

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 16 , 2024

RE: H.B. No. 2137
H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems, to which was referred H.B. No. 2137 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE HAWAII FARM TO FOOD BANK PROGRAM,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii Farm to Food Bank Program to fund food banks and emergency feeding organizations in the State to purchase, store, and transport fresh locally grown or produced food to food-insecure communities.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture; one member of the Kaua'i County Council; Young Brothers, LLC; Hawai'i Foodbank; Hawai'i Primary Care Association; Hawai'i Public Health Institute; Hawai'i Pacific Health; Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action; Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i; Ulupono Initiative; 350Hawaii.org; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i; Voice of God Ministries; Lanakila Pacific; Green Party of Hawai'i; Giving Hope Hawaii; Immanuel Christian Church; Paradise Chapel of the Assemblies of God; Hawaii Food Industry Association; Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!; Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center; and numerous individuals. Your Committee received



comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General.

Your Committee finds that Hawaii's food banks have provided food to those in need throughout the years, including when many Hawaii residents experienced food insecurity due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Food banks were able to meet this increased need during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic due to a major increase in federal funds and philanthropy. However, funding from these sources has declined considerably, and Hawaii's food banks will need additional support in order to continue to meet the needs of Hawaii residents. This measure supports the efforts of Hawaii's food banks as they continue to serve residents, while providing local food producers with a market to support their operations.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Removing emergency feeding organizations from receiving funds under the Hawaii Farm to Food Bank Program;
- (2) Deleting language that would have appropriated funds into and out of the Hawaii Food Assistance Program Special Fund;
- (3) Inserting an unspecified appropriation of general revenues for the Hawaii Farm to Food Bank Program;
- (4) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

Your Committee respectfully requests your Committee on Finance, should it deliberate on this measure, to consider an appropriation amount of \$5,000,000.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2137, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2137, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Agriculture & Food
Systems,



CEDRIC ASUEGA GATES, Chair



