

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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2024
1:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**HOUSE BILL 2590, HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY**

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2590, HD1. This bill establishes the Hawaii farm to food bank program and Hawaii food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the state. The Department expresses our **strong support**.

Farm to Food bank programs are a win-win program, helping alleviate food insecurity in our communities, while opening additional markets to our farmers and ranchers. With a stable source of funding, food banks are a consistent customer for our farmers. The fragility of our food supply chains was made apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hawaii farmers rose up and continued to feed their communities.

In addition, Farm to Food bank programs make healthy fresh foods grown and raised in Hawaii available to everyone, not just those that can afford it. Due to the ability for food banks to change their inventory quickly, this program would allow the food banks to act as 'ballast', purchasing when there are unexpected abundance in the market.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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Telephone: (808) 241-4188
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Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766

March 8, 2024

**TESTIMONY OF ADDISON BULOSAN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
HB 2590, HD 1, RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Monday, March 11, 2024
1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224
Via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 2590, HD 1, Relating to Food Security. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

I wholeheartedly support the intent of HB 2590, HD 1, which would greatly affect the Kaua'i community.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2590, HD 1. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

ADDISON BULOSAN
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AAO:slr



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT
Monday, March 11, 2024 — 1:00 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports HB 2590 HD1, Relating to Food Security.

Dear Chair Gabbard 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 and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono supports HB 2590 HD1, which appropriates funds for food bank purchases from local farmers, to be extended by request for proposal via the Department of Agriculture.

Over the last few years, one of the most pressing issues for many local families has been food insecurity. With many out of work and surviving on government unemployment support, communities have relied on the efforts of food banks and local food producers to meet their basic need to eat.

In response to the COVID pandemic, federal monies injected into Hawai'i through county initiatives helped grow a local farm-to-food bank effort, in which food banks were able to purchase local products for distribution to needy communities. This effort was a win-win-win, in that local food producers had a market to sell their products when hotels and restaurants shuttered their doors, local families received fresh and nutritious food products made locally island-wide, and food banks that were struggling to purchase shelf-stable food due to nationwide shortages were rescued by Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers who provided local food to their communities.

The Farm to Food Bank efforts across the state led to many important foundational relationships between local farmers, ranchers, and community feeding organizations that helped struggling communities cope with the social and economic consequences of the COVID pandemic. Unfortunately, natural disasters, food supply chain disruptions, and state emergencies have become a harsh, consistent reality for our local communities. Food banks across the state will need support to meet these food security challenges, and continuing to strengthen the bonds between farms and food banks is a worthy investment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



March 11, 2024

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

RE: Testimony in support of HB 2590, Relating to Food Security

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I am writing in **strong support of HB 2590**, which appropriates funds for food bank purchases from local farmers, with the funds to be administered by request for proposal via the department of agriculture.

Food insecurity is a critical issue in Hawai'i, where one in six residents lacks comprehensive access to healthy, nutritious food. One in four children is food insecure. Hawai'i has the highest cost of living in the nation, and inflation has driven food prices up by more than 25% since before the pandemic—greatly exacerbating the problem and putting far too many families at risk of going hungry, or making impossible choices between food and rent, food and medicine, or food and transportation. Food insecure households are especially vulnerable to a natural disaster, as they do not have the capacity to set aside a fourteen-day supply of food and water.

The Farm to Food Bank program addresses these critical needs while investing in our local food systems at the same time. Every dollar in the Farm to Foodbank program does double duty—not only is it invested in local agriculture, supporting our local farmers, helping to buoy our local economy and food system, and decreasing our dependence on imported food, but it allows us to provide fresh, healthy, Hawai'i-grown produce and proteins to those we serve. We know that food insecurity is highly correlated with negative health outcomes such as diabetes and heart disease, and that as budgets grow tighter, households tend to shift towards less expensive food options—which are often highly processed and significantly less healthy. The ability to provide fresh produce to those we serve will have a long-term positive effect on the health of our entire community.

Hawai'i Foodbank established our Farm to Foodbank program during the pandemic through a partnership with the Hawai'i Farm Bureau, with a commitment to purchase locally produced foods from local farmers and ranchers when their regular markets shut down. For the first three years of the Farm to Foodbank program, Hawai'i Foodbank purchased and distributed more than seven million pounds of local produce and proteins, funded primarily through COVID-era federal pandemic relief funds. Since those funds have lapsed, we have continued to fund our Farm to Foodbank program through private philanthropic support and other sources, and are currently purchasing between 25,000 – 30,000 pounds of local produce per week, including culturally relevant products such as poi, 'uala, and 'ulu. HB2590 would allow us to continue and grow these important programs.



Hawai'i Foodbank is Hawai'i's largest hunger relief organization, fiercely dedicated to our mission of nourishing our 'ohana today while working to end hunger tomorrow. We work with a network of more than 200 partner agencies across O'ahu and Kaua'i to provide food assistance to an average of more than 150,000 people each month.

Hawai'i Foodbank provides all food, including locally purchased produce, to our network of partner agencies free of charge, and our partner agencies then distribute that food into our communities directly. Last year, we distributed food for more than 16.2 million meals across the islands we directly serve, including nearly 5 million pounds of fresh produce. Together with the Maui Food Bank, serving Maui County, and The Food Basket, serving Hawai'i Island, our network of food banks and partner agencies provide food assistance to all those facing hunger across the State.

