

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEXTER KISHIDA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2024
12:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 308

HOUSE BILL NO. 2083, HD2
RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2083, HD2. Authorizes the Department of Education to establish a recognition program to incentivize schools to submit to the Department a plan for the school to reach the local farm to school meal goal of thirty per cent of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030. Requires public high schools under the Department of Education (DOE) to provide plant-based meals as an option under the school meals program. The Department supports the intent and offers comments.

Hawaii Department of Agriculture continues its commitment to support the DOE in achieving its goals of reaching 30% local by 2030. This includes plant-based options that are made from food grown and manufactured in Hawaii. Through market development and innovative programs which this pilot program can develop, Hawaii farmers can reach generational profitability.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





HB2083 HD2
RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS
House Committee on Finance

February 28, 2024

12:00 pm

Conference Room 308

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) provides testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB2083 HD2, which seeks to enhance the health and well-being of Hawai‘i's students by promoting locally sourced, nutritious, and environmentally conscious school meals. **OHA recognizes this legislation to be pivotal for the future of our youth and the sustainability of our local food systems.**

OHA believes that this measure provides the opportunity for the Department of Education to improve the quality of school meals while supporting local agricultural producers. Hawai‘i’s food system is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, viral pandemics, and military conflicts. According to research, Hawai‘i imports over 90% of its food¹, while also only having the sustained capacity to feed our population of 1.4 million for a week if imported supply chains are disrupted.² OHA recognizes that the foresight in establishing a target goal of 30% for locally sourced products in school meals, as initiated by Act 175, Session Laws of Hawai‘i 2021, is commendable. Hawai‘i’s food system statistics underscore the importance of this goal. Currently, the average meat and dairy products served in schools often contain processed elements and additives, impacting the health outcomes of our students negatively. HB2083 suggests that schools can improve meals while being an important part of local agriculture’s future.

Additionally, the emphasis on introducing plant-based options in high school meals aligns with contemporary research demonstrating the copious amount of health benefits associated with a plant-based diet. Beyond health considerations, offering vegetarian meals fosters increased demand for local greens, thereby supporting our local farmers and

¹ HNL Port Flood Vulnerability Assessment: Sea Level Rise and Food System Infrastructure Impacts 2050, 2070 (1m, 1.5m SLR by 2100).

² Hawai‘i Public Radio by Mark Ladao, Catherine Cluett Pactol, and Sophia McCullough, “State Working Group Calls for Improvements to Food Reserves and Disaster Response,” Hawai‘i Public Radio, November 10, 2023, <https://www.hawaiipublicradio.org/local-news/2023-11-09/state-working-group-calls-for-improvements-to-food-reserves-and-disaster-response>.



HB2083 HD2
RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS
House Committee on Finance

cultivating a culture of environmental awareness among our youth. OHA appreciates the added definition of “plant-based” to ensure clarity for the Department.

OHA further understands and appreciates the concerns the Department raised previously on the time needed to implement effectively. We appreciate the amendments to allow the Department to pilot a plant-based meal program at Mililani High School. We believe this can be the perfect launching point for a successful program. Once the Department can innovate and problem-solve, OHA hopes the program can expand to all the other 293 public schools. We also would like to recognize that this program may require added funding and staffing for the Department to actualize these goals. We defer to the Department on these needs and support additional funding and positions to ensure effective implementation.

This legislation represents a crucial investment in the future of Hawai‘i, and we are confident that its enactment will contribute significantly to the overall well-being of our community. By supporting HB2083 HD2, we are taking proactive steps to prioritize the health and well-being of our community members, foster sustainable agricultural practices, and instill values of environmental stewardship among our youth.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS HB2083 HD2**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/28/2024

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Finance

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 2083, HD2 RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS.

Purpose of Bill: Authorizes the Department of Education to establish a recognition program to incentivize schools to submit to the Department a plan for the school to reach the local farm to school meal goal of thirty per cent of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030. Requires the Department of Education to establish a plant-based meal pilot program at Mililani high school no later than the 2025-2026 school year. Effective 7/1/3000.
(HD2)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) provides comments for HB 2083, HD2.

The Department appreciates this bill's intent to support the thirty percent by 2030 local food purchases goal, and its advocacy for the health benefits of a plant-based diet but finds that this bill seeks to achieve two competing goals:

- Increasing locally sourced products under Act 175; and
- Increasing plant-based meal options within our school menus as a way to promote health and be more environmentally conscious.

The bill suggests that establishing plant-based meal options once per week will ensure that our targeted goal pursuant to Act 175 will be met, however, to meet federal meal credit compliance statewide, and maintain federal financial support, the department must be able to procure plant-based meat/meat alternates or entrees that meet the definition of a locally sourced product to be able to serve a plant-based meal option.

The Department's School Food Services Branch (SFSB) is currently able to offer local plant-based meal items such as salads and sides, but for plant-based proteins, the SFSB finds that Hawaii farms and vendors are not prepared to provide local plant-based meats/meat alternatives sufficient for meals at 257 schools statewide at this time. The SFSB's assessment of the capacity of local vendors, through its 2023 Request for Information campaign, found that Hawaii's agriculture and food manufacturing industry does not yet have large-scale vendors producing sufficient plant-based proteins, made from local ingredients. To meet the demands of this bill by the school year 2025-2026, the unintended consequence of this measure may compel the Department to purchase plant-based manufactured products from the mainland to meet this bill's mandate and therefore, reduce the demand for locally raised animal proteins that we currently purchase to pursue the thirty percent by 2030 local food purchases goal.

