

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

Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 2771, H.D. 1
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

SENATOR MIKE GABBARD, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

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

Hearing Date: March 13, 2024

Room Number: Conference Room 224

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the Governor's Executive
2 Supplemental Budget request for fiscal implications, and the Department of Agriculture (DOA)
3 for implementation of the proposed appropriation.

4 **Department Position:** The DOH supports this measure.

5 **Department Testimony:** The DOH supports House Bill 2771, House Draft 1 (H.B. 2771, H.D. 1)
6 that appropriates funds to DOA for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food
7 Incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the
8 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

9 The DOH strongly supports the public health justification for Hawaii's DA BUX Double Up
10 Food Bucks Program (DA BUX) as one component of a comprehensive approach to improve the
11 availability and accessibility of healthy foods to improve health outcomes for our communities,
12 especially for people who face greater health and income disparities. The DA BUX allows a
13 dollar-for-dollar match on locally produced fresh fruits and vegetables for SNAP recipients.

1 Major health authorities including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Centers for
2 Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization recommend increasing fruit
3 and vegetable intake as a means to prevent chronic disease and improve overall health.^{i,ii,iii}
4 However, access to fresh produce for income-limited individuals can be difficult and contributes
5 to poorer diets and higher rates of chronic disease than middle class and wealthy individuals
6 with more options where they live, learn, work, play and gather.^{iv,v}

7 Hawaii has the highest cost of living in the nation with food costs that are twice the
8 national average.^{vi} In Hawaii, less than one in five adults reported eating five or more servings
9 of fruits and vegetable a day (2021 Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System). Adults
10 continue to show a decline in meeting dietary recommendations for a daily healthy plate of
11 whole fruits, a variety of vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins and dairy. Between 2019
12 and 2021, the percentage of adults who ate five or more servings of fruit and vegetables a day
13 decreased from 17 to 15 percent while the percentage of adults who ate one serving or no
14 servings increased from 7 to 8 percent.^{vii}

15 Nutrition incentive programs similar to the DA BUX are prevalent around the U.S. and
16 recognized as a “win-win-win” for farmers, families, and local businesses. Data from these
17 interventions have shown improvements in dietary behaviors, reduction in household hunger
18 and food insecurity, and increased sales of local produce by more than their dollar value
19 alone.^{viii,ix,x,xi}

20 The DOH urges the passage of H.B. 2771, H.D. 1 which will allow for continued funding
21 and the possible expansion of this extremely important program that provides much needed
22 support to Hawaii’s families, local farmers, and the economy.

23 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

ⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *2020 – 2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 9th Edition. December 2020.

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

ⁱⁱⁱ World Health Organization. *Healthy Diet Fact Sheet*. Web. Updated 29 September 2020.

^{iv} Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2021.

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

^{vi} United States Department of Agriculture: Official USDA Food Thrifty Plan Cost Estimates; July 2023.

^{vii} Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2021.

^{viii} Fitzgerald, Katherine. *Double Up in Farmers' Markets: The Consumer Experience*. Fair Food Network, 2015.

^{ix} Mann, J., et al. *Economics of healthy food incentives at Michigan farmers markets: Study highlights*. Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems, 2017.

^x Fitzgerald, Katherine. *Double Up Food Bucks and Hunger*. Fair Food Network, 2015.

^{xi} *Voices of Double Up in America*. Fair Food Network, June 2017.

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS
AND
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2024
1:02 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**HOUSE BILL 2771, HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2771, HD1. This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The Department expresses our **strong support**.

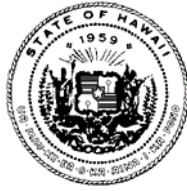
The DA BUX (double up SNAP) program is a win-win for the state. It stretches federal dollars to feed our food insecure communities and infuses these funds into our agriculture sector by incentivizing the purchase of locally produced food.

While the department has requested \$1,000,000 in its budget request, we support the current House Budget request of \$2,000,000 which would significantly leverage federal dollars. While the department expresses strong support of this measure, we prioritize the items in the administrations executive budget and legislative package.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

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

March 10, 2024

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

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

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2771 HD1 – RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 1:02 p.m.
Conference Room 224, State Capitol & Video Conference

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the measure and defers to the Department of Agriculture. DHS notes, that the executive budget (HB1800 HD1) includes a request for a similar appropriation; a recurring appropriation in the executive budget would ensure the program's continuity into the future.

PURPOSE: This bill appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1).

The Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems (HD1) amended this measure by:

- (1) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive dollar-for-dollar matching program helps SNAP participants double their purchasing power. Especially during this time of elevated food costs, continuing the program doubles the value of SNAP participants' benefits spent on Hawaii-

March 10, 2024

Page 2

grown fresh fruits and vegetables. This program also supports local farmers and keeps food dollars in the local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

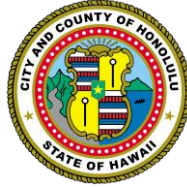
OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

KE KE'ENA LOLI ANIAU MĀLAMA 'ĀINA A ME KE OLA LOA

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 11th FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
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RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



MATTHEW GONSER, AICP, CFM
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR &
CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
PO'O HO'OKŌ & KAHU OLA LOA

BENJAMIN SULLIVAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR &
DEPUTY CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
HOPE PO'O & HOPE KAHU OLA LOA

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2024, 1:02 P.M.