Mahalo for your consideration.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO
Hawai'i Foodbank



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

March 11, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON HB 2590, HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:00 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, 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 2590, HD1, which appropriates funds for food bank purchase from local farmers, to be expended by request for proposal via the Department of Agriculture.

The Coronavirus Pandemic disrupted Hawai'i's local food systems and caused many local producers to lose their local markets. Many catered to tourism, large-scale events, hotels, restaurants, cruise ships, farmers' markets, and school lunch programs, which were non-existent during Hawai'i's shutdown.

Like small businesses around the state, without open and consistent markets, local farmers and ranchers will decrease food production levels and likely downsize and/or go out of business. To help address the state's food security during the pandemic, Hawai'i's Foodbanks partnered with local food producers to ensure that farmers and ranchers could survive.

At the onset of the pandemic, Hawai'i's Foodbanks partnered with farmers and ranchers to provide local agricultural produce and proteins for their food assistance programs. As organizations that aggregate and distribute food, Foodbank staff brought valuable logistical insight to these programs. The combined efforts of Hawai'i's Foodbanks, the Hawai'i Farm Bureau, and other partner organizations allowed tens of thousands of families access to food during unprecedented times. This win-win partnership connected local producers that lost markets and revenue sources due to COVID-19 with the Hawai'i Foodbank to meet the increased demands of feeding Hawai'i's communities.

HB 2590, HD1, will provide funds to Hawai'i's food banks that support non-profit and community feeding programs by providing locally grown or produced foods to communities in need. This will also help Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers while providing local nutritional food to those who need it most.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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Natalie Urminska
Kauai

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee,

The Hawaii Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports HB2590.**

Food insecurity is a serious issue in Hawaii. Our state's farmers are a vital part of the solution, and the Hawaii Farm to Food Bank Program provides a crucial link between our farmers and those in need.

We believe it is essential to strengthen partnerships between the food banks and agricultural producers to bring fresh produce and other foods to households in need. Additionally, we are confident that the monetary appropriations will enable farmer and food banks to provide the much-needed food access for the state's residents.

The emphasis on local food sourcing is a strategic move towards enhancing the state's resilience in emergencies. By establishing a steady, local supply chain of essential food items, we mitigate the risks associated with external supply chain disruptions. Local sourcing ensures that, in times of crisis of local or global origin, our communities have reliable access to nutritious food.

HFUU seeks amendments on the following pages to establish the program in statute, provide definitions, and establish a program structure, informed by bill language and testimony for [HB314 \(2023\)](#) and [HB2137 \(2024\)](#).

In conclusion, the Hawaii Farmers Union strongly supports the Hawaii Farm to Food Bank Program. This program not only serves the State's immediate food needs but also provides a sustainable market for local food producers, keeping money circulating within the State to boost our local economy. We urge the legislature to pass this bill, recognizing its potential to significantly impact both our agricultural sector and the food security of our communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF

SECTION 2. Chapter 141, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new part to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"PART . HAWAII FARM TO FOOD BANK PROGRAM

§141- Definitions. For the purposes of this part:

"Department" means the department of agriculture.

"Food bank" has the same meaning as in title 7 United States Code section 7501(5).

"Fresh locally grown or produced food" means fruits, vegetables, nuts, coffee, eggs, poultry and poultry products, livestock products, milk and milk products, aquacultural and maricultural products, and horticultural products that are one hundred per cent grown, raised, and harvested in Hawaii.

§141- Hawaii farm to food bank program. (a) There is established the Hawaii farm to food bank program to be administered by the department. Under the program, the department shall relieve food shortages by providing funds to food banks located in the State to facilitate consistent supply chains of fresh locally grown or produced food that is culturally relevant to food insecure communities.

(b) Food banks that receive support pursuant to this section shall use the funds to purchase, store, and transport fresh locally grown or produced food in the State that is culturally relevant to recipients at no cost to the recipients.

§141- Rules.

(a) The Department shall use a formula modeled after, and substantially similar to, the emergency food assistance program's state allocation formula, enumerated in 7 Code of Federal Regulations section 251.3(h), to determine the amount to be allocated to each county.

(b) No more than fifteen per cent of the moneys appropriated may be used for administrative costs. The department shall adopt additional rules pursuant to chapter 91 necessary for the purposes of this part as needed."

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the Hawaii farm to food bank program.



HIPHI Board

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Community-Based Research &
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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
Development

Date: March 10, 2024

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

Re: HB 2590 HD1 Relating to Food Security

Hrg: Monday, March 11, 2024 1:00 PM

Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, convened by the Hawai'i Public Health Instituteⁱ appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **Support of HB 2590 HD1**, which would provide funds to food banks to make purchases from local farmers.

Consistent Demand

Farmers sometimes produce supply beyond market demand, which often goes to waste, or farmers under produce because there is not always consistent market demand. Currently, this excess would go to waste or people are unable to obtain local foods because there is not enough. However, with a robust farm to food bank program, the food bank system can be consistent purchasers of locally sourced food.ⁱⁱ This system provides a steady demand for the local farming community, ensuring an opportunity for them to have consistent buyers of their foods. When the foodbanks consistently purchase food at fair market values, our local farmers are supported and that has positive impacts on the local economy. It is integral that farmers have consistent buyers so they can produce to scale. There is constant demand for fresh produce from the food banks, but it is often unavailable. This program can help fill that void by providing healthier food choices for our residents.

