

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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

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

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

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

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2960

**March 2, 2022
10:15 a.m.
Room 211 and Videoconference**

RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

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

Senate Bill No. 2960 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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

MARCH 2, 2022

10:15 A.M.

CONFERENCE ROOM 224 & VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

SENATE BILL NO. 2960
RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Chairperson Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2960. This measure requires the Department of Agriculture (“Department”) to partner with a Hawaii entity to establish a pilot United States Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) Harmonized GAP food safety training and certification program to help small- and medium-sized farms obtain the USDA Harmonized Good Agricultural Practices certification and appropriate 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, we recommend that any appropriation for the educational functions be placed in the budget for the Department's Chairperson. 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.



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

February 25, 2022

Senate Committee on Ways & Means
Wednesday March 2, 2022, 10:15 am

SUBJECT: Support for SB 2960 – RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, 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 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 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.

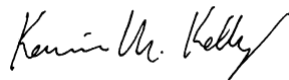
Central to the expansion of farmer food safety training and certification is ensuring the success of the state's small farms by making them eligible to access new, larger, and more stable institutional and commercial markets that require food safety certification. The latest analysis from DBEDT suggests 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.

I agree with the Department of Agriculture (HDOA) Chairperson Phyllis Shimabukuro-Geiser's prior comments that HDOA has an internal conflict of interest in conducting both the internal audits required by GroupGAP and the contracted external audits required by USDA. In addition, the Dean of CTAHR, Nick Comerford, has indicated that providing certification is outside the mission of his unit and might compromise the trust relationships that CTAHR extension agents have with farmers if they are, even erroneously, seen as enforcement agents of the government.

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 legislation.



Kevin M Kelly, President



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 Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 2, 2022
TIME: 10:15am
PLACE: Via Videoconference

RE: SB2960 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.

SB-2960

Submitted on: 2/28/2022 12:32:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2022 10:15:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Scott Wong | Testifying for Ohana Hui Ventures, Inc | Support | No |

Comments:

We are in SUPPORT. As a Local Hawaiian Owned Company and partnering with multiple local farmers small to medium size, we find that support in making the Food Safety Certification process easier by helping to fund the process will be key for small farmers.

Farming in itself is a passion that benefits all citizens but the costs of farming alone is quite costly without adding on the City, State and Federal requirements to do conservation plans, permitting, insurance and land leases.

We support this bill to help with the Partnering of HDOA and the appropriations of Funds.

Testimony Presented to
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
March 2, 2022, 10:15 a.m., Conference Room 211

SUBJECT: Support for SB2960 – RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

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

Lanakila Pacific strongly supports SB2960 relating to the establishment of a food safety training and certification pilot program, to help small to medium farms comply with federal food safety certification mandates and appropriating funding for its administration.

Lanakila Pacific is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides services and social enterprise programs to build independence and improve the quality of life for individuals with cognitive, physical, social, or age-related challenges. In 2019, Lanakila Pacific embarked on an endeavor to utilize more local produce in the 576,000 meals that we delivered through the Lanakila Meals on Wheels program. Due to cost constraints, the opportunity to achieve this goal requires working with farmers to build their production capacity and ability to safely handle the produce. To that end, we partnered with the North Shore Economic Vitality Partnership (NSEVP) as one of the first steps to understanding and prioritizing food safety – in light of the vulnerable seniors we feed.

Hawaii imports approximately 85% of the food that is consumed here. There is growing demand to increase local food production, which would have a positive impact on our economy. A 2012 report by DBEDT, in cooperation with HDOA, states that *“The economic impact of food import replacement is significant. Replacing just 10% of the food we currently import would amount to approximately \$313 million. Assuming a 30% farm share, \$94 million would be realized at the farm-gate which would generate an economy-wide impact of an additional \$188 million in sales, \$47 million in earnings, \$6 million in state tax revenues, and more than 2,300 jobs. An investment in programs and projects which support greater food self-sufficiency will result in economic, social and environmental benefits to the State of Hawaii.”*

Investing in food safety training is a sustainable way to support greater food self-sufficiency in the state and help institutional feeding organizations, like Lanakila Pacific, increase utilization. Specifically, food safety certifications would pave the way for local producers to provide more food to the local market.

Lanakila Pacific Board
Scott Nahme, *Chair*
Savan Patel, *Vice Chair*
Alton Murakami, *Treasurer*
Kristi O’Heron, *Secretary*
Maria Borje-Bonkowski
Cleo Brown
Paige Heckathorn Choy

Dawn Hirano
Joy Ishiara
William H. Kern
Matt Miller
Michael Morales
Dr. Ashley Ono
Ryan Yamamoto

Lanakila Pacific
Foundation Board
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Kira Higa
Scott Kavanaugh
Derek Mizuno
Mike Robinson
Dwayne Takeno

President and CEO
Rona Yagi Fukumoto



Despite strong support in the State for local food purchasing, most of the State's agricultural producers are not well prepared to show evidence that they meet food safety guidelines, outlined as "using Good Agricultural Practices", and the vast majority are not food safety certified, creating a liability risk of liability should a customer become ill due to foodborne illness. Food safety is also a consideration for food served to our keiki in schools and to health-compromised individuals in hospitals and other facilities.

