

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

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
AND HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**MARCH 29, 2023  
1:10 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 187  
SENATE RESOLUTION 171**

**URGING THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE OF THE  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ISSUE ADDITIONAL  
FUNDING FOR THE GUS SCHUMACHER NUTRITION INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO  
PROVIDE MATCHING FUNDS FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE STATE DOUBLE UP  
FOOD BUCKS PROGRAM TO ALL APPROVED SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION  
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM RETAIL OUTLETS THROUGHOUT THE STATE**

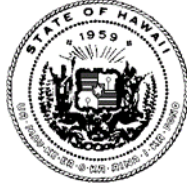
Chairpersons Gabbard and San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee:

SCR187 Requests that the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, of the USDA to issue additional funding for the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program to provide matching funds for the expansion of the state double up food bucks program to all approved supplemental nutrition assistance program retail outlets throughout the state. The HDOA is in strong support of this this resolution and comments that the state has successfully administered previous GUSNIP awards that increased SNAP recipient access to Hawaii fruits and vegetables through the DA BUX program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

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

March 28, 2023

TO: The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SCR 187/ SR 171 – URGING THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ISSUE ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THE GUS SCHUMACHER NUTRITION INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO PROVIDE MATCHING FUNDS FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE STATE DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS PROGRAM TO ALL APPROVED SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM RETAIL OUTLETS THROUGHOUT THE STATE.**

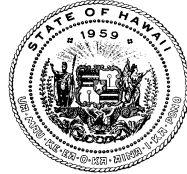
Hearing: Wednesday, March 29, 2023, 1:10 p.m.  
Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports these resolutions and provides comments.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of these resolutions is to urge the National Institute of Food and Agriculture of the United States Department of Agriculture to issue additional funding for the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program to provide matching funds for the expansion of the state Double Up Food Bucks Program to all approved Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program retail outlets throughout the State.

The Hawaii healthy food incentive dollar-for-dollar matching program, also known as the DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks Program, is popular among SNAP participants. It allows doubling SNAP participants' purchasing power of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. Additional funding for this program will increase the purchasing power of SNAP recipients and will be an economic boost to support local farmers and keeps food dollars in the local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on these resolutions.



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

**Testimony in SUPPORT of S.C.R. 187/S.R. 171**

**URGING THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ISSUE ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THE GUS SCHUMACHER NUTRITION INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO PROVIDE MATCHING FUNDS FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE STATE DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS PROGRAM TO ALL APPROVED SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM RETAIL OUTLETS THROUGHOUT THE STATE**

SENATOR MIKE GABBARD, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: March 29, 2023

Room Number: Conference Room 224

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports Senate Concurrent  
3 Resolution 187 (S.C.R. 187) and Senate Resolution 171 (S.R. 171) urging the National Institute  
4 of Food and Agriculture of the United States Department of Agriculture to issue additional  
5 funding for the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) to provide matching  
6 funds for the expansion of the state double up food bucks program to all approved supplemental  
7 nutrition assistance program retail outlets throughout the state. The DOH strongly supports this  
8 measure and the DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks Program (DA BUX) as one component of a  
9 comprehensive approach to improve the availability and accessibility of healthy foods to  
10 improve health outcomes for people in Hawaii, especially for people who face greater health  
11 disparities.

1 Major health authorities (including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Centers for  
2 Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization) recommend increasing fruit  
3 and vegetable intake as a means to prevent chronic disease and improve overall health.<sup>1,2,3</sup>  
4 However, access to fresh produce for income-limited individuals can be difficult and is one of  
5 the reasons why they often have poorer diets and higher rates of chronic disease than middle  
6 class and wealthy individuals.<sup>4,5</sup> Hawaii has the highest cost of living in the nation with food  
7 costs that are 82% higher than the national average.<sup>6</sup> In Hawaii, less than one in five adults  
8 reported eating five or more fruits and vegetable a day (2019 Behavioral Risk Factors  
9 Surveillance System).<sup>7</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic increased attention to the vulnerability of  
10 Hawaii’s food systems and the need for a comprehensive approach and collaborative work  
11 towards a sustainable food system.