The Department appreciates the plant-based meal being defined in this amended measure; however, a plant-based meal option by definition would not serve both USDA Child Nutrition Requirements for reimbursable meals nor the targeted local purchase goals of Act 175 at this time. The Department has and will continue to work towards increasing plant-based meal options within the federal guidelines while prioritizing local food purchases in support of Act 175 sensitive to the environmental impact it may have.

Additionally, the Department must raise concerns that this bill's designed intentions to focus on one school runs into conflict with the Department's statewide functions and operations.

Finally, the Department requests that this measure be amended on page 3, line 8 to read: "(b) The Department ~~shall~~ may establish guidelines for the rewards recognition program"

This amendment will make the language in the bill more consistent with the "may establish a recognition program" on page 3, line 2.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



To: The Honorable Chair Kyle Yamashita, the Honorable Vice Chair Lisa Kitagawa, and Members of the Finance Committee.

From: Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: Hearing HB2083 HD2 RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS

Hearing: Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 12:00 p.m., room 308

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Lisa Kitagawa, and Members of the Finance Committee.

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (HIROC) is a group of scientists, educators, filmmakers and environmental advocates who have been working since 2017 to protect Hawaii's coral reefs and ocean.

The Climate Protectors Hawai'i seeks to educate and engage the local community in climate change action, to help Hawai'i show the world the way back to a safe and stable climate.

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2083 HD2 and we request the bill be amended so the pilot program

for plant-based meals at Mililani High School will be expanded to at least one school in each county!

More local food in schools, especially with plant-based options, is a win-win-win!

This bill would recognize schools, providing incentives to plan for and meet the farm to schools meals goal. The goal of 30% local food in schools by 2030 will lead to **fresher, more nutritious food for our keiki**. It will also **help local farmers** by expanding markets for their produce. It will **mitigate climate warming** by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from shipping food great distances and help the State reach its target of being carbon negative as soon as feasible but not later than 2045.

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo!

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)



Date: February 26, 2024
To: Finance Committee (FIN)
From: Climate Future Forum
Re: **STRONG SUPPORT for HB2083 HD2**
Hearing: Feb 28, 2024

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitigawa, and Members of the Finance Committee,

On behalf of the Climate Future Forum, I'm writing to you in **strong support of HB2083**. Climate Future Forum (CFF) is a network of youth and adults dedicated to supportive climate policy and legislation. From an event held on December 9, 2023 at the Hawai'i State Capitol when youth and policy makers convened, a list of priority bills was agreed upon.

The mission of the **Climate Future Forum** (<https://www.climatefuturehawaii.org/>) is to inspire youth to be active and engaged participants in developing and advocating for climate policy and legislation. We do so by bringing together youth (ages 14-26), educators, policymakers, and nonprofits to evaluate and discuss climate action priorities and provide tangible steps to empower youth. Our hope is for youth to forge relationships with policymakers so that they can continue to work together throughout the legislative process in Hawai'i and beyond.

On December 9th, 2023, the Climate Future Forum was held at the Hawaii State Capitol. The event included over 80 youth, adults, legislators and staff members, and about 30 people from the community. One of the goals of this event was for youth to develop their legislative priorities for the 2023 legislative session. One of their priorities is centered around improving food systems. Therefore, the Climate Future Forum strongly supports this bill because by creating a coordinated food systems plan, we will be able to:

- increase local food security through a coordinated approach
- achieve the state's goals for local food production and support local farmers
- diversify Hawai'i's economy by supporting a robust local food economy
- contribute to the local agricultural industry (new markets, more stability, more jobs)
- reduce food miles and associated greenhouse gas emissions

Please pass this bill out of your committee.

Mahalo nui loa,
Climate Future Forum



To: The House Committee on Finance (FIN)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 12pm

In support of HB2083 HD2

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the FIN Committee,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **supports HB2083 HD2, but with a suggested amendment.** This measure authorizes the Department of Education to establish a recognition program to incentivize schools to submit to the Department a plan for the school to reach the local farm to school meal goal of 30% of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030. Submitting a plan will help ensure that this very important goal is met.

Incentivizing schools to reach the local farm to school meal goal of 30% of food served in the school is a common-sense idea that supports our farmers and at the same time helps our keiki by providing local, fresh, healthy options. We know that by promoting healthy lifestyle choices and providing access to meals that contain less processed food, and more fruits and vegetables, we can help keiki reduce their risk for developing chronic diseases and improve their overall health.

Efforts to support our farmers also builds our resiliency and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping food in for meals offered at public schools. In addition, it stimulates our economy by creating local jobs and supporting the growth of local agriculture. These efforts and more are the type of actions needed to move Hawaii to a decarbonized economy. Truly this is a win:win proposition.