Help the Local Economy

This program will help local farmers to sell within the state and to bring fresh, local foods to those who depend on the food bank system. This investment flows to all sectors of our economy because these local dollars go toward purchasing goods in our local economy and paying local employees, creating a multiplying impact of the dollars spent.

Sincerely,

Nate Hix
Social Impact Policy Manager
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

ⁱ The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, formerly known as the Obesity Prevention Task Force, was created by the legislature in 2012 and is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations. The HEAL Coalition works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

ⁱⁱ <https://kauainownews.com/2022/02/14/hawaii-food-basket-receives-donation-from-kaiser-for-new-program/>



WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

March 8, 2024

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

RE: House Bill 2590 HD1 – RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY
Hearing date: March 11, 2024, 1:00 p.m.

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Young Brothers, LLC ("YB") offering **SUPPORT** for House Bill 2590 HD1 – Relating to Food Security.

YB is a common carrier by water, transporting property by tug and barge between the islands of O'ahu, Hawai'i, Kaua'i, Maui, Moloka'i, and Lāna'i. YB is currently the only water carrier authorized to transport property under Chapter 271G, Hawaii Revised Statutes ("HRS") (i.e., the Hawaii Water Carrier Act), subject to the regulatory authority of the Public Utilities Commission of the State of Hawaii ("PUC"). Since 1900, customers across Hawaii have relied on YB's frequent, regular, and universal sailings to serve as the bridge that connects all communities in this island-state.

This measure would appropriate funds for food bank purchases from local farmers, with the funds to be administered by request for proposal via the Hawaii Department of Agriculture.

Food security remains a critical issue in Hawaii. This measure will help address these food security challenges while also investing in local agriculture. The Hawaii Foodbank's Farm to Foodbank program, which was launched in March of 2020, has successfully provided healthy, locally-grown produce within communities across the state by working with partner agencies and organizations to distribute food to the community. This measure will support such efforts going forward.

For the reasons stated above, I offer **SUPPORT** for this measure.

Thank you for your service to the State of Hawaii, and for the opportunity to testify offering comments on this measure.

Sincerely,

Jay Ana
President



To: The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Monday, March 11, 2024, 1pm

In strong support of HB2590 HD1

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the AEN committee,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **strongly supports HB2590 HD1** that appropriates funds for food bank purchases from local farmers, to be expended by the Department of Agriculture via requests for proposals.

Many families in Hawaii struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis, and the COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated this situation. This measure is a wonderful idea that supports our farmers and at the same time helps our local families in need by providing local, fresh, healthy options. Efforts to support our farmers also builds our resiliency and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food.

Please pass **HB2590 HD1** so that we all may reap these benefits.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of this important legislation.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Re: **HB 2590 HD1 – Relating to Food Security**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
March 11, 2024, 1:00 PM

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB 2590 HD1**. This bill appropriates funds for food bank purchases from local farmers, to be expended by the Department of Agriculture via requests for proposals.

According to Feeding America, more than 50,000 – or one in six – Hawai'i children are facing hunger.¹ Especially with highest cost of living and the second-most expensive groceries in the nation,² it is nearly impossible for the low-income families in Hawai'i to afford to buy healthy food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

In addition, it is well established that the stresses of childhood poverty have both immediate and long-term effects on keiki's physical and mental health, behavioral self-control, academic achievement, and earnings as adults.³

That's why it's so important to support Hawai'i's food banks. They and their partner agencies help ensure that struggling families do not go hungry, by distributing millions of pounds of food per year to those in need in our state.

Food banks were a lifeline during the pandemic when our state had some of the highest unemployment rates in the nation. But even with folks back at work, higher grocery prices have led to our state's food banks to continue to see demand that's higher than before the pandemic.

This program has the added plus of supporting our local farms. Farm to food bank programs are a win-win, by providing healthy local food to those who need it and purchasing from local farmers.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony. Please pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hawaii>

² <https://meric.mo.gov/data/cost-living-data-series>

³ <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/indicator/2014/06/childhood-poverty>

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 9:16:17 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sylvia Dolena	Testifying for Pele Lani Farm LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

PLEASE I urge you to support HB2590 HD1.

With hunger on the rise, and the challenging economy with out-of-control inflation, we need to provide for our residents especially the keiki and kupunas.

Sylvia Dolena

Pele Lani Farm LLC



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

March 10, 2024

To: The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Senator Tim Richards, III, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

From: Kristin Frost Albrecht, Executive Director
The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

Testimony in Strong Support of HB 2590 HD1, Relating to Food Security

Aloha Chair Gabbard and Vice Chair Richards,

My name is Kristin Frost Albrecht, and I am the Executive Director of The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank. Our mission is to "End hunger in Hawaii County". We strongly SUPPORT this bill.

The Food Basket has long depended on the farmers and ranchers on Hawai'i Island to provide healthy, nutritious food for our clientele. This was never truer than during the pandemic when the numbers of residents who needed our services soared to six times more than pre-pandemic. Had it not been for our farmers and ranchers, we would not have been able to source enough food to distribute to all who needed assistance. Establishing a statewide Farm to Food Bank program that would both provide financial incentives to local producers as well as meet the increased demand for emergency food for our food banks would be a double win -- healthy food for our residents in need, and vital support for our local producers and the economy.