12 Nutrition incentive programs similar to the DA BUX are prevalent around the United  
13 States and are often touted as a “win-win-win” for farmers, families, and local businesses. Data  
14 from these interventions have shown improvements in dietary behaviors, reduction in household  
15 hunger and food insecurity, and increased sales of local produce (by more than their dollar value  
16 alone).<sup>8,9,10</sup>

17 Passage of S.C.R 187/S.R. 171 will demonstrate Hawaii’s support of the Alliance for  
18 National Nutrition Incentives (ANNI) proposal for expansion of the GusNIP. The additional

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *2015 – 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. December 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Strategies to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases: The CDC Guide to Strategies to Increase the Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2011.

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization. *Healthy Diet Fact Sheet N°394*. Web. Updated September 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Simmet, Anja et al. *The Dietary Quality of Food Pantry Users: A Systematic Review of Existing Literature*. Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Volume 117, Issue 4, 563 – 576.

<sup>6</sup> United States Department of Agriculture: Official USDA Food Thrifty Plans

<sup>7</sup> Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Fitzgerald, Katherine. *Double Up in Farmers’ Markets: The Consumer Experience*. Fair Food Network, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Mann, J., et al. *Economics of healthy food incentives at Michigan farmers markets: Study highlights*. Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Fitzgerald, Katherine. *Double Up Food Bucks and Hunger*. Fair Food Network, 2015.

- 1 GusNIP federal funds that can be used to match state dollars will help to sustain and expand DA
- 2 BUX and provide much needed support for Hawaii's families, local farmers, and economy.
- 3 Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Wednesday, March 29, 2023, at 2:00 PM  
Via Video Conference; Conference Room 224

**Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment**

To: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Herbert "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

**Senate Committee on Health and human Services**

To: Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senator Henry Aquino, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson  
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

**Re: Testimony in Support of SCR 187/SR 171  
Urging The National Institute Of Food And Agriculture Of The United States  
Department Of Agriculture To Issue Additional Funding For The Gus Schumacher  
Nutrition Incentive Program To Provide Matching Funds For The Expansion Of The  
State Double Up Food Bucks Program To All Approved Supplemental Nutrition  
Assistance Program Retail Outlets Throughout The State.**

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My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

HPH writes in SUPPORT of SCR 187/SR 171 which urges the National Institute of Food and Agriculture of the United States Department of Agriculture to issue additional funding for the Gus Schumacher nutrition incentive program to provide matching funds for the expansion of the state double up food bucks program to all approved Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) retail outlets.

HPH has supported the Double Up food bucks program since 2019 to both foster strengthening local food systems and allow SNAP recipients to access good nutrition. The program has been successful in encouraging SNAP recipients to make healthy food choices. Fresh fruits and vegetables are an integral part of a healthy diet and central to the prevention of obesity and chronic disease. While every community should have access to fresh and healthy dietary options, the high cost of fresh produce often makes that difficult. This challenge is felt acutely by participants in the federal supplemental nutrition assistance program, a low-income population that struggles to afford healthy food. The double up food bucks program is a viable model that supports local farmers,

helps low-income families that receive double the purchasing power for healthy, Hawaii-grown produce, and benefits Hawaii by keeping dollars in the local economy.

HPH recognizes the strong connection between access to healthy foods with health and wellness. Adults who eat a healthy diet live longer and have a lower risk of obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. Healthy eating can help people with chronic diseases manage these conditions and avoid complications. However, many low income families continue to struggle to put food on the table.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.





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

March 29, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

**TESTIMONY ON SCR 187/SR 171**

URGING THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ISSUE ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THE GUS SCHUMACHER NUTRITION INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO PROVIDE MATCHING FUNDS FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE STATE DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS PROGRAM TO ALL APPROVED SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM RETAIL OUTLETS THROUGHOUT THE STATE

Conference Room 227 & Videoconference  
1:10 PM

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and San Buenaventura, Vice-Chairs Richards and Aquino, and Members of the Committees:

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

**The Hawaii Farm Bureau supports SCR 187/SR 171**, which urges the National Institute of Food and Agriculture of the United States Department of Agriculture to issue additional funding for the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program to provide matching funds for the expansion of the state Double Up Food Bucks Program (DA BUX) to all approved Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program retail outlets throughout the State.