This measure further requires the Department of Education to establish a plant-based meal pilot program at Mililani high school no later than the 2025-2026 school year. Plant-based meals provide a healthy, tasty, climate-friendly option our keiki can enjoy. The original version of this measure aimed to require all public high schools under the Department of Education to provide plant-based meals as an option under the school meals program. It is very disappointing that despite numerous examples of school districts on the continent that are already successfully providing vegan options to students, that the HD2 version of this measure chooses to launch only a small pilot project limited to just one high school. This, after numerous testimonies provided by youth at the last hearing which stated their concern about food choices that contributed to the climate crisis, and wanting to have options for locally sourced, plant-based meals that would be less carbon-intensive. **We strongly urge that this measure be amended to expand the pilot to**

more than one location, as piloting at only one school would be insufficient if the intent of the pilot is to truly flush out issues to ensure success for a subsequent statewide implementation of this program.

If we are to solve the climate crisis, it will require all of us working together. We all need to be part of the solution. Importantly, we need to offer opportunities to empower our keiki by giving them the opportunity to make sustainable food choices that will help mitigate climate breakdown.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support with a suggested amendment** to this measure.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

To: House Committee on Finance
Hon. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Hon. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Re: HB 2083 HD 2 RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS

Hearing: Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 12:00 p.m., Room 308 & videoconference

Position: Strong Support

Aloha, Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, which has over 7,500 active members statewide, strongly supports HB 2083 HD 2.

HB 2083 HD 2 authorizes the Department of Education to establish a recognition program to incentivize schools to submit to the Department a plan for the school to reach the local farm to school meal goal of thirty per cent of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030. It requires the Department of Education to establish a plant-based meal pilot program at Mililani high school no later than the 2025-2026 school year. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD2)

A plan for schools to achieve the local Farm to School meal goal of having 30% of their food local-sourced by 2030 has several significant benefits such as providing healthier options. Locally grown fruits, vegetables, and other produce are often harvested at their peak ripeness, retaining essential vitamins and minerals. In addition, embracing locally sourced ingredients supports Hawai'i's farmers and agricultural stakeholders. These partnerships strengthen the local economy and contribute to food security by reducing dependence on external sources. Further, by incorporating local ingredients, schools can honor traditional Hawaiian foods and culinary practices and sourcing food locally reduces transportation-related emissions and minimizes the carbon footprint associated with long-distance food distribution. It contributes to a more sustainable and eco-friendly food system.

Furthermore, exposure to fresh, local produce encourages students to adopt healthier eating habits and requiring public high schools to offer plant-based meals as an option serves several purposes such as special dietary requirements as some students prefer or require plant-based diets due to health, ethical, or cultural reasons. Having plant-based options ensures that no student feels excluded based on their dietary choices or restrictions.

Introducing plant-based meals allows students to learn about alternative protein sources, environmental sustainability, and the impact of food choices. Supporting local farmers and

diversifying meal options contributes to Hawai'i's food security. By incorporating plant-based meals, schools can reduce reliance on imported animal products and prioritize locally grown alternatives.

By nurturing a connection between schools, local agriculture, and healthy eating, Hawai'i can create a more resilient and vibrant food system for its students and communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. Please pass this measure.

Melodie Adaja

legislativepriorities@gmail.com

Alan B. Burdick

burdick808@gmail.com

Co-Chairs, Environmental Caucus
of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

HB-2083-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:10:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Helen Cox	Kaua`i Climate Action Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kakou,

I am writing on behalf of Kaua`i Climate Action Coalition (KCAC) to urge you to pass HB2083 HD2 with an amendment to expand the pilot to beyond one school. Piloting at only one school is insufficient. In addition to submitting SUPPORT, please request this amendment. KCAC is a group of over 150 Kauai residents who engage in education, direct action, and supporting legislation that addresses the climate crisis that we are already experiencing and which threatens the lives of our children.

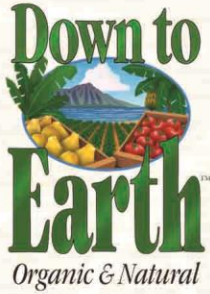
HB2083 not only addresses climate change by moving us towards reducing shipping costs and building resilience, it also will improve the health of our children and our farmers. Expanding the pilot to include one than one school will provide sufficient data to understand what the next steps should be.

Please pass HB2083 HD2. Mahalo!

Helen Cox, Chair

Kaua`i Climate Action Coalition

Love Life!



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HB2083 HD2 RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS
House Committee on Finance
February 28, 2024, 2:00pm State Capitol

Aloha Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair, Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair, and Finance Committee Members.

Down to Earth Organic and Natural testifies in support of HB2083 HD2.

Down to Earth Organic and Natural has six locations on Oahu and Maui. Since we opened in 1977, we have supported healthy lifestyles and preservation of the environment by selling local, fresh, organic and natural products, and by promoting a healthy, plant-based and vegetarian lifestyle.

We are strongly in support of HB2083 HD2 to establish a program to incentivize schools to reach the local farm to school meal goal and to establish a plant-based meal pilot program at Mililani High School.

A 2020 *Nutrients* systematic review concluded that consuming five or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables is linked to better mental health, particularly less depression. According to recent scientific studies, for example a 2021 study published in *Advances in Nutrition*, eating a vegetarian diet can help prevent and treat type 2 diabetes. Plant-based diets improve insulin sensitivity, help with weight management, and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. As you know, diabetes is a serious concern in Hawaii; over 11% of the population has been diagnosed with diabetes and an additional 39,000 are estimated to have the disease but have not been diagnosed yet (American Diabetes Association, 2021). Diagnosed diabetes costs an estimated \$1.5 billion in Hawaii each year.

