are requiring food safety. This is not to mention that the federal government through the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is going to require farm food safety certification for most of our food producing farms. Without it farmers are facing a shrinking market for their products, and how do we increase sustainability and grow more of our local food supply?!? This is not to mention that it is the right thing to do to protect the public from food borne illnesses to larger degree by having food safety.

We will also be providing more food to government institutions including our schools as mandated by this Hawaii State Legislature, which is great, but for farmers to access this market food safety should also be mandated.

If we want to save our small farms (which 85% of our farms in Hawaii are smaller than 5 acres) also it is imperative to create programs that make it cost effective for them to comply with food safety, and this group GAP program needs the support of our government and our people to up the production of our

farms and increase sustainability. Increased funding to have more people training and helping farmers with this daunting task of food safety is critical for the survival of food production ag in our state.

Many farmers will need ongoing help to comply with food safety rules as it a lot of work to keep all the records that need to be kept and creating the systems for compliance are easy to develop or comply with. Gone are the days where anyone can go into ag and just grow and sell. Technical skills are needed to deal with all the tools needed to comply.

Dedicated funding to provide training and support within a USDA Group GAP program is critically needed and needed funding is right away! The longer we put off hiring and training trainers to help the farmers, the smaller the market will be for these farmers products and the more unsustainable our agricultural industry will become.

I advocated for money for food safety to start over 15 years ago, so we would not be in this critical situation today. Today...if we delay any longer we will surely start to see a decrease in what the ag industry can do to make us more food self sufficient.

I STRONGLY support SB2960, if we are to talk about food sustainability, and increasing our local food production, this is the first and one of the most critical steps in moving in that direction. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Dean J. Okimoto

SB-2960-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 11:04:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/1/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Rhoden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Yamashita, and members of the Finance Committee, thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.

My name is Lisa Rhoden and I have been working with farmers here in Hawai'i for well over a decade. I am the Food Safety Director for North Shore EVP (since 2016). I previously managed the Ag Park at Kunia (~300 acres), was the Senior Research Assistant in Agronomy at Pioneer Hi-Bred, and a conservation planner at Oahu RC&D. I support SB2960 because Hawai'i farmers need more support in achieving food safety practice implementation and certification and this is crucial to the stability and growth of Hawai'i agriculture.

Hawai'i's agriculture sector is made up of a majority of small and very small farms. This has had an impact on the types and amount of resources provided to the sector since the closure of the plantations. There is a longstanding assumption that if a farm is not of a certain size that it isn't commercial or cannot be successful. This assumption is wrong and has created damage in the industry because the needs of smaller operations have not been identified and met. The truth is small farms have the capacity to be successful commercial operations assuming that they receive appropriate and adequate support.

North Shore EVP has demonstrated this by researching and then establishing a USDA GroupGAP program which provides food safety training **and** certification to farmers statewide. *In 2021 we helped 8 operations receive their USDA Harmonized GAP certification.* Our new, current cohort is made up of 5 farms, plus 10 operations we continue to assist in maintaining their food safety practices and certification. We work statewide and we have successfully shown that with adequate support and training and appropriate applied technology, small farms can obtain the certification that is frequently required by larger distributors, aggregators, and other commercial markets.

Helping our farmers implement food safety practices and obtain certification opens the door to consistent markets such as grocery stores, schools, and distributors; therefore they are not solely dependent on farmers' markets and direct to consumer venues that shift in stability depending on a myriad of factors. More farms with documented food safety training and certification means more market access and more resiliency in our supply chain, which is dangerously fragile as we saw during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are in a position now to enact change that can strengthen this network in advance of the next disaster whether that is a hurricane or another global pandemic.

While there are other entities who can provide food safety training in the state, there is no way that they can reach all of the farms that need it and provide the one-on-one coaching that results in successful certification. We are the only organization that focuses on training and certification and does not have other obligations to fulfill. We have been dedicated to finding ways to make this training and certification more accessible. Our program has introduced new technology, a digital record keeping app called Heavy Connect, that allows farmers to log data and complete necessary records in the field on their mobile device. This is faster, easier, and more effective than paper record keeping and it results in more successful certifications. Supporting this ***food safety training AND certification program*** is a low-risk, high impact investment for the state. Food safety practices benefit all consumers, but are particularly of importance to keiki, kupuna, and immuno-compromised individuals. With more interest in getting local food into schools and state institutions, we must appropriately and adequately support our farmers and our consumers by providing this technical assistance.