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

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

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

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



## HIPHI Board

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

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

Debbie Erskine  
Treasurer  
ARCH-MEPS Consulting LLC, Owner

Keshia Adolpho, LCSW  
Na'au Healing Center

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

Carissa Holley, MEd  
Hale Makua Health Services

Jennifer José Lo, MD  
Hawai'i Pacific Health

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

Garret Sugai  
HMSA

Kathleen Roche, MS, RN, CENP  
Kaiser Permanente

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

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

## HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a  
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community Health  
Worker Initiative

COVID-19 Response

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol Free  
Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective

Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023

To: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice-Chair  
Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Health & Human Services

Re: **Support for SCR187**  
Urging The National Institute Of Food And Agriculture Of The  
United States Department Of Agriculture To Issue Additional  
Funding For The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program To  
Provide Matching Funds For The Expansion Of The State Double  
Up Food Bucks Program To All Approved Supplemental Nutrition  
Assistance Program Retail Outlets Throughout The State.

Hrg: Wednesday, March 29, 2023

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The Obesity Prevention Task Force (OPTF), a program of the Hawai'i Public Health Institute<sup>i</sup> (HIPHI), is in **Strong Support of SCR187**, which urges the National Institute of Food and Agriculture of the US Department of Agriculture to issue additional funding for the Gus-NIP to provide matching funds for the expansion of the state Double Up Food Bucks Program to all approved SNAP retail outlets statewide.

This resolution will demonstrate the Legislature's support for the Alliance for National Nutrition Incentives's (ANNI) proposal that the GusNIP funding that supports successful Double Up Food Bux programs, like Hawai'i's DA BUX, be expanded in the 2023 Farm Bill. DA BUX has proven extremely successful, and we must continue to have both the state and the federal government support this program through state dedicated money and federal matching funds.

**Double Up Food Bucks is a triple win for families, farmers, and the local economy.**

The Hawai'i Healthy Food incentive program, also known as DA BUX, provides a dollar-for-dollar match on locally produced fresh fruits and vegetables for SNAP recipients. Through this program, SNAP recipients can bring home healthy food, local farmers gain new customers and increased income, and more money goes into and grows our local economy.

Incentivizing SNAP dollars for fresh fruits and vegetables stretches food dollars for families, especially with increasing food costs. Furthermore, the doubling effect that DA BUX has on SNAP dollars gives families more room in their budgets for other necessary expenses.

**Double Up Food Bucks demand has risen significantly over the last several years.**

Year after year, this program has grown its impact making a significant impact on SNAP recipients. In 2019, SNAP shoppers spent \$87,359 through the DA BUX program; by 2022, SNAP shoppers spent \$2,275,460 through the DA BUX<sup>ii</sup>. That money has brought healthy foods to homes while positively impacting our local economy.

**Double Up Food Bucks provides a strong return on investment.**

SNAP is proven to stimulate the economy by being an economic multiplier. For every SNAP dollar spent, it generates \$1.79 in economic activity. These dollars ripple out throughout the supply chain, supporting farmers, retailers, and food distributor employees; these people, in turn, spend their dollars to help support economic activity further and so on. If the state provides \$3 million in funding for this program, the federal government could provide up to an additional \$3M of matching funds. This \$6M would result in over \$9.9M of total economic activity. In other words, the \$3M investment has a return of over 230%.

**Health and food security are positively impacted.**

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

**A \$3 million investment can help expand the program to more stores.**

The Double Up program has seen significant growth. It started with KTA in Hawai'i County and is now accessible statewide through Times, KTA, Foodland, and participating farmers' markets. These stores are locally based and operated, ensuring the economic impact is amplified. There are still ways for the program to grow its impact.

The \$3M will increase the program's reach and participation by engaging more people through educational campaigns in areas where there has been stalled growth, as well as provide the ability to engage more retail outlets that were unable to participate due to a limit of SNAP funding for participants.

Double Up Food Bucks is a triple win for health, agriculture, and the local economy and is a lifeline for many during the pandemic. Thank you for considering this important measure.

Mahalo,



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

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<sup>i</sup> Created by the legislature in 2012, the Obesity Prevention Task Force is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations and works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and healthcare environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents. The Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) convenes the Task Force and supports and promotes policy efforts to create a healthy Hawai'i.