The outcome of this legislation will be: keeping more funds in our economy, supporting our local farmers and producers, encouraging schools to use more fresh ingredients containing less preservatives in school lunches, and providing plant-based meal options to increase the fruit and vegetable component of our keiki's diets while adding to their understanding of how to eat healthy. Everyone can agree that getting more fruits and vegetables into the diets of our keiki is highly beneficial. By allowing our youth the opportunity to try plant-based meals (which they may not be exposed to at home), they are more likely to consider eating a diverse diet containing more fruits and vegetables for the betterment of their physical and mental health now and in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.

Alison Riggs
Public Policy & Government Relations Manager
Down to Earth

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E-mail: alison.riggs@downtoearth.org

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House Committee on Finance

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: HB2083 HD2

Wednesday, February 28, 2023 12:00 p.m. House Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Members of the Committee,

HAPA supports HB2083 HD2 which authorizes the Department of Education to establish a recognition program to incentivize schools to submit to the Department a plan for the school to reach the local farm to school meal goal of 30% of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030. Requires the Department of Education to establish a plant-based meal pilot program at Mililani high school no later than the 2025-2026 school year. This pilot program should be expanded to more than one location. Piloting at only one school is insufficient. In addition to submitting SUPPORT, please request this amendment.

Please prioritize the health and wellbeing of our keiki. HB2083 HD2 would help provide crucial support to Hawai'i public schools and ensure that our children have access to healthy and nutritious food.

By establishing a grant program to fund certain initiatives for public schools, HB2083 HD2 would help to address the issue of food insecurity among our most vulnerable children, providing them with the sustenance they need to succeed in school and in life.

By establishing full time positions and investing in this program, we invest in the lives of our children and ensure that they have access to quality food.

Please support HB2083 HD2.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director

HB-2083-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 11:58:40 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dave Mulinix	Greenpeace Hawaii	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair & Committee Members,

On behalf of Greenpeace Hawaii's members and supporters statewide, we Stand in SUPPORT of [HB2083 HD2](#) that authorizes the Department of Education to establish a recognition program to incentivize schools to submit to the Department a plan for the school to reach the local farm to school meal goal of 30% of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030. It also requires the Department of Education to establish a plant-based meal pilot program at Mililani high school no later than the 2025-2026 school year.

We support this pilot program at Mililani High but ask that you amend this bill to include more schools in Hawaii to get more thorough results.

Please pass HB2083.

Mahalo,

Dave Mulinix, CoFounder & Statewide Organizer

Greenpeace Hawaii

HB-2083-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 3:52:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
laurel brier	Kauai Climate Action Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is an excellent pilot project for the benefit of the health of our youth, our farming community and our planet. But why just one school? Let's expand at least to schools in every age group and on every island. That will give a much better idea of how it Will work. Mahalo



HIPHI Board

Misty Pacheco, DrPH
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University of Hawai'i at Hilo

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Carissa Holley, MEd
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Jennifer José Lo, MD
Hawai'i Health Partners

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

Kathleen Roche, MS, RN, CENP
Kaiser Permanente

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

Garret Sugai
HMSA

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

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &
Evaluation

Community Health
Worker Initiatives

COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

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/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce

Date: February 28, 2024

To: Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Re: Strong Support for HB 2083 Relating to School Meals

Hrg: Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 12:00 PM, Conf Rm 308

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) works to advance policy and systems change to reduce disparities and improve the health of Hawai'i residents. HIPHI is home to and testifies here on behalf of The Hawai'i Farm to School Hui, which collectively represents over 40 organizations from across the islands.

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) appreciates the opportunity to provide **Strong Support** for **HB2083**, which would incentivize individual schools to submit a plan to the Department of Education (HIDOE) for that school to reach the Farm to School goal of 30% locally sourced products by 2030. This bill would also create a plant-based meal pilot program at Mililani High School as part of the school meals program.

The first aspect of this bill would, theoretically, give principals and cafeteria managers at individual schools more control over their vendor choices. This decentralization could benefit rural schools, who may have an easier time finding local farms with the capacity to meet the schools need for specific products. Molokai High School, for example, might only need a few thousand pounds of carrots per year, and farmers based on that island could easily meet that need.

The second aspect of this bill is more challenging. USDA reimbursable meals require five components on the plate: Milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meat/meat alternates. This bill is specifically referring to meat alternatives. Locally grown alternatives such as ulu and kalo are an allowable substitute for grains. To substitute for meat, products will have to be analyzed by a lab and nutrition information submitted to the USDA. This will take time, and should be taken into consideration when setting an effective date for this aspect of HB2083.

Mahalo for considering this measure and for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2083.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dennis Chase', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Dennis Chase
Hawai'i Farm to School Hui Program Manager
Hawai'i Public Health Institute



Date: Wednesday, February 28th, 2024
To: Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance (FIN)
From: Hawai'i Youth Food Council
Re: **SUPPORT for HB2083**
Hearing: 28/02/2024, Wednesday, 12:00PM

On behalf of the Hawai'i Youth Food Council, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of bill #HB2083, which authorizes the Department of Education to establish a recognition program to incentivize schools to submit a plan for the school to reach the local farm to school meal goal of thirty percent of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030 to the DOE. As well as requires public high schools under the Department of Education to provide plant based meals as an option under the school meals program.