In short, Hawai'i GroupGAP is a program that is turnkey, scalable, and highly effective. We get farmers trained and certified. While we have been successful up to now, we are reaching the limit of what we can do as a non profit organization having to write grant after grant to support ourselves and our farmers. This work should be financially supported by the State. We have shown what is possible and to continue and build on it, we need real, tangible support in terms of funding.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony. I urge you to support SB2960.

Mahalo,
Lisa Rhoden

SB-2960-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 3:58:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/1/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa M Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this Bill.

Theresa Thompson

Testimony Presented to
House Committee on Finance

April 1, 2022, 1:30pm Conference Room 308

by
Luisa F. Castro, PhD

SUBJECT: Support for SB2960 – RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair; Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair; and members of the Finance Committee:

My name is Luisa F. Castro, PhD and I was formerly a CTAHR Extension Agent in Food Safety and the former Produce Safety Program Manager at the Hawaii Department of Agriculture who developed the Produce Safety Program in the state in 2018.

I strongly support SB2960 relating to the establishment of a GroupGAP Pilot Program and appropriating funding for its administration. Specifically I support that the Department of Agriculture be required to partner with the Hawaii agricultural community to establish and implement a food safety training AND certification program to help small to medium sized farms comply with federal food safety mandates.

As someone who worked in educating farmers, stakeholders and government officials about good agricultural practices and food safety in Hawaii for over 30 years and continues to regulate food safety in Washington state, I know first-hand that food safety practices benefit all consumers, but are particularly important to keiki, kupuna, and immuno-compromised individuals. With more interest in getting local food into schools and state institutions, we must appropriately and adequately support our farmers and our consumers by providing this technical assistance to grow safe food from farm to fork.

Since 2017 North Shore EVP, a local nonprofit, has been working to establish a successful GroupGAP program here in Hawaii with the goal of helping small and medium sized producers across the state achieve food safety certification through the USDA. GroupGAP is a USDA program that allows farms, food hubs, and other aggregators to achieve USDA food safety certification together, utilizing the power of a group. To date, the North Shore EVP GroupGAP program has certified a total of 12 producers in USDA GAP and HGAP food safety certification across the state, most recently 8 operations that maintained or were newly certified by the end of 2021. The common refrain around food safety in Hawaii has been that it is too difficult, too expensive, and that small farms can't do it. However the cost to growers and agriculture in general after a recall or an outbreak is tenfold, not to mention a terrible experience for those whose health is negligibly impacted. The need for assistance is growing, and more support from the state is needed to ensure equitable access to this program and the assistance it provides to producers on all islands.

Dedicated funding to provide continued training and support within a USDA GroupGAP program in the state could help to stabilize and increase this number. Making food safety certification more accessible to all of the state's producers should be a measurable goal for a revitalized agriculture sector and would pave the way for local producers to provide safely grown, harvested, and transported food to the local market.

I strongly support SB2960 related to the establishment of a GroupGAP Pilot program and appropriation of funding. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Respectfully,

Luisa F. Castro PhD

March 31, 2022

Representatives Luke, Yamashita, Branco, Eli, Holt, Ilagan, Kobayashi, Marten, Nishimoto, Perruso, Sayama, Tam, Todd, Wildberger and McDermott

I am in support of the bill and the amendments proposed in the testimony of Kevin Kelly, President of the North Shore Economic Vitality Partnership:

- Clarify Hawai'i GroupGAP is a high impact, low-cost program that requires the commitment of farmers to improve their practices.
- Revise increasing demand for locally grown food is not driven by "anticipated farm closures" (page 3, line 9), but by new markets created by this Legislature in Acts 175 and 176 (2021) that require DOE and state agencies to purchase 50% of their food from local sources.
- Change the purpose of this Act from "establishing a food safety certification training program" to "establishing a food safety training AND certification program"

Passing this bill is critical to enhance the resilience of Hawai'i's economy to changing global conditions. The bill would take the important steps of establishing responsibility and funding to support small and medium-sized farm's efforts to implement critical food safety and record keeping procedures. Implementation will improve produce safety, traceability and marketability. Furthermore, undertaking GAP and required documentation can improve overall operations as well as offer insight into output, which will benefit the supply chain and consumers.

I appreciate your consideration.



David John Buerge
Honolulu, Hawai'i

SB-2960-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2022 3:28:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/1/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tierra Bartolotti	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Hawai'i State House Committee on Finance,

As UH student who has been conducting Food Systems Research, it has been strongly expressed throughout the community that farmers & food producers alike do not have a clear understanding of the rules & regulations governing processing compliances. SB 2960 would significantly help to demystify the food safety regulations for farmers & alleviate one of the biggest barriers for local produce getting to the local market. I strongly support SB2960 & appreciate that this bill has been introduced.