<sup>ii</sup>[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bca7bc67eb88c2e986a5203/t/62f6dc8f8e3f8d1a809e2e9a/1660345536073/2020-2021\\_Outcomes\\_Report\\_0.9.8.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bca7bc67eb88c2e986a5203/t/62f6dc8f8e3f8d1a809e2e9a/1660345536073/2020-2021_Outcomes_Report_0.9.8.pdf)

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



To: The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)  
and  
The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)  
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org  
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023, 1:10pm

**In strong support of SCR187/SR171**

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Richards and Aquino, and Committee members,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org is in **strong support of SCR187/SR171** that urges the National Institute of Food and Agriculture of the United States Department of Agriculture to issue additional funding for the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program to provide matching funds for the expansion of the state Double Up Food Bucks Program to all approved Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program retail outlets throughout the State.

The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program helps keep federal funding circulating in the local economy and incentivizes the use of SNAP benefits for the purchase of fresh local produce. SCR187/SR171 will expand this important program to retailers in rural areas, and by doing so, help more low-income families bring home more healthy food, area farmers gain new customers and make more money, and more food dollars will stay in the local economy.

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

Please pass SCR187/SR171.

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

Sherry Pollack  
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



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

SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Wednesday, March 29, 2023 — 1:10 p.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports SCR 187/ HR 171.**

Dear Chair Gabbard, Chair San Buenaventura 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 SCR 187/ SR 171**, which urges the National Institute of Food and Agriculture of the United States Department of Agriculture to issue additional funding for the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program to provide matching funds for the expansion of the state Double Up Food Bucks Program to all approved Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program retail outlets throughout the State.

Ulupono strongly supports the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program within the DOA. This resolution seeks to shed some light on the importance of the "DA BUX" Double Up Food Bucks Program, administered by The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's food bank, and find ways to expand dedicated resources to better serve our local community. With increased Federal and State support, this program can continue to serve as a triple-win solution for our communities as SNAP-eligible recipients double their spending power at point of purchase with healthy local produce, local farmers are able to expand their markets, and all money spent is kept right here in our state. In addition, this program leverages federal funding at a 1:1 match.

From 2020-2021, DA BUX has supported more than 470 farm producers and eight distributors through farm product sales. With rising inflation and Hawai'i's high cost of living, SNAP participation and benefits continue to climb since 2019 levels.<sup>1</sup> These numbers substantiate the need to support our local community as food insecurity continues to increase.

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<sup>1</sup> 9% increase for those receiving benefits; 100% increase in total annual SNAP benefits paid; and, 26 times increase in the annual amount of DA BUX discounts issues to SNAP shoppers since 2019.

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*



We are hopeful that the State can consider a \$3 million appropriation, per year, for the DOA program to support the continued efforts of DA BUX through HB 1248 or the Budget Bill. A \$3 million investment by the State would receive a direct match of \$3 million in federal funding. Furthermore, our analysis shows that with that level of state funding in place, the potential economic impact created by DA BUX in Hawai'i reaches nearly \$19 million.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Director of Government Affairs

See Attachment



**OUR STATE HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO UNLOCK SIGNIFICANT FEDERAL AND PHILANTHROPIC DOLLARS IN SUPPORT OF THIS PROVEN AND HIGHLY IMPACTFUL PROGRAM**



“The most I saved in one trip was \$28 and some change. **I really love this program because I am diabetic and need fresh veggies and fruits to help keep me healthy.** Mahalo for this amazing program. Also, DA BUX helps me with my kids too. They love looking for the DA BUX label on produce & can choose what they want. They love to eat! Carrots, cabbage and cucumbers are their faves as well as local apple bananas to name a few.”

— Dawn Marquez  
SNAP Shopper,  
Waimanalo, HI

# DA BUX

## DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS PROVIDES A TRIPLE-WIN

“For over a century, KTA Super Stores has strived to serve as an essential source for locally grown produce for our Hawai‘i Island community. DA BUX provides us the opportunity to support our local growers. **Since launching DA BUX in September 2017, we have seen transactions associated with the DA BUX program more than quadruple at our seven store locations.** We see this as positive sign that DA BUX is motivating families to purchase and consume more healthy fruits and vegetables and that this increased demand will drive increases in agricultural production for the state.”

