

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
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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2024
1:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 308

HOUSE BILL NO. 2134, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2134, HD1. This bill establishes within the department of agriculture a program specialist position, declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded and appropriates funds. The Department is in strong support of this bill.

The program specialist would seek, apply for, and administer grants from federal agencies as well as other sources of funding such as counties, nonprofit organizations, foundations and private organizations. The position would serve as the HDOA representative to the Administration's Federal Grant working group and coordinate opportunities with the applicable divisions within the Department.

There are over 2000 competitive funding opportunities in the Grants.gov database that the specialist can filter through. Using the keywords "Hawaii" and "Pacific", there are over 300 grants and cooperative agreements offered. Searching for "aquaculture", important to Hawaii, displays 60 opportunities. The specialist would have



access to technical assistance offered by the Federal Grant working group and in collaboration with commodity groups, agriculture associations, and other Departments, including UH CTAHR Researchers and Extension Agents, gather content for a robust application.

Due to current capacity limitations, many of the grants HDOA applies for are formula/block grants that are allocated to the states via a formula and are awarded to states that apply for the formula/block grant. The program specialist would be tasked to apply for the competitive grants. The trend for competitive grants in the \$50 to \$100 million range are for regional applications which benefit the Pacific Region. These applications require collaboration and coordination, requiring time and expertise which would be fulfilled by the program specialist. The average salary range of a grant writer in Hawaii is \$78,500 and one grant could more than compensate for the investment in the position. The Department supports the Committee Report that requests consideration for an appropriation of \$300,000 for this measure so long as it does not impact the budget priorities set forth in the Executive Budget Submittal.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-2134-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 12:52:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Warren Watanabe	Maui County Farm Bureau	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Maui County Farm Bureau is in support of HB2134 HD1.

Thank you.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Thursday, February 22, 2024 — 1:00 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative strongly supports HB 2134 HD1, Relating to Agriculture.

Dear Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

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

Ulupono strongly supports HB 2134 HD1, which appropriates funds to establish grant specialist positions within the Department of Agriculture (DOA).

Ulupono supports the State's efforts to actively pursue grant opportunities that help local agriculturalists. Many federal programs are dedicated to state departments or agencies who can apply for funding to support local initiatives. Establishing a position at the DOA for this work is extremely timely, not only to meet the needs of local farmers and ranchers, but also due to the funding that has been made available by the federal government.

The return on investment for the State can be substantial and transformative. For example, from 2014 to 2023, Ulupono provided funding for grant writers with organizations such as The Kohala Center, the O'ahu Agriculture and Conservation Association, and the Hawai'i Farm Bureau. These efforts brought in a total of approximately \$140 million, 100 times the full grant writing investment. Similarly, Ulupono believes that the State should strongly consider general funding DOA grant writers as they will be well worth the investment, and result in millions of dollars in federal funding to further support the State's agricultural efforts.

We appreciate this committee's effort to hear important measures that look to establish long-term support for our local farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Attachment

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i

THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE REQUEST THAT WILL *BRING MORE MONEY TO HAWAII*

Funding grant writing staff within the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) is a valuable investment that can yield a high return and long-term benefits for the state. The HDOA's operating budget request is \$300,000 in general funds for three currently vacant full-time employee (FTE) positions. Filling these positions follows through on legislators' requests to maximize existing positions toward legislative intent.

HDOA's Ask

HDOA is requesting funding for three existing grant writer positions to be dedicated to securing block and competitive federal grant programs.

- **Examples of block grants:**
 - USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant program (\$500,000)
 - USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network program (\$500,000)
 - USDA Micro-Grants for Food Security program (\$3.0 million)
 - USDA Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program (\$3.2 million)
- **Additional grants:**
 - Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (\$250,000)
 - Multi-State Specialty Crop Block Grant (\$500,000)
 - Community Wildfire Defense Grant (\$5 million)
 - Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (\$1 million)

Why Grant Writers?