The impacts of the ongoing high cost of living have heightened the issues of food insecurity and hunger in our state to new levels. Here on Hawai'i Island, our food banks in Kona and Hilo are facing escalating need, with record numbers of residents needing our services. We are still serving over three times more than we served pre-pandemic as our residents' grapple with the long-term impacts of the pandemic, as well as the rising costs of rent, groceries, gas, and utilities.

Food banks and Hawai'i's producers both provide a critical safety net in our food and disaster response system. This bill would provide crucial funding for both, increasing food security for our neediest residents and at the same time, strengthening our food system, and benefitting all in the state.

We respectfully ask your committee to pass this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Kristin Frost Albrecht
Executive Director, The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST ALBRECHT

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WWW.HAWAIIFOODBASKET.ORG

Administration and East Hawai'i Warehouse
40 Holomua Street, Hilo, HI 96720
808-933-6030 Phone | 808-934-0701 Fax

West Hawai'i Warehouse
73-4161 Ulu Wini Place, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740
808-322-1418 Phone | 808-322-7373 Fax

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 12:31:22 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Testifying for Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee,

The Green Party of Hawai'i stands in strong support of HB2590 HD1. Please pass this unanimously to help the food security of our Islands.

Mahalo nui,

Susan RobertsEmery

Co chair GPH

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 11:21:21 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emi Matsuura	Testifying for Go Blue Communities	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators Gabbard, Richards, DeCoite, Rhoads, and Awa,

On behalf of Go Blue Communities, a student-led organization that aims to educate youth about local farming in Hawaii, I am an 11th-grade student at Punahou School writing to share testimony from students in support of HB 2590. After presenting a lesson about food insecurity to 4th-grade students at Punahou School, we allowed them to share their feedback regarding this bill. Every student who responded expressed support to appropriate funds to assist our local farmers and food banks. Thank you for your time as you consider these voices in your deliberations.

“I support HB 2590 because it could help food banks such as the Hawaii food bank. I think we should support local farming because it will most likely have no viruses and bugs.” –Z. S., 4th grade

“I support HB 2590 because it can help the food banks such as the Hawaii food banks, Maui’s food banks, and the Lahaina food banks. I think we should support local farming because it can help our community and neighbors.” –V. L., 4th grade

“I support HB 2590. I support local farming because local food is more fresh and people who need food can eat.” –L. N., 4th grade

“It helps us have fresher food and if we weren’t making our own food and there was a problem and shipping companies closed that would mean that we wouldn’t have any food to eat.”

“I support it because the people on Maui need more food.”

“It helps people who are having trouble with food insecurity and we would not have to worry about losing money. And we would all know if the food was safe or not safe or even invasive.” –I. L., 4th grade

“We should because it will help people that don’t have food and are homeless or poor and so that it helps the food bank for poor people.”

“I support the bill because I think it would be nice to help people who don’t have food.” –E. P., 4th grade

“Yes, because having locally grown [food] is good for the people of Hawaii.” –R. S., 4th grade

“I support the HB 2590 bill because it will help food banks get more food if there is another big crisis and a lot of people need food and it will help support local farms and that will help solve food insecurity” –E. F., 4th grade

“I think it would be nice to have more food that was locally grown and fill food banks with local food and we would not spend more money on shipping. And help lessen food insecurity.” –C. M., 4th grade

“I think we should support local farming because it would be better for people who live here because it would be fresher and won’t have to pay for shipping.”

“I do support HB 2590 because if a natural disaster happens and people need food and the food bank runs out of food lots of people could die.”

Sincerely,

Emi Matsuura, on behalf of Go Blue Communities



HB2590 HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

March 11, 2024

1:00 p.m.

Conference Room 224

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HB2590 HD1** which would appropriate funds to allow the Hawai‘i Food Bank to purchase food from local farmers. OHA believes that food security, including access to culturally relevant, healthy, regionally produced foods are critical to the safety and security of the people of Hawai‘i.

In the aftermath of the devastating wildfires of August 2023 that caused significant loss of life and destruction to the Lahaina community, the State House of Representatives found that the Hawai‘i Foodbank only has about 3 weeks of food on hand at any given time, and that the Hawai‘i Foodbank is limited by storage capacity.¹ The House further noted that in the event of a disaster that affects the operability of the Port of Honolulu, food resupply could be disrupted or cut off across the State of Hawai‘i.² In light of the vulnerabilities to Hawai‘i’s food supply in the event of a disaster, it is critical that Hawai‘i prioritizes food security for the safety of all the people of Hawai‘i.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) noted that as of 2021, 93% of all farms in Hawai‘i were family farms and accounted for 55% of farmland and 52% of all agricultural products sold and government payments.³ The USDA additionally noted that small family farms with a gross cash farm income of less than \$350,000 per year accounted for 91% of all Hawai‘i farms.⁴ Many small farmers in Hawai‘i face challenges such as “increased competition from industrial-scale farming operations both domestically and overseas, as well as not being positioned to absorb rising operational costs like these larger competitors.”⁵

¹ State of Hawai‘i House of Representatives, *Laulima for Lahaina: Final Report of the House of Representatives Lahaina Wildfire Interim Working Groups*, House of Representatives, December 2023, p. 27 -28.

² *Id.* at p.30.

³ United States Department of Agriculture, *Family-owned farms account for 93% of Hawaii farms, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture Typology Report*, National Agricultural Statistics Service Hawaii Field Office, February 8, 2021, p. 1.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Swette Center for Sustainable Food Systems. *Hawai‘i Agritourism: Examining how Agritourism can be Responsibly Implemented to Support Small Farmers and Ecological and Cultural Preservation in the Hawaiian Islands*. April, 2023, p. 21.