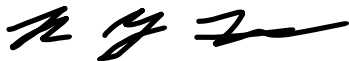
USDA GroupGAP is gaining momentum across the nation as a resource for smaller sized operations who need food safety certification and is the perfect mechanism for many of Hawaii's producers, because it provides a system of shared costs and a supportive network within a group of producers seeking certification. In Hawaii, many small and mid-scale producers can use food safety certification to gain market access but are still hindered by challenges including individual audit costs and staff to manage the operations food safety practices, write a food safety plan, etc. GroupGAP alleviates those burdens by providing technical assistance, in essence a food safety manager to guide practices and assist with documentation, and because producers share the costs of auditing across all farms in the group.

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 the state of Hawaii. To date, NSEVP's GroupGAP program has certified 12 producers in USDA GAP and HGAP food safety certification. Our food service director has audited the program.

Dedicated funding to provide training and support within a USDA GroupGAP program could help to stabilize and increase this number. Making food safety certification more accessible for all of our producers is a market advantage that should be developed.

We strongly urge you to pass this legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Respectfully,



Rona Yagi Fukumoto
President & CEO

SB-2960

Submitted on: 2/28/2022 1:50:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2022 10:15:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Bev Brody | Testifying for Get Fit Kauai | Support | No |

Comments:

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on behalf of the Healthy Eating Active Living Coalition of Kauai County - Get Fit Kauai. We strongly support SB2960 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.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS
Wednesday, March 2, 2022 — 10:15 a.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports SB 2960, Relating to Food Safety.

Dear Chair Dela Cruz 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, 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



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

March 2, 2022

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON SB 2960
RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
10:15 AM

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



Testimony Presented to
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
March 2, 2022 10:15am Conference Room 211
by

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

SUBJECT: Support for SB2960 – RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, members of the Ways and Means 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 the 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 make food safety certification more accessible for all of our producers. This is a timely market advantage that should be developed. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.

Respectfully,

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

Sustainability. Innovation. Quality.

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



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

SB2960
Relating to Food Safety

Wednesday, March 2, 2022, 10:15 AM
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, 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 SB2960** 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



SB-2960

Submitted on: 2/27/2022 12:13:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2022 10:15:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Thomas Brandt | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

Support!

#fixourfoodsystem

SB-2960

Submitted on: 2/27/2022 7:20:47 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2022 10:15:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Gerard Silva | Individual | Oppose | No |

Comments:

No More Red Tape !!

SB-2960

Submitted on: 2/28/2022 2:22:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2022 10:15:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Amy Brinker | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

Support

March 1, 2022

Senators Gabbard, Nishihara, Acasio, Rhoads, and Fevella,

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 (North Shore EVP):

- 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 4, line 6), 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 for the enhancing 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 would benefit the supply chain and consumers.

I appreciate your consideration.



David John Buerge
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Cindy Goldstein, PhD
Ag Matters LLC
98-814 C Kaonohi St
Aiea, HI 96701

SB2960, Relating to Food Safety
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Weds March 2, 2022 10:15 AM Conf Rm 211

SB2960: Support

Chair Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee,

I support SB2960 because it addresses a current need of Hawaii's agriculture community. The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act regulates production and handling practices that meet food safety standards. Ninety percent of Hawaii's farms are small or very small and it has been challenging to increase the number of food safety certified operations. Farms that undergo food safety training that results in certification have opportunities to expand production. While there is increased demand for food safety certified products by wholesalers, farmers markets, state agencies, and produce buyers; very few Hawaii farms have a food safety plan in place and even fewer have certified produce and ag products.

Having the Department of Agriculture partner with the Hawaii agricultural community to establish and implement a food safety training program will help small to medium sized farms comply with federal food safety certification mandates. SB2960 will help preserve small diversified farming businesses. Funding food safety training that leads to certification will help Hawaii's farmers continue to operate and contribute to expansion of their businesses and markets. SB2960 provides funding for a program that allows farmers to offer products that encourage buyers to source locally, reducing reliance on imported food products.

SB2960 calls for funding to establish a food safety training program. Expanding the purpose of funding to also include certification is important to ensure farming businesses are fully positioned to meet requirements of state agencies, wholesalers, individual local stores, and other buyers.