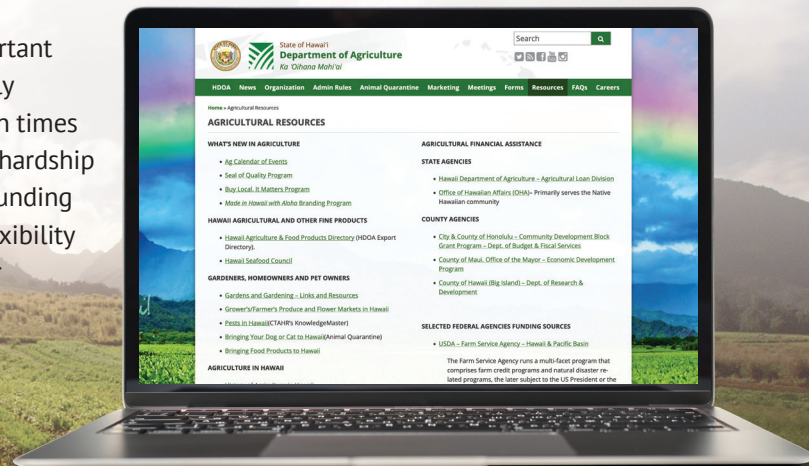
Based on these few examples, this \$300,000 investment could secure \$13.95 million in funding (46.5x return on investment) with more funding available.

Skilled grant writers will help the State to:

- Access federal funds by preparing competitive and compelling grant proposals that align with local farmer needs
- Identify and pursue grants that supplement and leverage existing State resources, maximizing the impact of HDOA's programs

Federal grants will provide:

- Additional means to support important projects and services without solely relying on State funds, especially in times of natural disasters and economic hardship
- A diversified source of long-term funding for HDOA, offering stability and flexibility to address emerging challenges or capitalize on new opportunities



THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE REQUEST THAT WILL BRING MORE MONEY TO HAWAII

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Did You Know That ...

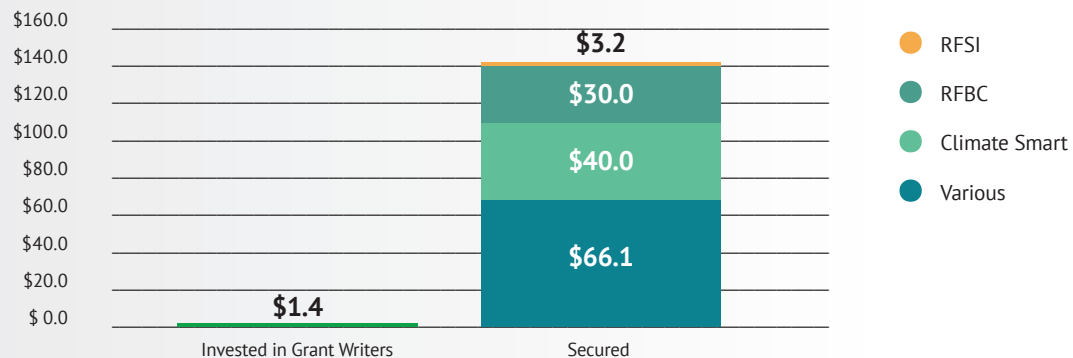
Stimulus bills approved by Congress beginning in 2020 unleashed the largest flood of federal money into the U.S. economy. Roughly \$5 trillion went to households, mom-and-pop shops, restaurants, airlines, hospitals, local governments, schools, and other institutions around the country grappling with the blow inflicted by COVID-19. A number of large USDA grant programs were created. The HDOA needs grant writer support in order to go after these multi-million-dollar opportunities.

Other Benefits for the State

By having grant writers on HDOA's staff, the State will benefit from:

- Grant writing is a specialized skill, and having dedicated grant writers allows other HDOA staff to focus on their core responsibilities leading to better use of resources and expertise.
- Aligned grant-seeking efforts with the HDOA's strategic goals and priorities ensures that all federal funding opportunities will support the agency's long-term objectives.
- Stronger partnership with Hawaii's congressional delegation to better communicate the agricultural industry's needs.