HB2590 HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

By supporting local farmers and the Hawai'i Foodbank through funding to allow the Hawai'i Foodbank to purchase food from local farmers, this measure will not only increase food security in Hawai'i, but also support local farmers, the vast majority of which are small, family-owned farms, allowing our local farmers to better compete with out-of-state competitors.

OHA appreciates the opportunity to share our mana'ō on **HB2590 HD1** and urges the legislature to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui loa.



March 11, 2024

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Tim M. Richards, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Re: HB 2590 HD1– RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2590 HD1, which would appropriate funds for food bank purchases from local farmers, to be expended by the Department of Agriculture via requests for proposals.

HMSA recognizes that the donations Hawaii’s food banks receive can easily fall short of what is needed. This is why we strongly support the efforts of lawmakers to help food banks purchase produce from Hawaii’s local farmers. This strengthens food bank supplies, supports our local economy by keeping money within our community, and benefits the health and well-being of our resident because locally grown produce is likely to be fresher and more nutritious.

Hawaii’s food banks play vital role in combating food insecurity in Hawaii. Passing this bill would help to positively impact the overall health and well-being of the people they serve. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2590 HD1.

Sincerely,

Dawn Kurisu
Assistant Vice President
Community and Government Relations



Food+ Policy Internship 2024

food@purplemaia.org

February 20, 2024

Subject: *H.B. 2590 HD1, Relating to Food Security*

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Agriculture and Environment Committee,

The Hawaii Food+ Policy wholeheartedly supports HB 2590 HD1 and urges your favorable consideration in providing crucial funding for sustainable agriculture. Our organization stands behind this initiative, recognizing its potential to address pressing issues faced by our local food producers.

Our intern, Nanea Kelii, embodies the spirit of our commitment to sustainable community food systems. As an organic farmer and a current student in the Sustainable Community Food Systems program at UH West Oahu, Nanea emphasizes the significance of cultivating food as a fundamental duty, as people's lives hinge on access to nutritious sustenance.

The necessity for funding is paramount in ensuring access to sustainable food sources, particularly from our local farmers, especially given the current challenges of inflated food prices. Local producers in Hawaii are grappling with fierce competition from continental suppliers. Which results in elevated price points that jeopardize accessibility for those dependent on local products and those committed to supporting Hawaii's economy.

In light of these challenges, it is evident that a proactive approach is needed to support our local food producers and ensure a reliable food supply for our communities. House Bill 2590 represents a crucial step in the right direction, aligning with our organization's mission to foster a sustainable and resilient food system for Hawaii. We trust you will consider the merits of this bill and contribute to the realization of a thriving and sustainable food ecosystem in our beautiful state.

Mahalo,

Kaitlyn + The 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.



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 | Honolulu, HI 96813
P: 808-533-1292 | e: info@hawaiiifood.com

Executive Officers

Gary Okimoto, Safeway Hawaii, *Chair*
Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale Grocer, *Vice Chair*
Kit Okimoto, Okimoto Corp., *Secretary/Treas.*
Lauren Zirbel, HFIA, *Executive Director*
Paul Kosasa, ABC Stores, *Advisor*
Derek Kurisu, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 11, 2024
TIME: 1pm
PLACE: 224

RE: HB2590 HD1 Relating to Food Security

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

HFIA is in support of this measure. Addressing food insecurity and strengthening our local agricultural sector are goals we all share. This measure will allow for the purchasing of food from local farmers by local food banks. This helps bolster our state's food supply for those in need during everyday circumstances, or in times of crisis. It also provides economic support for our local agricultural sector. It's also worth noting that many food banks around the state frequently have shortages of fresh fruits and vegetables. This measure will help ensure that those who are utilizing our food banks have access to fresh local healthy foods. We encourage you to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Hawaii
Legislative
Council
Members**

Joell Edwards
Wainiha Country
Market
Hanalei

Russell Ruderman
Island Naturals
Hilo/Kona

Dr. Andrew Johnson
Niko Niko Family
Dentistry
Honolulu

Robert H. Pahia
Hawaii Taro Farm
Wailuku

Maile Meyer
Na Mea Hawaii
Honolulu

Tina Wildberger
Kihei Ice
Kihei

L. Malu Shizue Miki
Abundant Life
Natural Foods
Hilo

Kim Coco Iwamoto
Enlightened Energy
Honolulu

Chamber of
Sustainable
Commerce
P.O. Box 22394
Honolulu, HI
96823

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

Monday, March 11, 2024
1:00 PM in Room 224

RE: **HB2590 HD1** Farm to Food Bank - **Strong Support**

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards and Committee Members,

The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce represents over 100 small businesses across the State that strive for a triple bottom line: people, planet and prosperity; we know Hawaii can strengthen its economy without hurting workers, consumers, communities or the environment.

This is why we are in strong support of HB2590 HD1, which appropriates funds for food bank purchases from local farmers, to be expended by the Department of Agriculture via requests for proposals.

Many of our members are farmers or operators in the farm to table supply chain. Supporting locally sourced food benefits the local economy, helps us become less dependent on tourism and more resilient and secure as an island chain.

Growing, processing, and distributing food locally creates and sustains community-based jobs. Direct marketing channels between farmers and consumers boosts local farmers' incomes.