— Toby Taniguchi  
President, KTA Super Stores

DA BUX continues to be an amazing way to connect our farm directly to the

consumers who need it most. Being able to offer the best quality fresh locally grown food in a very affordable way removes a big hurdle for people; [DA BUX] helps to make feeding them and their families easy. **This program helps to support local agriculture so we can more easily compete with imported food and gives us farmers a big incentive to produce more fruits and vegetables to satisfy the increased demand for our goods.**”

— Ryan Earehart  
Farm Owner, Oko‘a Farms

# DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks provides a Triple-Win

HAWAII IMPORTS APPROXIMATELY 85-90% of its food and has food costs that are 91% higher than the national average. Dependence on food imports threatens the sustainability of food producers throughout the islands and places the entire population directly at risk of food shortages in the event of pandemics, natural disasters, and economic disruptions. Furthermore, with the highest cost of living in the nation, Hawaii is challenged with growing food costs and food insecurity, and 12% of its population receives Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 2022.

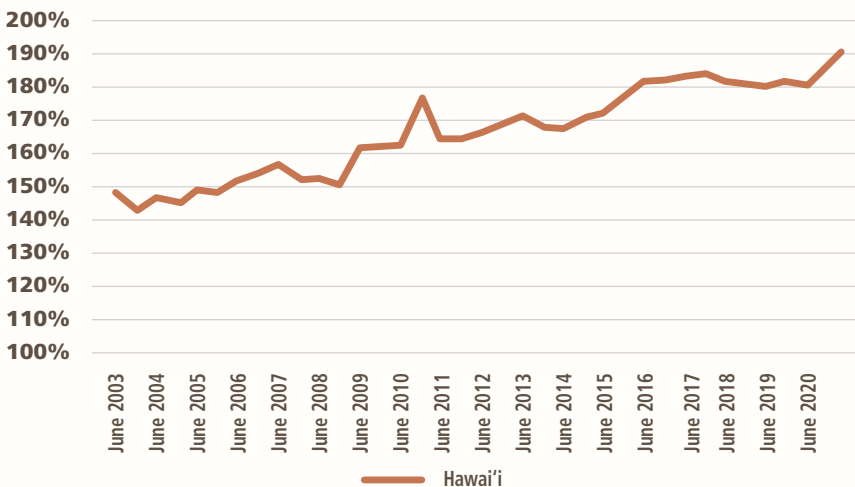
## THE PROBLEM

Overall, Hawaii faces an estimated \$83 million in annual costs related to food insecurity and hunger. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rising inflation, Hawaii households are facing increasing food costs. Compared to the rest of the nation, Hawaii households spend the highest percentage of their annual budget on food. This is compounded with the rising inflation that has increased food prices and overall cost of living in Hawaii by 6.6% and 7.4%, respectively. Increasing food prices reinforces many residents' reliance on cheaper, less healthy fast food options that have long-range impacts on health and wellbeing. This situation creates a significant need to help feed low income families AND support local agricultural food producers.

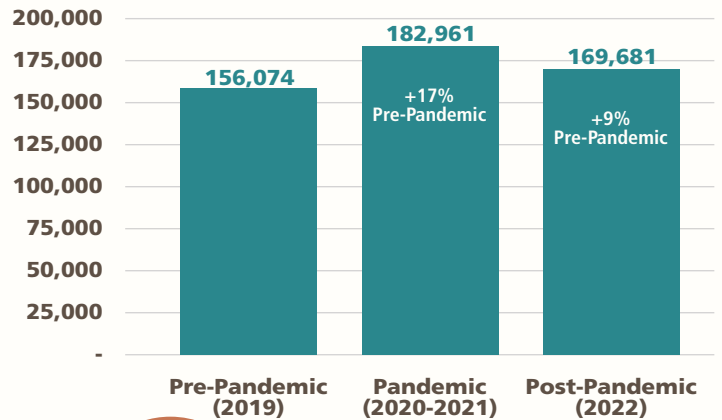
## BY THE NUMBERS

- 90% Imported Food
- 91% Higher Food Costs (Refer to the graph for the increasing trend of Hawaii's cost of food under the USDA Thrifty Food Plan compared to the national average cost of food)
- 12% Received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance in 2022

## Hawaii's Monthly Thrifty Plan Cost vs. National Average



## Monthly Average of Individual SNAP Recipients in Hawaii



## THE SOLUTION

DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks is a triple-win solution because it doubles the purchasing power of low-income SNAP families for healthy, Hawaii-grown produce; it supports local farmers with an increased customer base; and it benefits the entire island community by keeping dollars in the local economy.