Funding Invested vs. Secured (\$s in Millions)



Return on Investment

Grant writers provide a significant return on investment

Investing in grant-writing capacity not only pays for itself but also brings in funds several times the initial investment.

- The Kohala Center, O'ahu Agriculture & Conservation Association, and Hawaii Farm Bureau invested \$1.4 million in grant writers over the past 10 years.
- Secured ~\$140 million for local agriculture (100x return on investment).
- This included unprecedented funding from the USDA.
 - \$40 million from the Climate-Smart Commodities program to help farmers fund climate-smart farming practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
 - \$30 million from the Regional Food Business Centers (RFBC) program to establish regional centers, which provide farmers with grants and connect them with federal programs.
 - \$3.2 million from the newly created USDA Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) program.

Ulupono's Support of Maui Wildfire Efforts

After the Lahaina wildfire, the Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO) to support its efforts helping other organizations apply for more than \$60 million from the USDA Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) program, including the Departments of Land and Natural Resources and Hawaiian Home Lands, non-profit organizations and homeowner's associations.



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e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 22, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 2134, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
1:00 PM

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

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 2134, HD1, which appropriates funds to establish grant specialist positions within the Department of Agriculture.

The decrease in direct Federal appropriations for agriculture has resulted in an increased level of dependence on grants. Many federal programs have turned into competitive grant programs.

Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers are finding it difficult to secure the financial support necessary to build capacity. Grant writing for USDA, State, County, and other grants usually involves a very complex application process that can be difficult to navigate through. This often deters farmers and ranchers from applying for USDA and other grants. A well-trained and skilled grant writer would be able to assist farmers and ranchers obtain USDA and other grants by assisting them with applying for and fulfilling the requirements of the grants.

Access to USDA and other grants can result in increased capacity, new business opportunities, increased employment opportunities and address Hawai'i's goals of increased self-sufficiency and sustainability.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.



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

**COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, February 7, 2024
9:30 AM**

**VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Conference Room 325
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street**

RE: HB2140 RELATING TO ORNAMENTAL GINGER

My name is Eric S. Tanouye and I am the President for the Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association. HFNA is a statewide umbrella organization with approximately 350 members. Our membership is made up with breeders, hybridizers, propagators, growers, shippers, wholesalers, retailers, educators, and the allied industry, which supports our efforts in agriculture.

The Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association (HFNA) **STRONGLY SUPPORTS House Bill 2140**

Ornamental ginger is a popular tropical flower that could be considered as a symbol of the beauty of Hawaii. For our Nurserymen and women to continue to grow and provide this product it is important we find solutions to the pathogens that threaten the ornamental ginger and avoid the spreading of these viruses to growers statewide. Currently there is no cure for infected plants and the best option would be to have virus free ginger plants available for our industry.

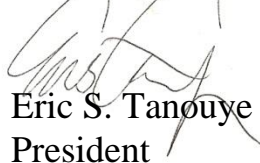
An important way to combat these threats is to have and share the knowledge with growers on how to contain this virus through best management practices. We ask that you support our industry and agriculture



by supporting these efforts for statewide research into pathogens, production and distribution of pathogen-free ornamental ginger plants and outreach to our ornamental producers.

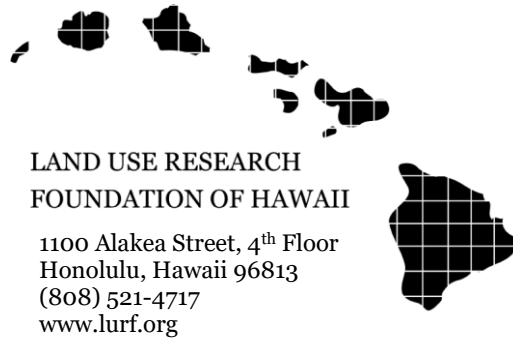
If you have any questions at this time, I would be happy to discuss them and can be reached by phone at 808-959-3535 ext 2627, cell 960-1433 and email eric@greenpointnursery.com.