This bill will improve the health and opportunity for students and help take a step forward in the Farm to School movement. It is exciting for there to be a possibility of having an incentive for schools that partake in this because it creates much needed change for the now and the future. Having 30% of food locally sourced is something very achievable by 2030 and seeing that it is under 30% should be alarming to many. As a student myself eating school lunch, I can see the processed and packaged food everyday and the health of my peers and I are slowly decreasing in front of my eyes. Family members of students are now getting sick and unable to be active with their children anymore. Not only will this better the health in communities, but it will also create financial opportunities within our island that are not yet available for local farmers. By adding a plant based option in schools and sourcing locally, it will take the steps to a sustainable and healthier future. So all in all, if the future is your priority then it should be this bill as well.

Thank you very much for your support of garden-based learning for all students. We respectfully request that you please pass this bill.

Sincerely,
Shania Wilson & co-members of the Hawai'i Youth Food Council

Shania Wilson, Mililani High
Kaylie Hirayama, Hawaii Preparatory Academy
Gigi Kiyabu, Mid Pacific Institute
Sabina Funasaki, Punahou School
Audrey Lin, 'Iolani School
Vivienne Hill, Honolulu Waldorf School

The **Hawai'i Youth Food Council** is a program of the Hawai'i Farm to School Hui and Hawai'i Public Health Institute, and includes students from public, charter and independent high schools across Hawai'i. The council was established in 2020 to engage and empower youth in the process of rewriting the present narrative of Hawaii's food system. Members identify and address systemic issues that exist throughout various dimensions of the food chain to promote community participation in the formation of resilient, equitable local food economies.

Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Wednesday, February 28, 2024
12:00PM, House conference room 308
Hawaii State Capitol

Support for H.B. No.2083 HD 2

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Jenny Kuwahara and I am a teacher at Mililani High School. I am testifying **in support of the intent of H.B.No. 2083.**

I am testifying specifically in support of the plant-based meal part of the bill. I believe it is necessary to implement this part of the bill for the health of the environment and the youth who depend on school meals. However, I think making it just a Mililani High School effort for one year lessens the impact on the greater school community of the DOE. Many students live in food deserts and/or do not have the means to get their voices heard at this time about the importance of school meals to their well-being. I am testifying not only for my current students, but for those I have taught who may not have the means to be heard and need access to whole foods as part of their daily diet in the school system.

Continuing to rely on highly processed and imported foods procured in our industrial food system means that we are negatively impacting the health of our students and perpetuating support of an environmentally destructive food system. Whole food, plant-based meals need to be reintroduced to our diets and our schools should be morally obligated to set students up for a healthy future. It requires a cultural shift back to our ancestral foods and not just one for the privileged or outspoken.

While this may require fundamental changes to the way the DOE approaches school meals, we know it can be done and has been done in places like New York City. The long term benefits far outweigh the short-term potential inconvenience some may feel implementing this change will have on the current system.

I hope you will consider passing H.B. No. 2083 because it is necessary to move our state towards a more sustainable, food secure, and healthy future. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Mililani High School

HB-2083-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 5:21:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arlene Twomey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Incentivise schools to submit to the Department a plan for the school to reach the local farm to school meal goal of 30% of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030. Requires the Department of Education to establish a plant-based meal pilot program at Mililani high school no later than the 2025-2026 school year.

This pilot program should be expanded to more than one location. Piloting at only one school is insufficient. In addition to submitting SUPPORT, please request this amendment.

Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Wednesday, February 28, 2024
12:00PM, House conference room 308
Hawaii State Capitol

Support for H.B. No.2083 HD 2

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Jayda Sakoda and I am a Junior at Mililani High School. I am testifying **in support of** H.B.No. 2083 HD2.

As someone who has grown up in Hawaii for their entire life, I feel an incredibly strong love and care for the island of Oahu and the Mililani community. As a student here at Mililani High School I feel that it is very important for me and my fellow peers to have quality food that is not only accessible for us to eat, but can also help the environment and my community. Many students are not willing to eat school lunches whether this be because the food doesn't look appetizing, or because it simply doesn't taste good. This leaves many students with no real food to eat for an entire school day, lots of food waste, and causes many issues for the students, school, and the environment. In addition to these issues, 24% of waste in landfills is food waste, which causes many issues to not only our school but to many places around the island of Oahu. This bill has the power to start change not only at the high school but also the entire Mililani community. I feel extremely passionate about this bill and the things that it can accomplish.

I hope you will consider passing H.B. No. 2083 HD2 because of the incredible amounts of benefits that it can provide for not only our school but for the entire Mililani community. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Jayda Sakoda
Mililani High School

HB-2083-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 5:39:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tadia Rice	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

PLEASE SUPPORT HB2083 HD2!

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2024

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

H.B. No. 2083 HD2

DATE: Wednesday, February 28, 2024
TIME: 12:00 p.m.
PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Conference Room 308
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

In SUPPORT of HB2083 HD2 Relating to School Meals.

I, Bonnie Parker, a teacher at Mililani High School, am submitting the following written testimony on behalf of the students of our Sustainable Foods Systems classes. The following statements are written by my students in support of HB2083 Relating to School Meals:

I, Chaunev Joines, am a supporter of HB2083. In the class of 2024, at Mililani High School. The food served here is less than 2-6% local. This would be important for us to act on by knowing we made what is eaten and waste will come back to us at the end. This would create a great cycle and system for High Schools.