An appropriation of up to \$3 million in state funds will bring in additional federal funds to sustain, expand and extend the statewide DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks program. Given the broad benefits of DA BUX for our state, it is imperative to secure sustained funding for DA BUX and ensure it is a staple service providing economic relief to SNAP households and directly supporting local agricultural food producers across the state. Based on the projected spend down rate, current funding of the DA BUX program will only last through August 2024.

## HOW IT WORKS

The program offers SNAP participants a DA BUX Access Card or voucher at point of sale that doubles their purchasing power when they buy locally

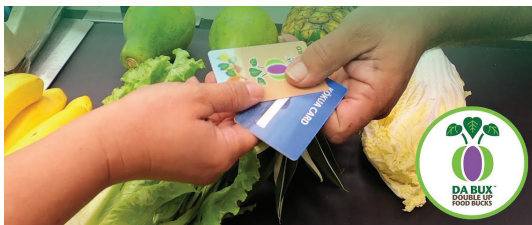


grown fruits and vegetables — \$10 of SNAP benefits would be worth \$20 of Hawaii grown produce. Thus, each \$1 funded into the program provides \$2 worth of local food purchases.

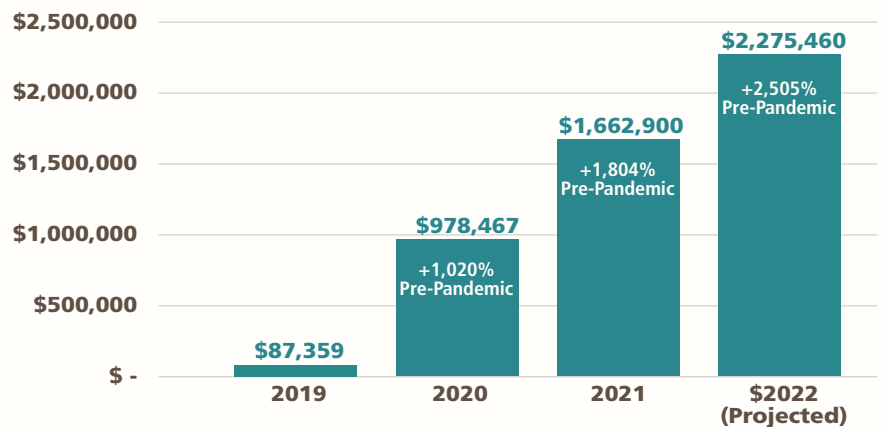
# State Support is Key to Federal and Philanthropic Funding

	State Investment of \$1M	State Investment of \$2M	State Investment of \$3M
State Funding	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000
Federal GusNIP grant	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000
Total Funding for DA BUX discounts	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$6,000,000
Economic multiplier on DA BUX discounts <sup>1</sup>	1.7	1.7	1.7
Potential economic impact of DA BUX discounts	\$3,328,020	\$6,656,041	\$9,984,061
Federal SNAP benefits	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$6,000,000
Economic multiplier of SNAP benefits <sup>2</sup>	1.5	1.5	1.5
Potential economic impact of SNAP benefits	\$3,000,000	\$6,000,000	\$9,000,000
<b>Total funding for SNAP &amp; DA BUX</b>	<b>\$4,000,000</b>	<b>\$8,000,000</b>	<b>\$12,000,000</b>
<b>Potential economic impact</b>	<b>\$6,328,000</b>	<b>\$12,656,041</b>	<b>\$18,984,061</b>
<b>Economic impact multiplier of state funding</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6.3</b>

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



## Annual DA BUX Discounts Issued to SNAP Shoppers



Local Food Sales Driven By SNAP DA BUX				
County	2019	2020	2021	2022 (Projected)
<b>Honolulu</b>	\$ -	\$929,217	\$1,659,101	\$2,397,563
% increase		100%	79%	45%
<b>Hawai'i</b>	\$174,718	\$842,482	\$1,125,573	\$1,244,464
% increase		382%	34%	11%
<b>Kaua'i</b>	\$ -	\$87,574	\$191,309	\$211,498
% increase		100%	118%	11%
<b>Maui</b>	\$ -	\$97,661	\$349,817	\$697,394
% increase		100%	258%	99%
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>\$174,718</b>	<b>\$1,956,934</b>	<b>\$3,325,800</b>	<b>\$4,550,919</b>

- From 2020 through 2021, DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors by incentivizing the sale of their farm products sold at participating farm direct retailers.
- In January 2022, local produce sales to SNAP shoppers at participating farm direct retailers increased an average of 531% from 2019
- DA BUX gives farmers the opportunity to feed local residents (rather than exporting product to the mainland) and to increase production towards a self-sufficient local food supply for the state. The program strengthens the relationship between local residents and food producers. Increasing local food production capacity can help to bring prices down, making healthy local food accessible and affordable to more people.