Supporting Agriculture and Hawaii,



Eric S. Tanouye
President

Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association



February 20, 2024

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

**Comments in Support of HB 2134, H.D. 1 Relating to Agriculture
(Appropriates funds to establish grant specialist positions within the
department of agriculture [DOA]. Effective 7/1/3000.)**

**Thursday, February 22, 2024, 1:00 p.m.; State Capitol, Conference Room
308, Via Videoconference.**

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers, and utility companies. LURF's mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational, and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express its **support of HB 2134, H.D. 1**, and of the various agricultural stakeholder groups who defend the goals of viable agricultural operations and the conservation and protection of agriculture, including important agricultural lands in Hawaii.

HB 2134, H.D. 1. The purpose of this measure is to establish specialist positions within the DOA to assist farmers and ranchers in applying for, obtaining, and fulfilling the requirements of grants offered by the United States Department of Agriculture, State, counties, or private entities.

LURF's Position. The Legislature has found that due to the current absence of grant writing and grant administration expertise within the DOA, many federal funding and other grant opportunities for agriculture and related purposes regrettably go unsought or disregarded. The establishment of grant specialist positions to assist farmers and ranchers in applying for, obtaining, and fulfilling the requirements of grants offered by government agencies and private entities, particularly farmers and ranchers who produce local food that is at least partly consumed within the State, is therefore vital.

Many local farmers, ranchers and other agricultural operators struggle to secure financial support and assistance available to help them obtain the financial help required to operate successful businesses. These agricultural stakeholders would also benefit from the assistance of grant specialists who could lend their expertise and provide the informational knowledge and experience necessary to navigate through grant application processes that are sometimes complex. Access to and receipt of such grants could increase production capacity and provide new business and employment opportunities within the local agricultural industry.

Adequate funding is therefore required to address this critical workforce issue, as more expertise, outreach, and support is necessary to assist these farmers, ranchers, and operators to ensure the profitability and long-term sustainability of local agricultural production, as well as to help them work toward the expansion of diversified agriculture and promote the agricultural self-sufficiency of the State.

For the above reasons, LURF **supports HB 2134, H.D. 1** and respectfully urges your favorable consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding this measure.



Food+ Policy Internship 2024

food@purplemaia.org

February 20, 2024

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB 2134 HD1 Relating to Agriculture

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

Hawaii Food+ Policy appreciates the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB2134 HD1 to establish grant specialist positions within the department of agriculture to assist farmers and ranchers in applying for, obtaining, and fulfilling the requirements of grants offered by the United States Department of Agriculture, State, counties, or private entities.

The resources established through HB2134 HD1 will sustain farmers in providing fresh and nutritious food for our communities and boost the state economy. About 9 out of 10 farms in Hawai'i earn less than \$50,000 in annual sales, with farms making less than \$1,000 in annual sales representing 25% of all Hawai'i farms (USDA-NASS, 2017). Financial assistance can be crucial for growers to continue and expand sales, however many farmers lack the time and/or resources to seek out and apply to grants on their own. The grant specialist positions created through HB2134 HD1 would be able to assist farmers and ranchers in successfully obtaining and fulfilling the requirements of grants, bringing more capital into Hawai'i's agriculture industries.

Importantly, HB2134 HD1 helps level the playing field for farmers and ranchers who lack the technical writing and administrative skills required to apply for and obtain grants, improving equity and producer diversity in the food system. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure, please pass HB2134 HD1 favorably out of committee.