STATE OF HAWAII
SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT AND
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2771 HD1,
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY**

BY,

MATTHEW GONSER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

Dear Chair Gabbard, Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committees:

The City and County of Honolulu ("City") Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR) supports HB2771 HD1, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program (DA BUX) and provides matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

In accordance with the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu¹, CCSR is working to increase local food security—including local food supply, production, transportation, and distribution, especially for low-income and frontline communities on O'ahu that have historically lacked access to healthy and affordable local food. HB2771 HD1 furthers the City's food security and sustainability goals by ensuring O'ahu families in need can access healthy food, supporting O'ahu's agricultural producers, and keeping money within the local food economy.

In addition to the state's leadership and support for DA BUX to date, through Covid-19 pandemic relief the City dedicated relief and recovery funding to household

¹ Revised Ordinances of Honolulu 2021 § 2-10.8,
https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/honolulu/latest/honolulu/0-0-0-50446#JD_2-10.8

Chair Gabbard and Chair San Buenaventura
HB2771, HD1
March 13, 2024
Page 2

feeding programs that also bolstered local farmers and producers during an economic downturn, while providing healthy local foods to families. The City continues to advance recovery grants with farmers and producers, and in support of the agricultural system more broadly. The City is excited to increasingly be a partner with the state in support of local agriculture including addressing the economic and food security needs of farmers and households.

HB2771 HD1 also aligns with the City's community-driven "O'ahu Resilience Strategy," which specifically identifies the need to promote new agricultural models for economic and food security.² Continued and sustained investment in DA BUX is both a short-term lifeline that addresses household food insecurity and a long-term investment that supports local producers and contributes to a more resilient food economy on O'ahu. DA BUX is a "triple win" for Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2771 HD1.

² *Ola O'ahu Resilience Strategy*, Action 10, Promote New Agricultural Models for Economic and Food Security, https://www.resilientoahu.org/s/Ola_Oahu_Resilience_Strategy-lfrm.pdf

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
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TO: Representative Mike Gabbard, Chair
Representative Herbert M. "Tim" Richards III, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Representative Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Committee on Health and Human Services

Representative Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Representative Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor
Rogerene Arce, Director of Agriculture

DATE: March 12, 2024

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB2771, RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure. The Act appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program. We **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

1. This bill doubles the purchasing power of a SNAP dollar when used to buy Hawai'i grown produce, thus supporting our agricultural industry.
2. This bill supports local farmers and producers by increasing the customer base and incentivizing consumers to keep dollars in our local community.
3. This bill dedicates funding to the state which can ultimately be matched by federal funding. This funding is small but necessary to begin to address food and nutrition security for Hawai'i.

For the foregoing reasons, we **SUPPORT** this measure.



SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Wednesday, March 13, 2024 – 1:02 p.m.
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

HB 2771 HD1 - RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

SUPPORT

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

The Local Food Coalition **SUPPORTS** HB 2771 HD1, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program, also known as DA BUX supports healthy eating habits by allowing SNAP-eligible recipients to double their purchasing power to buy fresh fruits and vegetables. In addition to helping local families stretch their purchasing power, this program also leverages federal funding and supports our local farmers.

We are hopeful that the State can consider a \$2 million appropriation for the DA BUX program. A \$2 million investment by the State would receive a direct match of \$2 million in federal funding. We look forward to sustained funding to support our local families and farmers.

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 2771 HD1.

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



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE & THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Wednesday, March 13, 2024 — 1:02 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative strongly supports HB 2771 HD1, Relating to Food Security.

Dear Chair Gabbard, Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committees:

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

Ulupono strongly supports HB 2771 HD1, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and provides matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Ulupono strongly supports the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program within the DOA because of the program's transformative effects on community hunger and health, local agriculture, and overall economic vitality. At the heart of this program is the highly impactful "DA BUX" Double Up Food Bucks Program, ran statewide by The Food Basket and representing a triple-win solution for our communities. Through the program, SNAP-eligible participants are empowered to double their purchasing power toward healthy, locally grown fruits and vegetables, concurrently benefitting local farmers. Importantly, these dollars stay within our state, which benefits our local economy.

Furthermore, this program's leveraging of federal funding at a 1:1 match demonstrates a prudent approach to maximizing resources for optimal impact.

The impact is clear: Hawai'i residents have faced a 26% increase in food prices since January 2020. Through DA BUX, \$10 of SNAP benefits transforms into \$20 of Hawai'i-grown produce for individuals and families who most need it (Last year, 160,000 Hawai'i residents received SNAP assistance).