Food banks help to build communities by providing jobs and purchasing goods and services from local businesses, creating an economic stimulus in the areas they serve. Importantly, food donations also help low-income families free up money to meet other basic needs.

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 10:01:54 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill: positive for Hawaii's health and supports local agriculture: a win - win for sure!

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2024 3:51:19 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Redfeather	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of this Bill to provide This Bill is a win-win for the community and our farmers. Past programs have shown us that when our Food Banks partner with our agricultural community everyone benefits, and the recipients are rewarded with fresh food, enhancing their health. HDOA seems to be the perfect partner for this funding stream. Mahalo!

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 9:24:39 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marilyn Mick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee,

Sadly, hunger is on the rise in Hawai‘i and therefore so is the number of households which rely on food banks. This measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai‘i to local communities for distribution. This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai‘i, benefiting our economy.

In addition to reducing hunger, food banks help to build communities by providing jobs and purchasing goods and services from local businesses, creating an economic stimulus in the areas they serve. Importantly, food donations also help low-income families free up money to meet other basic needs.

Supporting locally sourced food benefits the local economy, helps us become less dependent on tourism and more resilient and secure as an island chain. Growing, processing, and distributing food locally creates and sustains community-based jobs. Direct marketing channels between farmers and consumers boosts local farmers' incomes.

Closer proximity relationships with our food will in turn also reduce carbon emissions related to shipping and packaging waste associated with importation from the United States.

Please support HB 2590 HD1 to help grow Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and bolster local food security.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Marilyn Mick, Honolulu

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 3:33:41 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorna Holmes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass HB 2590. In addition to reducing hunger, food banks help to build communities by providing jobs and purchasing goods and services from local businesses, creating an economic stimulus in the areas they serve. Importantly, food donations also help low-income families free up money to meet other basic needs.

Supporting locally sourced food benefits the local economy, helps us become less dependent on tourism and more resilient and secure as an island chain. Growing, processing, and distributing food locally creates and sustains community-based jobs. Direct marketing channels between farmers and consumers boosts local farmers' incomes.

Mahalo

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 11:19:09 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Roger Walraven	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chairs and Committee members I

I support HB2590 and ask that you do likewise.
Hawaii's pitiful agricultural industry needs all the help it can get. Hungry citizens will benefit from this program. Please support this initiative.
Aloha

Roger Walraven

Kauai retiree

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 4:39:06 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Yes to appropriating funds for food bank purchases from local farmers, to be expended by the Department of Agriculture via requests for proposals.

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 5:48:41 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sadly, hunger is on the rise in Hawai‘i and therefore so is the number of households which rely on food banks. This measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai‘i to local communities for distribution. This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai‘i, benefiting our economy.

In addition to reducing hunger, food banks help to build communities by providing jobs and purchasing goods and services from local businesses, creating an economic stimulus in the areas they serve. Importantly, food donations also help low-income families free up money to meet other basic needs.

Supporting locally sourced food benefits the local economy, helps us become less dependent on tourism and more resilient and secure as an island chain. Growing, processing, and distributing food locally creates and sustains community-based jobs. Direct marketing channels between farmers and consumers boosts local farmers' incomes.

Closer proximity relationships with our food will in turn also reduce carbon emissions related to shipping and packaging waste associated with importation from the United States.

Please support HB 2590 HD1 to help grow Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and bolster local food security. Mahalo for your consideration!

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 3:03:51 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Irena Bliss	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee,

Sadly, hunger is on the rise in Hawai‘i and therefore so is the number of households which rely on food banks. Please support HB 2590 HD1 - this measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai‘i to local communities for distribution. This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai‘i, benefiting our economy.

In addition to reducing hunger, food banks help to build communities by providing jobs and purchasing goods and services from local businesses, creating an economic stimulus in the areas they serve. Importantly, food donations also help low-income families free up money to meet other basic needs.

Supporting locally sourced food benefits the local economy, helps us become less dependent on tourism and more resilient and secure as an island chain. Growing, processing, and distributing food locally creates and sustains community-based jobs. Direct marketing channels between farmers and consumers boosts local farmers' incomes.

Closer proximity relationships with our food will in turn also reduce carbon emissions related to shipping and packaging waste associated with importation from the United States.

Please support HB 2590 HD1 to help grow Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and bolster local food security. Mahalo piha for your consideration!

Me ke aloha,

Irena Bliss
Ha‘ikū, Maui 96708

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 2:54:45 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KEALA FUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee,

Sadly, hunger is on the rise in Hawai‘i and therefore so is the number of households which rely on food banks. This measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai‘i to local communities for distribution. This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai‘i, benefiting our economy.

In addition to reducing hunger, food banks help to build communities by providing jobs and purchasing goods and services from local businesses, creating an economic stimulus in the areas they serve. Importantly, food donations also help low-income families free up money to meet other basic needs.

Supporting locally sourced food benefits the local economy, helps us become less dependent on tourism and more resilient and secure as an island chain. Growing, processing, and distributing food locally creates and sustains community-based jobs. Direct marketing channels between farmers and consumers boosts local farmers' incomes.

Closer proximity relationships with our food will in turn also reduce carbon emissions related to shipping and packaging waste associated with importation from the United States.

Please support HB 2590 HD1 to help grow Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and bolster local food security. Mahalo for your consideration!