Mahalo,
Hawaii Food+ Policy Team

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2024, the cohort of interns are undergrads and graduate students from throughout the UH System. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

HB2134 HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Thursday, February 22, 2024, 1:00PM
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

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

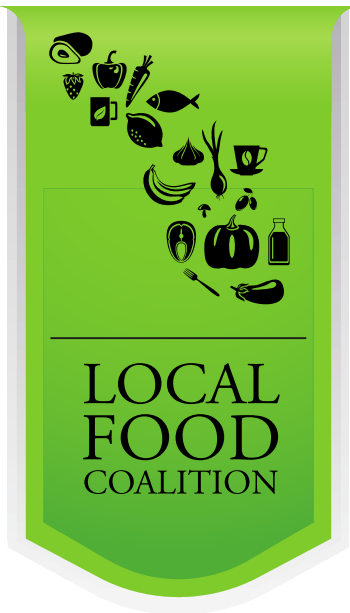
The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB2134 HD1** which appropriates funds to establish grant specialist positions within the Department of Agriculture.

Grant writing is often time-consuming and requires a thorough knowledge of the process to be successful. While grant funds are available, this difficulty can be a deterrent to farmers and ranchers from applying for such grants. Grant specialists in the Department of Agriculture could help our local farmers and ranchers gain access to federal funding that may be available to help them increase capacity and help the state reach its goal of increasing local food production and reducing our reliance on imports.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director





Hawai'i Aquaculture & Aquaponics Association
Hawai'i Cattlemen's Council
Hawai'i Farm Bureau Federation
Hawai'i Farmers' Union United
Hawai'i Food Industry Association
Hawai'i Food Manufacturers Association
Kohala Center
Land Use Research Foundation of Hawai'i
Maui Farm to School Network (Maui F2SN)
Ulupono Initiative
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources - University of Hawai'i at Manoa

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Thursday, February 22, 2024 – 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

HB 2134 HD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE SUPPORT

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

The Local Food Coalition **SUPPORTS** HB 2134 HD1, which appropriates funds to establish grant specialist positions within the Department of Agriculture.

Federal grants are one way the state can increase funding for agriculture. Unfortunately, grant writing is a very complex and time-consuming process, which can be a deterrent to farmers and ranchers from applying for such grants.

Having grant specialists in the Department of Agriculture could help our local farmers and ranchers gain access to federal funding that may be available to help them increase capacity and help the state reach its goal of increasing local food production and reducing our reliance on imports.

The Local Food Coalition is an organization comprised of farmers, ranchers, livestock producers, investors and other organizations working to provide Hawaii's food supply.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2134 HD1.

HB-2134-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 4:21:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support

HB-2134-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 4:25:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jimmy Gomes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stand by HFB testimony

HB-2134-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 12:29:56 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frederick M. Mencher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I support HB 2134, HD1, which appropriates funds to establish grant specialist positions within the Department of Agriculture.

The decrease in direct Federal appropriations for agriculture has resulted in an increased level of dependence on grants. Many federal programs have turned into competitive grant programs.

Hawai‘i’s farmers and ranchers are finding it difficult to secure the financial support necessary to build capacity. Grant writing for USDA, State, County, and other grants usually involves a very complex application process that can be difficult to navigate through. This often deters farmers and ranchers from applying for USDA and other grants. A well-trained and skilled grant writer would be able to assist farmers and ranchers obtain USDA and other grants by assisting them with applying for and fulfilling the requirements of the grants.

Access to USDA and other grants can result in increased capacity, new business opportunities, increased employment opportunities and address Hawai‘i’s goals of increased self-sufficiency and sustainability.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Frederick M. Mencher

HB-2134-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 8:05:39 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONGLY SUPPORT!

POSITION WOULD BE EXCELLENT RETURN ON INVESTMENT.

HB-2134-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 11:42:19 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this much needed measure.

Thank you.

HB-2134-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 1:45:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aileen K . F. Yeh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this bill which appropriates funds to establish a grant specialist positions within the Department of Agriculture.

Aileen Yeh

HB-2134-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 11:53:03 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yoshito LHote	Aina Hookupu o Kilauea	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A grant specialist is an important position to get federal \$\$ to the DOA