While UH CTAHR offers training related to principles of food safety and record keeping, resources and personnel are already stretched thin. An approach that offers statewide food safety training leading to certification has been developed by Hawaii Group GAP (Good Agricultural Practices). This program has a successful track record for providing participating farm businesses with a framework for following farm food safety practices and record keeping, technical support, and assistance creating relationships with vendors and distributors. Each farm receives reliable technical assistance and the ability to maintain their USDA GAP certification from year to year.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB2960.

SB-2960

Submitted on: 3/1/2022 10:26:05 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2022 10:15:00 AM



| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Remote Testimony Requested |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Lisa Rhoden | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

My name is Lisa Rhoden, I am the food safety director for the Hawaii GroupGAP program managed by North Shore EVP. I am writing in 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 and training program to help small to medium sized farms comply with federal food safety certification mandates.

In 2015 I met and spoke with Kevin Kelly about the barriers small and medium sized producers experience in accessing local markets, particularly those associated with distributors and grocery stores. We both saw a need to assist smaller producers with food safety practice implementation and support to obtain USDA food safety certification. If this was the primary barrier to better market access, we knew that it could be addressed and mitigated.

In 2017, we began our GroupGAP program, with assistance from USDA and other partners including Michigan GroupGAP. In 2018 we successfully helped to certify 2 local operations in USDA GAP, followed by another 2 in 2019 in USDA Harmonized GAP as well as passing our own GroupGAP system audit with USDA. Since then we have worked with farmers across our state to help them with the food safety documentation and certification required to move their product safely and successfully into broader local markets.

SB2960 will help small and medium sized operations receive equitable assistance. Larger operations have the capacity to hire food safety managers to administer the food safety practices and manage the documentation required for an audit. Small operations can be similarly successful but need a little more support; they are often family or one-person operations without the resources to dedicate to the pursuit of a single certification. With this help, they are successful; in fact Hawaii GroupGAP has a successful track record of assisting small and medium sized operations. We have helped 8 operations in achieving or maintaining USDA Harmonized GAP certification in 2021. Much of the “heavy lifting” is done in the first 9-12 months, after which farmers continue to receive assistance to maintain their practices and update their documentation for each year. In this way each farm receives reliable technical assistance and can maintain their USDA GAP certification from year to year.

Hawaii GroupGAP has consistently worked to improve the efficacy of our program, including

- 1.

1. partnering with HeavyConnect (a digital record keeping app) to provide a solution to the record keeping challenge that has prevented farmers from being successful in the past,
2. engaging on a monthly call with GroupGAP programs across the country to learn about best practices,
3. creating relationships with vendors so that producers can benefit from discounts for their services,
4. Creating relationships with distributors that provides two way communication providing information on what local grown products distributors need and what farms are growing those products and have food safety certification.

State institutional purchasing mandates will soon provide an incentive for farmers to get GAP certified but currently most Hawaii farmers are not prepared, and do not have appropriate documentation that shows compliance with food safety practices. This fact alone highlights the need for more food safety training and certification across the state.

Although GAP assistance does exist within CTAHR, food safety training is not their only responsibility, and the need is great. CTAHR is not able to provide certification.

The Hawaii GroupGAP program is a turn-key food safety training and certification program. It is affordable for producers and provides both one-on-one coaching and group technical assistance within a supportive network. This program assists producers in obtaining USDA Harmonized GAP certification, an audit that also addresses FSMA compliance measures. Up to this point our program has been successful with minimal staff (3), and funding coming primarily from grants. With state support, this program can continue to grow and improve the current numbers of only 30 USDA GAP certified operations across the State.

I urge you to support Hawaii's producers and the local supply chain and pass SB2960.

Mahalo for your time and the opportunity to submit testimony on this matter.

Sincerely,

Lisa Rhoden

Food Safety Director

Hawaii GroupGAP

North Shore EVP



LATE

Food+ Policy Internship 2022

food@purplemaia.org

March 01, 2022

To: Chair Dela Cruz and the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Subject: SB2960 **Support**

Aloha,

We're writing on behalf of the Food+ Policy Internship to express our **SUPPORT** for **SB2960**, Relating to Food Safety.

Small farms and farmers need your help and resources. It is unlikely that they can compete with medium sized and large farms to achieve financial security on their own. Small farms and farmers are important contributors to Hawai'i's food systems. Yet many find difficulty in dealing with the bureaucracies of being a food producer in Hawai'i. Expert farmers are producing an abundance of food, they really just need our help in bringing that food to markets so they can focus on what should be their sole task- their kuleana to land stewardship and food production. This focus can only be achieved when they are not breaking their backs with the mental load of running a farm business. That is why the establishment of a food safety certification training program, through the department of agriculture, is important. By limiting assistance to farms with less than \$500,000 in annual food sales, we can ensure that the funds and efforts of this program will truly help small farms and farmers.

We hope that the legislature will show their dedication to the success of small farms and farmers by showing their **support** for **SB2960**, Relating to Food Safety.

Mahalo,

The Food+ Policy Internship Team 2002

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.