<sup>1</sup> Based on the "The Economic Contributions of Healthy Food Incentives" report prepared by Colorado State University, and the percentage of 2021 DA BUX discounts issued via farm-direct outlets and food retailers. Refer to the report at: [https://fairfoodnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Economic\\_Contributions\\_Incentives\\_2\\_2\\_21.pdf](https://fairfoodnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Economic_Contributions_Incentives_2_2_21.pdf)

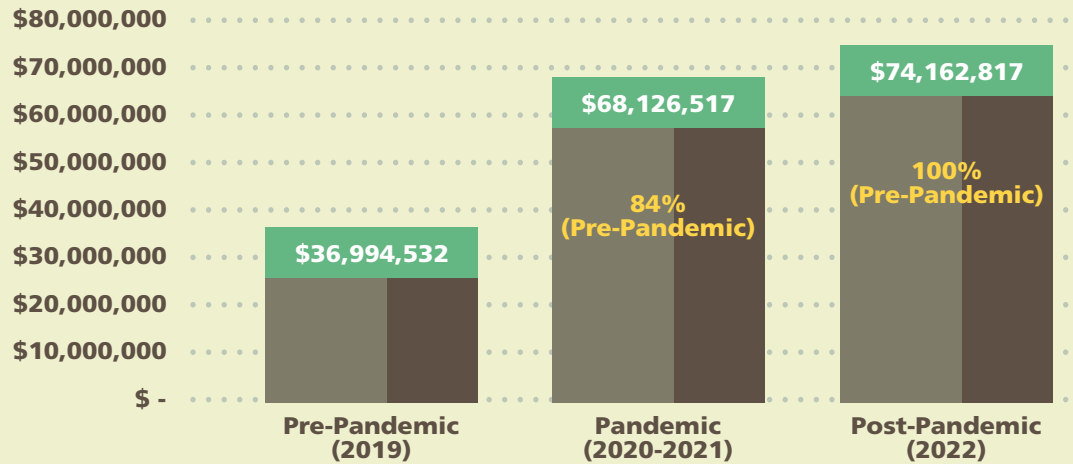
<sup>2</sup> Based on the "The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Economy: New Estimates of the SNAP Multiplier" report prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service. Refer to the report at: [https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/93529/err265\\_summary.pdf](https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/93529/err265_summary.pdf)

# More Impact for State 'BUX'

Due to rising inflation and higher cost of living, SNAP participation and SNAP benefits in Hawai'i continue to be significantly higher compared to 2019 levels.

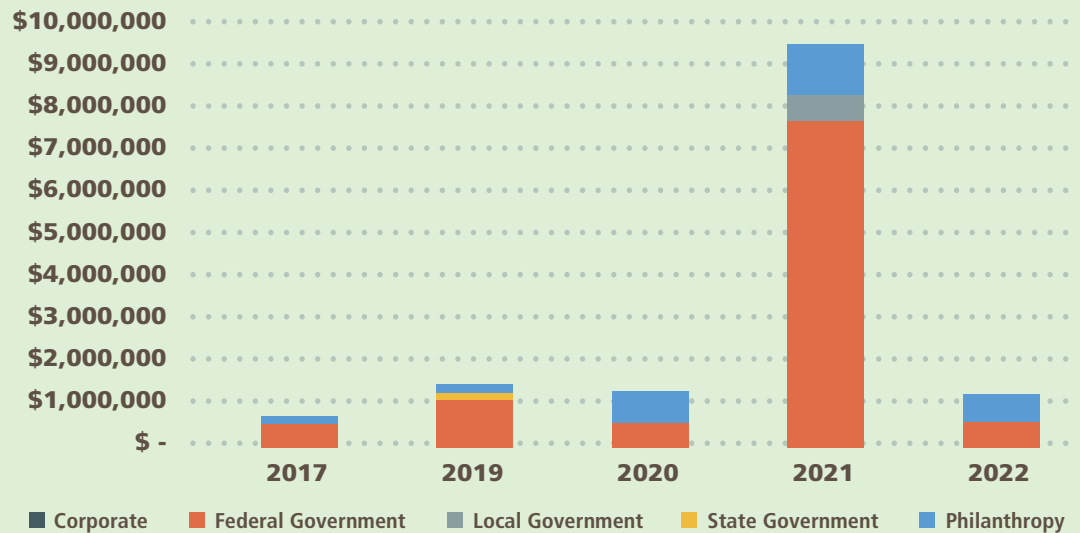
- 8th highest poverty rate (10.5% of the population living at or below the poverty line)
- 9% increase in the number of individuals in Hawai'i receiving SNAP benefits
- 100% increase in the annual total amount of SNAP benefits paid in Hawai'i
- 26x increase the annual total of DA BUX discounts issued to SNAP shoppers