Keala Fung, Honolulu

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 2:12:11 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eliel Starbright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee, Sadly, hunger is on the rise in Hawai'i and therefore so is the number of households which rely on food banks. This measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai'i to local communities for distribution. This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai'i, benefiting our economy. Timothy Starbright, Kapaa

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 1:18:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dennis O'Shea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee,

Please support this bill.

It not only helps local families in need, it helps promote Hawaii's food self-sufficiency.

It's a win-win.

Mahalo.

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 12:53:26 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Way over due Hawaii! Support!

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 12:48:32 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edward Dedeo DC	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee,

Statistics say hunger (and homelessness) is increasing on the Islands. Food banks and other community organizations play a large role in getting what is needed to those in need. State funding is critical for a program to promote greater reliance on locally grown foods. Our local farmers need to be incentivized to do what they do best. New farmers will emerge from more favorable economic conditions.

Supporting locally sourced food benefits the local economy, by helping us become less dependent on tourist dollars while getting more resilient and secure as an island chain. Growing, processing, and distributing food locally creates and sustains community-based jobs. Direct local marketing between farmers and consumers boosts local farmers' incomes.

Also closer connections with our food supply can help reduce carbon emissions related to shipping and waste associated with importation from the mainland United States.

Please support HB 2590 HD1 to help grow Hawai'i's agricultural sector and bolster local food security. Mahalo for your consideration!

Edward de Deo, Lawai, Kauai

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 12:40:29 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee,

Sadly, hunger is on the rise in Hawai‘i and therefore so is the number of households which rely on food banks. This measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai‘i to local communities for distribution. This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai‘i, benefiting our economy.

In addition to reducing hunger, food banks help to build communities by providing jobs and purchasing goods and services from local businesses, creating an economic stimulus in the areas they serve. Importantly, food donations also help low-income families free up money to meet other basic needs.

Supporting locally sourced food benefits the local economy, helps us become less dependent on tourism and more resilient and secure as an island chain. Growing, processing, and distributing food locally creates and sustains community-based jobs. Direct marketing channels between farmers and consumers boosts local farmers' incomes.

Closer proximity relationships with our food will in turn also reduce carbon emissions related to shipping and packaging waste associated with importation from the United States.

Please support HB 2590 HD1 to help grow Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and bolster local food security.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili, O'ahu

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2024 9:07:04 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Brandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support!

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 12:28:19 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
holly heiman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I would like to say I have worked in restaurants and grown gardens since 1979 and I am so grateful for all the effort these Kauai farms are making. The restaunts have significantly more farm to table selections thus making our diners experience so much better and most importantly giving people jobs/keeping farmers and family in business. Also we received food from Nourish every Wednesday and what they are doing for Kupuna is incredible and MUCH USED AND NEEDED Food gets distributed expertly to my older neighbors here at Lihue Gardens and all over the island by a church. It feels so good to experience this teamwork . Much needed for kids to see this

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 11:41:18 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Douglas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee,

Sadly, hunger is on the rise in Hawai‘i and therefore so is the number of households which rely on food banks. This measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai‘i to local communities for distribution. This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai‘i, benefiting our economy.

In addition to reducing hunger, food banks help to build communities by providing jobs and purchasing goods and services from local businesses, creating an economic stimulus in the areas they serve. Importantly, food donations also help low-income families free up money to meet other basic needs.

Supporting locally sourced food benefits the local economy, helps us become less dependent on tourism and more resilient and secure as an island chain. Growing, processing, and distributing food locally creates and sustains community-based jobs. Direct marketing channels between farmers and consumers boosts local farmers' incomes.

Closer proximity relationships with our food will in turn also reduce carbon emissions related to shipping and packaging waste associated with importation from the United States.

Please support HB 2590 HD1 to help grow Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and bolster local food security. Mahalo for your consideration!

Susan Douglas, Kihei, HI 96753

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 11:09:35 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danelle Guion	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee,

Sadly, hunger is on the rise in Hawai‘i and therefore so is the number of households which rely on food banks. This measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai‘i to local communities for distribution. This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai‘i, benefiting our economy.

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Supporting locally sourced food benefits the local economy, helps us become less dependent on tourism and more resilient and secure as an island chain. Growing, processing, and distributing food locally creates and sustains community-based jobs. Direct marketing channels between farmers and consumers boosts local farmers' incomes.

Closer proximity relationships with our food will in turn also reduce carbon emissions related to shipping and packaging waste associated with importation from the United States.

Please support HB 2590 HD1 to help grow Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and bolster local food security. Mahalo for your consideration!

Danielle Guion, Makakilo, Hawaii

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 11:09:15 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee,

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Closer proximity relationships with our food will in turn also reduce carbon emissions related to shipping and packaging waste associated with importation from the United States.

Please support HB 2590 HD1 to help grow Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and bolster local food security. Mahalo for your consideration!

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 11:08:21 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Palma-Glennie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

i strongly support HB2590 HD1 and the logic behind it. too much food is wasted on farms, esepically when those farms are no longer working ones. (I was offered oranges by my neighbor becasue they were falling to the ground in droves and he's only actively selling the coffee he grows.)

please support this humane effort, community-building effort.

mahalo and sincerely,

janice palma-glennie

kailua-kona

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 10:12:28 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support.