I, Peter Aoki, am a supporter of HB2083. As a student of Mililani High School, I believe having the option to choose healthier, locally sourced meals, and of higher quality will encourage students to choose local

I, Sydnee Nakamura, am a supporter of HB2083. As a current student at Mililani High School, I believe that having the opportunity to supplement imported food with local foods for our school lunches will be very beneficial to our health.

I, Carlee Dowsett, am a supporter of HB2083. If we support our local farmers here in Hawai'i, we can be less dependent on other big corporations. I believe that we should be given more healthy and nutritious foods.

I, Ani Briley, am a supporter of HB2083.

Good Morning, My name is Michael, and I am a student representing Mililani High School. I am here to express support regarding HB2083. In my testimony, I will address the incentives on why we should swiftly implement this bill and take more initiative, highlighting reasons why locally grown meals should take top priority into school lunches. Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective on this crucial matter.

I, Nicole Lariosa, am a supporter of HB2083. As a current student at Mililani High School, I believe that having locally supported foods will make meals in school more nutritious and healthy.

I, Akeliela Wade, am a supporter of HB2083. As a current student of Mililani High School, I believe having local and plant based foods added to our meals at school would benefit students greatly by being healthier and more nutritious.

I, Skylar Kaneshiro, am a supporter of HB2083. As a student of Mililani High School, I think that having locally grown food will greatly benefit our school lunches.

I, Kaira Kee, am a supporter of HB2083. As a student of Mililani High School, I think that having locally grown food will greatly benefit our school lunches.

I, Chase Mizoguchi, am a supporter of HB2083. As a current student of Mililani High School, I believe that it is best to have locally grown foods used for our school lunches.

I, DAngelo Paulo, am a supporter of HB2083. As a current student at Mililani High School, I know having local and plant based foods in our school lunches will benefit the students, and their health and it will give our local farmers more support and recognition.

I, Callie Toguchi-Nebre, am a supporter of HB2083. As a current student at Mililani High School, I believe that having locally produced food will benefit our health and lessen food waste; making lunch more appealing.

I, Azaryah Enos, am a supporter of HB2083. Being a Mililani High School student, I believe that locally grown produce has many benefits in relation to earth and individuals. It would help support our environment sustainability & lower carbon emissions. It also helps support local farmers which could possibly help out with our community economy. Choosing locally grown food would contribute significantly.

I, Jerahmyah Maafala I agree that 30% of my lunch should be locally grown , to better our environment

I, Malia Gilbert, am a supporter of HB2083. As a current Mililani Highschool Student, I believe locally grown food lessens the urge to reach for fast food, resulting in a healthy, nutritious diet.

I, Dasia Flores, am a supporter of HB2083. Being a current MHS student I firmly believe that locally grown and produced food will help our students enjoy lunches better and be excited to eat it.

My name is Champ Aipoalani and I support HB2083.

Jahshua Starkey, I am a supporter of HB2083 as well as a student of Mililani High School. I believe that locally grown foods are very important and will allow Hawaii as a whole to thrive.

I, Kade Smathers, am a supporter of HB2083. Being a current MHS student I firmly believe that locally grown foods are better for the environment and our community.

We believe that HB2083 will help create and support a more viable food system to benefit the people and the land of Hawai'i.

Mālama pono,

Bonnie Parker



Aloha Chair Woodsen, Vice Chair La Chica, Members of the Education Committee, and Superintendent Hayashi, Aloha.

On behalf of the Sustainable Foods Systems and Agriculture students, Dr. Jennifer Kuwahara and her AP Environmental Science students who are with me in this room, we urge the passing of HB2083 to not only uphold ACT 175 which was put into effect July 1, 2021 but for the sake of the total well being of all students under the care of our Department of Education across the pae ‘āina of Hawai‘i.

We believe that the passing of this bill will not only benefit students, it will benefit the people of Hawai‘i as well as the land in which we reside...our ‘āina, the land which feeds and nourishes us extending from our oceans to our soils, to our freshwaters, to our skies, to our heavens.

We are one natural disaster away from a total food system collapse. Is it not our responsibility to give our future generations something better than this?? It is written on the Hawai‘i DOE website that “The Department is the state’s largest institutional consumer of food products, serving over 100,000 students a day.” 100,000 meals each day equals 100,000 opportunities every single day school is in session to make a better choice. Imagine if each of these 100,000 choices each day was to support a healthier diet for our keiki, to support our local farmers, to support total food sovereignty.

Imagine if each of these 100,000 choices each day were opportunities to create a food system not reliant on 98% imported foods, opportunities to revitalize and maintain the health of our waters and soils, opportunities to develop infrastructure that does not contribute to the devastating effects of climate change.

This is a crucial and pivotal moment for our future. We ask this committee and Superintendent Hayashi to make a bold move, take charge in the leadership role you were entrusted with, and lead us towards a more food secure future.

We are not in a food system crisis if the solution is right in front of us.

Mahalo for allowing me this time.

HB-2083-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 12:10:37 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
tlaloc tokuda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a GREAT BILL, a similar bill was defeated last year because the power that exist don't want to give our kiekis healthy meals or increase our local food production. This bill goes a long way in providing healthy foods for our kiekis, supporting our farmers, reducing our dependency on shipped in foods and reducing our energy consumption.Don't let the bill die for another year!

