

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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**MORRIS M. ATTA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE JOINT SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND  
ENVIRONMENT AND COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND  
TOURISM**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2023  
1:00 P.M.**

**CONFERENCE ROOM 224 AND VIDEO CONFERENCING**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1426 HD1  
RELATING TO VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS**

Chair Gabbard, Chair DeCoite and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill 1426 HD1. This bill establishes a food and product innovation network within the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) and appropriate moneys for food and product innovation facilities on the islands of Molokai, Oahu, and Hawaii.

The Department of Agriculture supports this measure and provides the following comments. With the COVID-19 pandemic behind us, this new initiative will provide the catalyst for launching innovations in food products, processing technology, packaging processes, creative food supply chain logistics, and novel marketing channels for both local and export markets. Innovation further drives economic efficiencies and raises a competitive advantage. Global competition requires incorporating the latest innovations available for Hawaii producers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**JAMES J. NAKATANI**  
Executive Director

STATE OF HAWAII  
**AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

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**TESTIMONY OF JAMES J. NAKATANI**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT AND**  
**COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

**Wednesday, March 15, 2023**

**1:00 p.m.**

**VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING**

**Conference Room 224**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1426 H.D. 1**  
**RELATING TO VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS**

Chairs Gabbard and DeCoite, Vice Chairs Richards and Wakai and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1426 H.D. 1. The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) supports this measure, which establishes a food and product innovation network within the Agribusiness Development Corporation and appropriates moneys for food and product innovation facilities on the islands of Molokai and Oahu.

The ADC appreciates any support from the Legislature to help it make optimal use of agricultural assets for the economic, environmental, and social benefit of the people of Hawaii. The ADC concurs that agencies involved in the creation and development of value-added products should establish a network to

share expertise. The sharing of information and ideas is invaluable and will help foster entrepreneurs and spur economic development statewide.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



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

SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY, ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT, & TOURISM  
Wednesday, March 15, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports HB 1426 HD1, Relating to Value-Added Products.**

Dear Chair Gabbard, Chair DeCoite, and Members of the Committees:

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

**Ulupono supports HB 1426 HD1**, which establishes a food and product innovation network within the Agribusiness Development Corporation and appropriates moneys for food and product innovation facilities on the islands of Molokai, O'ahu, and Hawai'i.

According to the USDA, U.S. farm establishments received 14.5 cents per dollar spent on domestically produced food in 2021. This was the lowest recorded farm share value in nearly three decades.<sup>1</sup> In Hawai'i, leaf lettuce growers receive \$2–\$4 per pound for raw product. Some of these leaf lettuce growers add value to their product by washing, cutting, packaging and mixing multiple leaf lettuce varieties into retail ready clamshell boxes. By doing this minimal value-added processing, these leaf lettuce growers can increase their price to \$9–\$12 per pound.

Another way farmers can increase their profitability is to create value-added products with their off-grade produce. Off-grade produce can be perfectly edible, but might not be “good looking” enough for grocery shoppers. Depending on the type of produce, the percentage of a harvest that might be classified as off-grade can range from 10% to 40%.<sup>2</sup> Farmers have trouble selling off-grade produce, so it is often wasted. By figuring out innovative ways to add value to off-grade produce, farmers will be able to utilize more of their harvest and generate profit from produce that would otherwise go unused.

As Hawai'i's local food issues become increasingly complex and challenging, local producers

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/gallery/chart-detail?chartId=105281#:~:text=U.S.%20farm%20establishments%20received%2014.5.value%20in%20nearly%20three%20decades.>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.salon.com/2019/09/08/study-finds-farm-level-food-waste-is-much-worse-than-we-thought\\_partner/](https://www.salon.com/2019/09/08/study-finds-farm-level-food-waste-is-much-worse-than-we-thought_partner/) and <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921344919301296>



and local food entrepreneurs will need additional resources and support to address and overcome them. We appreciate this committee's efforts to look at policies that support local food production and the success of our farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Director of Government Affairs



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#### **Executive Officers**

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

TO: Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Senator Mike Gabbard Chair  
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III Vice Chair

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: Wednesday, March 15, 2023  
TIME: 2pm

RE: HB1248 HD1 Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

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.

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

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

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

Each dollar spent in this program goes into Hawaii's agricultural sector and circulates from there into the larger local economy. This is a win for SNAP users, a win for Hawaii farmers, a win for Hawaii retailers, and a win for Hawaii's economy.

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



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March 15, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1426, HD1**  
RELATING TO VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
1:00 PM

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and DeCoite, Vice-Chairs Richards and Wakai, and Members of the Committees:

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

**The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 1426, HD1**, which establishes a food and product innovation network within the Agribusiness Development Corporation and appropriates moneys for food and product innovation facilities on the islands of Molokai, Oahu, and Hawai'i.

As expenses rise, increases in farm revenues and profits are critical to the continued viability of farms and ranches. One way farmers can do this is by "adding value" to raw agricultural crops. Currently, off-grade and excess production is sometimes wasted due to market conditions. Converting them into value-added products will not only increase farm revenue but also provide new business opportunities, increase employment opportunities, and address Hawai'i's goals of increased self-sufficiency and sustainability.