March 11, 2024

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

RE: Testimony in support of HB 2590, HD1, Relating to Food Security

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

One in five Hawaii children struggle with hunger. At more than 55,000 children, they would fill the Stan Sheriff Center four times over and still overflow into the parking lot.

My name is Charla Teves. I am a college student and a life-long resident of Honolulu. This year, I was named one of five national Stephen J. Brady Scholars by the Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation. I am testifying in strong support of HB 2590, HD1.

When I was a senior in high school, two Honolulu radio DJs mocked a popular singer for her experiences with childhood hunger. Along with the rest of our community, I was shocked by their insensitivity. It opened my eyes to the intensive needs right here in my hometown. I am asking for your help to adopt policies that will eliminate hunger in our lifetime.

In 2021, I was one of 100 students nationwide awarded a Youth Service America and Sodexo Stop Hunger grant which enabled me to convene a Hawai'i virtual end hunger summit. Many state legislators, community leaders, students, and young adults convened to share their ideas such as supporting a statewide food policy and school gardens. I learned so much from the experience that I can no longer remain quiet. Since then, I have volunteered with many food drives and in other ways to help end hunger. Two weeks ago, I was awarded a Youth Service America grant to engage middle school students in Waianae in engaging in efforts to end hunger in Hawaii.

Based on these experiences, I know for sure that your support of food banks in Hawaii will make a difference.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 4:29:44 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gwen Rodrigues	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee,

Sadly, hunger is on the rise in Hawai‘i and therefore so is the number of households which rely on food banks. This measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai‘i to local communities for distribution. This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai‘i, benefiting our economy.

In addition to reducing hunger, food banks help to build communities by providing jobs and purchasing goods and services from local businesses, creating an economic stimulus in the areas they serve. Importantly, food donations also help low-income families free up money to meet other basic needs.

Supporting locally sourced food benefits the local economy, helps us become less dependent on tourism and more resilient and secure as an island chain. Growing, processing, and distributing food locally creates and sustains community-based jobs. Direct marketing channels between farmers and consumers boosts local farmers' incomes.

Closer proximity relationships with our food will in turn also reduce carbon emissions related to shipping and packaging waste associated with importation from the United States.

Please support HB 2590 HD1 to help grow Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and bolster local food security. Mahalo for your consideration!

Gwen Rodrigues, Hilo Hawaii

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 5:32:51 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT!

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 5:57:23 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nahelani Parsons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- Food insecurity remains a critical issue in Hawaii.
- Farm to food bank addresses these food insecurity needs while also investing in local agriculture—a win-win.
- Hawai‘i Foodbank’s Farm to Foodbank program, launched in March 2020, has been a tremendous success, providing healthy, locally-grown produce to those we serve.
- Hawai‘i Foodbank works with a network of more than 200 partner agencies, or emergency feeding organizations, to distribute food to the community. They distributed 19.5 million pounds of food, or food for 16.2 million meals, through these channels in 2023, including nearly 5 million pounds of fresh produce.

Testimony of Kiana Otsuka in Support

Committee on Agriculture and Environment

March 11, 2024 at 1:00PM

Conference Room 224

HB 2590 HD1

Relating to Food Security

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kiana Otsuka, and I am passionate about sustainable food systems and improving food equity in Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support of HB 2590 HD 1**, which appropriates funds for food bank purchases from local farmers, to be expended by the Department of Agriculture via requests for proposals.

Sadly, hunger is on the rise in Hawai'i and therefore so is the number of households which rely on food banks. This measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai'i to local communities for distribution. This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai'i, benefiting our economy.

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Mahalo,
Kiana Otsuka

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 6:36:54 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Garland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support.

Mahalo,

Emily

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 6:46:57 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Nihipali	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee,

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Closer proximity relationships with our food will in turn also reduce carbon emissions related to shipping and packaging waste associated with importation from the United States.

Please support HB 2590 HD1 to help grow Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector and bolster local food security. Mahalo for your consideration!

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 8:57:03 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Timothy Wiley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Timothy Wiley, and I am a student attending Leeward Community College at both their Pu'uloa and Wai'anae Moku campus locations. My time in community college has allowed me to observe the need for reform in our state's food system, witnessing the effect our current production of agriculture has on local communities. From my attendance at the Wai'anae Moku campus, I have observed a significantly higher reliance on the dependency of our school's food bank in this location compared to the Pearl City Pu'uloa campus. Speaking with my peers in community college, they all have stories of their need for food assistance to keep up with the state's high cost of living. Alternatively, they dream of the state becoming self-sufficient through growing their food, decreasing the need for imported foods, and supporting themselves economically and socially. Through the passage of SB 2590, addressing the various factors involved in creating a healthy food system that benefits local farmers, and therefore, people, will bring life to my community of the Wai'anae coast. To benefit the people of Hawai'i and my community in Wai'anae, I strongly urge the passage of SB 2590.

Mahalo, Timothy Wiley

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 9:00:30 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherri Thal	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2590,

Mahalo

HB-2590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 9:23:17 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Hatzistavrakis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Patti Hatzistavrakis, strongly support Bill 2590 HB RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY, to appropriate funds for food bank purchases from local farmers. This bill would have a positive impact on the local economy, by keeping funds within the Hawai'i farmers' community. It would also benefit those receiving assistance from the Food Banks, in the way of healthy, nutritious produce. In addition, it would positively impact our statewide drive toward more sustainable food sources. I strongly urge the committee to pass Bill 2590 HB RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure, and for the committee's consideration.