## Average Monthly SNAP Benefits Paid for Hawaii SNAP Participants



Historically, the DA BUX program has been primarily funded by Federal grants and philanthropic/private funding (representing almost all of total program funds). To date, the State of Hawaii has only provided \$94,000 in General Funds, and allocated \$500,000 in Federal CARES Act funds to the program.

## DA BUX Fundings by Source (2017-2022)



Secure and sustained state funding for DA BUX program is the key to federal and philanthropic funding matches. State funds can generate significant leverage:

- Stimulate economic activity of \$19 million (6.3x of state funding) while increasing local food production for local consumption.
- \$3 million can be matched by \$3 million in federal dollars from a Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) grant, as well as \$6 million from SNAP purchases, resulting in \$12 million going toward local food purchases and supporting local farmers
- Given the impact achieved and successful track record, state funding will be a worthwhile investment and position the DA BUX program for future federal funding.
- Other states have recognized the benefit and impact of double up food bucks programs by investing state funds in expanding and sustaining their programs. There are nine states that have invested state funds in their double up food bucks programs, totaling approximately \$94.5 million from 2015 through 2021.

**SCR-187**

Submitted on: 3/26/2023 11:00:36 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/29/2023 1:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

This is a valuable program.

**SCR-187**

Submitted on: 3/26/2023 5:13:57 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/29/2023 1:10:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Who the Hell is GUS!!!!!!

**SCR-187**

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 9:48:18 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/29/2023 1:10:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jean Butel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a resident of Hawaii, I am writing in support of SCR187. AS we are all aware, the cost of food has risen dramatically in the past year making it more difficult for families to purchase food especially healthy food. SCR187 will provide \$3M to fund and grow the DA BUX program. This support of the DA BUX program will help families, local farmers, and our economy.

This is needed as 59% of participants who currently use the DA BUX programs are food insecure. By growing the program, it would be possible to reach more food insecure households.

The DA BUX program also helps to grow our local food supply and put more money into our economy. Hawaii currently imports ~85% of its food supply, by increasing our local food supply we can move towards a more self-sufficient local food supply for Hawaii. Additionally, a \$3M dollar investment in Double Up Bucks would result in over \$9.9M in economic activity.

Finally, if Hawai'i allocates \$3M for the DA BUX program, the state could apply for an additional \$3M in federal matching funds, totaling \$6M. I urge you to support SCR187. This legislation is a win for families, farmers, and the economy.

Sincerely,

Jean Butel

**SCR-187**

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 7:52:45 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/29/2023 1:10:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alison Kaneshiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

Healthy, fresh foods are more expensive than ever before. Nutrition is tied to healthy and well-being. By allowing the double up food bucks program to continue, more people will be able to choose eating healthier foods. Food insecurities affects the most vulnerable in our population, children, and the elderly. There are links to childhood hypertension and obesity with poor nutrition. In general, poor diet increases the risk of cardiovascular disease (Lafranconi, et al., 2019). I whole heartedly support better nutrition for the population of Hawaii through better ability to afford fresh fruits and vegetables through this program. Teaching our children to eat fresh, healthy foods can improve their lifelong eating habits, and better health. In the process, will decrease healthcare spending on chronic health issues caused by poor diets.

Mahalo for your time.

**Reference**

Lafranconi, A., Ray, S., & Grosso, G. (2019). Editorial: Public Health Nutrition: Assessing Evidence to Determine Policy and Practice. *Frontiers in public health*, 7, 21.  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2019.00021>