Tlaloc Tokuda

Kailua Kona HI 96740

February 26, 2024
Testimony of Elise Rogalski
Student - Hawai'i Pacific University
on
HB2083 HD2 Relating to School Meals
House Committee on Finance - Representative Yamashita
February 28, 2024 12pm

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **support** of bill HB2083 HD2 relating to school meals. This bill addresses multiple issues that I believe need legislation for impactful changes to be made including supporting the local economy and healthy living. What children experience in grade school forms who they are. Bringing in locally sourced products and offering healthy meal options will not only impact the health and wellness of our community right now, but will likely have lasting impacts.

The changes that this bill would initiate could be used as a great tool for education within schools. This bill has the potential to support a variety of concepts we teach including but not limited to our local economy and healthy living. I feel there is no better tool for education than real life examples that affect the children themselves.

Furthermore, offering healthy, plant-based options allows for children to have more of a choice when it comes to their diet. In my personal experience, this leads to an increase in emotional and physical wellbeing.

Lastly, there are many ideas on how to best support our local economy, I feel this is an ideal scenario. Public schools can offer local farms a consistent demand for products. I believe this is a strong way to ensure local farms are being supported.

I urge the committee to support HB2083 HD2. For our children, community, and local economy.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony.

Kind regards,

Elise Rogalski

HB-2083-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 10:02:03 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jake Sihavong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair

Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

House Committee on Finance

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

12:00PM, House conference room 308

Hawaii State Capitol

Support for H.B. No.2083 HD 2

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Jake Sihavong and I am a Senior at Mililani High School. I am testifying in support of H.B.No. 2083 HD2.

As a student at Mililani High School and a member of our school's AP Environmental Science class, I have learned about the wide variety of issues related to importing lunches. Not only considering the additional carbon emissions but also the drop in food quality. Our school has recently done a food waste audit, where we collected excess lunches from students to use for creating compost. That experience made me realize the immense amount of students who still rely on school lunches every day for their source of nutrients. For the well-being of the student body, sourcing food locally, even that initial 30%, will improve the quality of these vital meals for future generations. These students may be the driving force in society decades from now, so we must do our best to support them as much as we can; supplying a quality lunch is a key first step.

For the plant-based meal program, this is just as important. Meat has been an integral part of my diet for many years; from childhood to now, I still admittedly consume it. However, recently I have discovered not only the environmental effects of our meat industry but also the ethics behind it. In the grand scheme of things, it is an industry model that isn't necessarily sustainable for the future, nor does this industry have practices most people can accept at face value. Employing alternatives at local schools opens the door to potential options for our future that stray away from the traditional meat industry. As a school student

I hope you will consider passing H.B. No. 2083 HD2 because it's key to take this first step forward for not only our planet, but the future generations in Hawaii. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Jake Sihavong

Mililani High School

HB-2083-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 10:03:26 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carole Mandryk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support! Not just good for the environment, our resiliency, but also teaching the keiki!

Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Wednesday, February 28, 2024
12:00PM, House conference room 308
Hawaii State Capitol

Support for H.B. No.2083 HD 2

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Kristin McNeal and I am a junior at Mililani High School. I am testifying **in support of** H.B.No. 2083.

When I was in 4th and 5th grade at Daniel K. Inouye Elementary, I would never get school lunch because it would make me feel gross or sick, and ask to go home. To this day, I only ever pack my lunch because I'm worried that whatever food is being served will end up making me feel bad. I believe that by implementing a plant based option into school lunches there would be a decrease in the amount of kids missing class due to illnesses. There are many benefits to eating a plant based diet, not just on the environment but also on individuals health. In my own home, we strive to eat as healthy as possible, so I don't understand why school would want any different. There are places in the world known as Blue Zones, which are places with an above average number of people living to or past the age of 100. All of these places (Sardinia, Italy; Ikaria, Greece; Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica; Okinawa, Japan; Loma Linda, CA; and Singapore) eat diets with little to no meat. Areas in Hawai'i are actually being studied in order to become a Blue Zone due to the residents' long lives. Components like exercise, diet, and community all contribute to one's longevity. Why would we import foods, when the local foods are already proven to be extremely healthy? Plant based options could also improve students' focus at school, leading to better test scores. In regard to the environment, it's not sustainable to import as much food as we currently do. It contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, and makes us very dependent on the mainland. If an emergency were to occur, we would be put in quite a difficult situation. By implementing a plant based option in schools, supplied by local farmers, there would be a decrease in emissions due to shortened transportation, circulation within the state's economy, and education to students on our state's culture and eating a healthy diet.

I hope you will consider passing H.B. No. 2083 because it would benefit the health of students and the environment. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Kristin McNeal
Mililani High School

HB-2083-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 10:32:30 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cory Harden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, in strong support! Cory

HB-2083-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 12:22:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

HB-2083-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 5:15:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Gorman-Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee members,

I am in full support of HB 2083 that authorizes the Department of Education to establish a recognition program to incentivize schools to submit to the Department a plan for the school to reach the local farm to school meal goal of 30% of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030. It also requires the Department of Education to establish a plant-based meal pilot program at Mililani high school no later than the 2025-2026 school year. I would like to request that this pilot program be expanded to at least 5 schools.