High production costs are a major driver of narrow profit margins for Hawai'i's farmers and value-added food producers. Labor, taxes, land, transportation, utilities, and supplies are all costs of doing business that often results in value-added food producers just being able to break even.

If a Hawai'i farmer or entrepreneur wants to process an off-grade product into a value-added product they are usually forced to send it to the mainland because Hawai'i lacks value-added processing facilities. This cost of transportation to and from the mainland is often enough to discourage farmers from pursuing value-added production.



Hawai'i is potentially losing millions of dollars because of the cost to process agricultural crops into value-added products. A network of food and value-added facilities in Hawai'i will support the production of new value-added products so that farmers can increase their income while allowing locally produced value-added goods can compete with imported products, and expand into new export markets, strengthening our local economy.

The strength of Hawai'i's economy is dependent upon a diversity in commerce that is resilient to economic downturns and aggressive in creating new growth opportunities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



HAWAII FOREST INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (HFIA)

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96774 Phone: 808-933-9411  
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Website: www.hawaiiiforest.org

**Date:** 03/13/2023

**TO:** AEN Chair Gabbard, AEN Vice Chair Richards, EET Chair DeCoite, EET Vice Chair Wakai and AEN and EET Committee Members

**FROM:** the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA)

**SUBJECT:** In Support of HB1426 HD1 Relating to Value Added Products

Dear Chair Gabbard, Chair DeCoite and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Directors and members of the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA), please support HB1426 HD1 Relating to Value-Added Products..

Since 1989 HFIA has worked towards actualizing healthy and productive forests across the state of Hawaii and recognized Hawaii's opportunity for economic growth and diversification. We've taken much pride in encouraging our members to create products utilizing locally sourced materials. We've done this via our Hawaii's Wood Brand program which represents fine items made from wood grown in the Hawaiian Islands. The program requires participants to meet certain criteria ensuring their products are Hawaii Made and of good quality. Roughly 40% of HFIA's members are woodworkers, the vast majority of whom utilize woods sourced locally. Many HFIA woodworkers sell their finished products both locally and out of state. These sales of high quality, Hawaii Made products, to out of state buyers are a small-scale example of what HB1426 could yield on a broader scale across various food and product categories.

It is also important to note that Hawaii is home to millions of acres of land zoned as Conservation Reserve. These lands hold forest resources that could be utilized for innovation and to create value-added, Hawaii Made products. Extracted resources could be replenished for future harvest and use. These lands also hold wild game that could be processed to feed local families or exported as a Hawaii Sourced product with the support of a Food and Product Innovation Network.

Ultimately, a successful Food and Product Innovation Network could yield various benefits including economic diversification and growth, job creation, business innovation and networking and resource sharing amongst entrepreneurs in the State of Hawaii. For these reasons we hope that you will support HB1426 HD1.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

*Guy Cellier*

Guy Cellier, Acting President

Hawaii Forest Industry Association

*Established in 1989, HFIA's is a nonprofit organization founded by people committed to sustainable forest management. HFIA's mission is to promote healthy and productive forests and a sustainable forest industry through management, education, planning, information exchange, and advocacy. HFIA has over 130 members including woodworkers, landowners, sawyers, foundations, foresters, growers, educators, environmentalists, architects, millers, ranchers, and others interested in HFIA's mission and goals.*

HFIA Board of Directors

Officers: Acting President/Vice-President Guy Cellier, Secretary Peter D. Simmons, Treasurer Wade Lee  
Directors: Thomas Calhoun, Jeremy Campbell, Aaron Hammer, Nickolas Koch, Tai Lake, Michael Sowards, Irene Sprecher, Michael Tam, Jorma Winkler, Ron Wolfe, Aileen Yeh

**HB-1426-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 1:03:21 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tanya Mendija	Testifying for Sustainable Molokai	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Subject: HB 1426, Relating To Value-Added Products

We would like to express our full support for HB 1426. This bill will allow us to continue serving our island community in providing them with the capacity to increase their economic situation and have a more resilient future on the island of Molokai for generations to come.

Mahalo for your time.

Tanya Mendija

**HB-1426-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 1:10:50 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jason Imada	Testifying for Molokai Hunting Club	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are in support of a facility described in the bill, however we have some concerns and questions. First, we do recognize that our island Molokai is in need of such a facility. However, when talking about the utilization of axis deer for profit, we need to also talk about how this will be managed. Axis deer for many people on this island are a staple of the diet. Without axis deer, most people on this island will suffer. If we are going to have people, or entities, (local and outsiders) incentivized to take as many axis deer as possible for profit, we need a system that manages the population so it can be sustainable and healthy. How will this be managed? FYI, the Molokai Hunting Club has already been taking data and information regarding population density and health on lands that we have access to. We are an upstanding and respected non-profit organization that is committed to conservation and protection of wild game on this island for future generations. To specifically name axis deer without a well thought out management plan is dangerous for the well being of the people. We truly appreciate all the work that Lynne Decoit continues to do for our island.

**HB-1426-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 9:41:57 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

**HB-1426-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 6:11:16 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

In support of HD1. Thank you.