The Mayo Clinic has concluded that the following benefits are achieved when eating LOCAL produce, picked at its prime because it:

1. Tastes better
2. Saves money
3. Better for environment
4. Better for local economy
5. "Produce that is harvested in its proper season matures longer on the plant, which makes it more nutrient-dense when compared to being picked before its prime."

HB-2083-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 10:58:41 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rita Scanlan	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Yes schools should provide farm fresh local options. However schools should not be forced to serve only plant based meals like Mililani. Not everybody thrives on a plant based diet.

HB-2083-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/28/2024 1:27:01 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Quincy Coullahan	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair

Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

House Committee on Finance

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

12:00PM, House conference room 308

Hawaii State Capitol

Support for H.B. No.2083 HD 2

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Quincy Coullahan and I am a Senior at Mililani High School. I am testifying in strong support of H.B.No. 2083.

Just the other day I was talking to my school counselor and I told her I wasn't eating school lunch that day. She responded saying that this was a problem which she commonly observed. Many students at our school are not eating throughout the entire school day because school lunch is the only option they have, yet it doesn't include their dietary restrictions, or they wish it was more fresh and less processed. Not only does this bill support local farms and our 'āina, but it supports the Hawaii public school student body. It will encourage all students to eat during the day and be more inclusive to all through plant based meals and locally sourced products. This excites those not only with a plant based diet, but all students who crave a fresher, unprocessed lunch. My AP Environmental Science class had discussions concerning the lack of locally

sourced and plant based meals in cafeterias and even those who enjoy having meat on their platter believe these solutions should be implemented for the sake of their peers and for more intriguing, healthy meals.

I hope you will consider passing H.B. No. 2083 as it will greatly benefit local communities, the planet, and students state-wide. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Quincy Coullahan

Mililani High School

HB-2083-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/28/2024 8:19:23 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Matsuno	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Malia Matsuno and I am a Senior at Mililani High School testifying in support of H.B.No. 2083 HD2. In addition to actively working towards the betterment of our environment, this bill will incentivize schools to feed us students nourishing meals.

In 2018, Mililani High initiated the 'Aina Pono Farm to School program which aimed to introduce locally sourced, home-style cooked meals into the cafeteria. Although I was not yet enrolled in the high school at that time, my older sister participated in the program, and I vividly recall her excitement about the delicious school lunches she ate that day, a stark contrast to the preheated, processed food currently being served that I, as a student with certain dietary restrictions, along with others who feel the same, cannot eat. Echoing the same principles of the Aina Pono program's menu and adding a day of plant based food to this would allow more students like myself to enjoy school meals rather than having to spend extra time and money to purchase lunch before school or bring home lunch.

Finally, I wanted to emphasize the economic benefit that HB no 2083 will have. With more than a quarter of school lunch food being wasted each day, it's clear that the current state of our food system is wasting money. Plus, the DOE returned about \$7 million of unspent federal money just in the past decade that was supposed to have bought fresh local produce. That's \$7 million dollars that could have been spent to improve what is oftentimes the only balanced meal students eat in a day.

Hawaii, with its distinctive environment and rich culture, deserves a food system that not only provides essential nutrition to students but also aligns with the principles of sustainability. Given the diverse palates in our culturally rich state, our students deserve better, and HB no 2083 will lead us one step in the right direction.

Thank you.

HB-2083-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/28/2024 8:25:32 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mollie Moore	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair

Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

House Committee on Finance

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

12:00PM, House conference room 308

Hawai'i State Capitol

Support for H.B. No.2083 HD 2

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Mollie Moore and I am a Junior at Mililani High School. I am testifying in support of H.B.No. 2083 HD2.

I grew up on the mainland until middle school. I remember visiting Hawai'i about a year before moving to Oahu, the rich culture really impressed me, especially the local food. I loved experiencing eating freshly caught fish, or fruit and vegetables from local farmers markets. They were so tasty, made me feel good, and reminded me of the culture I was experiencing. It was a very memorable part of my trip. So, when I moved here transitioning into high school I was excited and to be honest, I had my hopes up for the school's food system. I wanted to be able to experience Hawaiian culture through the food I was eating at school. Not only is the food different from what I expected it to be, I notice

sometimes when I eat the meat provided by the cafeteria, it does not make me feel well and I end up regretting getting the food in the first place. I think this bill is a wonderful opportunity for our Mililani community and other communities throughout the islands to not only get a better understanding of the rich Hawaiian culture and agriculture we have here but to use it as a helpful addition to our schools food systems. I love the idea of offering more plant-based options as well, as there are many benefits from a plant based diet. Some benefits include reduced risk for heart disease, stroke, diabetes and an increase in overall mental health and wellness. This is great for growing students! Even if students do not realize the benefits of plant based eating, having the option is the first step in the right direction. So, with this bill incorporating more locally grown food in our school systems with a plant based option we as students can learn more about Hawaiian culture, feel better after eating, and have the desire to eat healthier or more plant based because of the amazing benefits.

I hope you will consider passing H.B. No. 2083 HD2 because I believe it could be a great bill in our society and will benefit the overall health of students around the state, it is also the perfect way to bring us closer as a community as we all learn to appreciate the islands we live on more and more in our daily lives. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Mollie Moore

Mililani High School