The impact is far reaching for local farmers: Since 2020, DA BUX purchases have benefitted more than 470 farm producers and eight distributors through farm product sales. This facilitates the expansion of markets for local ag producers.

The impact is growing: Local produce sales to SNAP shoppers at participating farm direct retailers increased an average of 531% from 2019 to 2021. These numbers substantiate the need to support our local community as food insecurity continues to increase.

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i

Additionally, DA BUX directly supports the Maui community recovery from the August 2023 wildfires.

- Prior to the wildfires, Maui County experienced the largest increase in poverty in the state as the percentage of households in Maui County living below the federal poverty line rose from 6% in 2018 to 16% in 2022.¹ Approximately 11% of Maui County residents face food insecurity, resulting in \$17 million in annual costs to address food insecurity and hunger in the county, based on data from Feeding America.²
- As of August 2023, there were 14,540 SNAP participants or 7,921 SNAP households on Maui Island. DA BUX alleviates food insecurity by reducing hunger and improving the overall well-being of Maui families by doubling their purchase power for fresh locally produced fruits and vegetables at 13 DA BUX retail locations across Maui Island, including grocers, food hubs, and farmers markets.
- DA BUX also expands the customer base of Maui Island producers, many of whom struggled with market closures following the wildfires.³ There are currently 72 Maui farmers/producers that are supported by the program with increased sales and farm profits. Food sales driven by the program on Maui Island has increased from \$97,661 in 2020 to \$768,225 projected in 2023 (based on the latest data)—nearly a 700% increase.

We are hopeful the State will consider a \$2 million appropriation, per year, for the DOA program to support DA BUX. A \$2 million investment by the State would receive a direct match of \$2 million in federal funding. Furthermore, our analysis shows that, with that level of state funding in place, the potential economic impact created by DA BUX in Hawai'i reaches nearly \$13 million.

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

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Attachment

¹ <https://www.mauinews.com/news/local-news/2022/12/52-of-maui-county-homes-live-below-alice-threshold/>

² <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2021/overall/hawaii/county/maui>

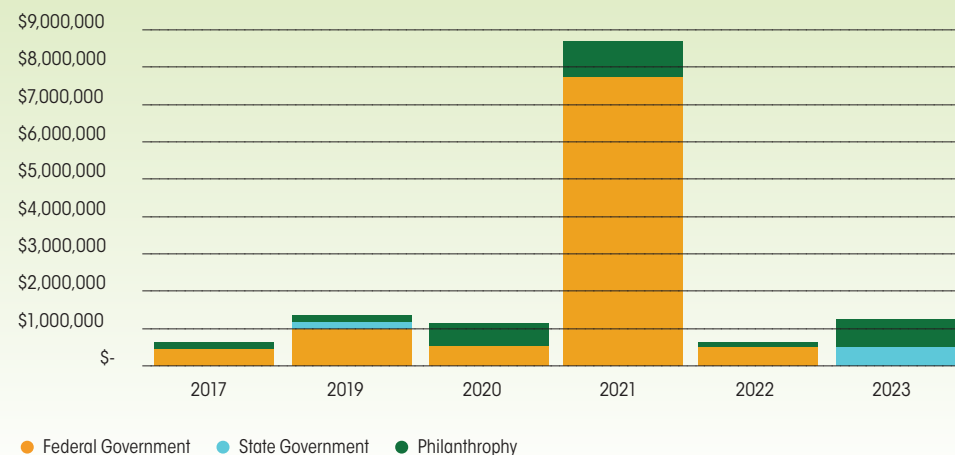
³ 80% of farmers lost their markets and half of them lost between 75% and 100% of their customers, based on a post-fire survey conducted by Hawai'i Farmers Union United.

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2023/11/hawaiis-food-banks-need-far-more-funding-before-the-next-disaster/>

Opportunity to Expand a Proven, Highly Impactful Program

DA BUX FUNDING BY SOURCE (2017 - 2023)

State funds have historically represented just 4% of total funding to DA BUX



\$2 MILLION IN STATE FUNDING HAS A POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF \$12.8 MILLION

Historically, the DA BUX program has been primarily funded by federal grants and philanthropic/private funding (representing almost all of total program funds). Since its inception, DA BUX has received **\$13.7 MILLION** in funding. The State funding of \$594,000 represents **4%** of total funding to the program to date.

Secure and sustained State funding for DA BUX program is the key to federal and philanthropic funding matches. An appropriation of \$2 million in State funds can generate significant leverage:

- Stimulate economic activity of about \$13 million (6.4x State funding) while increasing local food production for local consumption.
- \$2 million in State funds can be matched by \$2 million in federal dollars from a Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) grant, as well as \$4 million from SNAP purchases, resulting in \$8 million going toward local food purchases and supporting local farmers.
- Given the impact achieved and successful track record, State funding will be a worthwhile investment and position the DA BUX program for future federal funding.
- Other states have recognized the benefit and impact of Double Up Food Bucks programs by investing their state funds in expanding and sustaining their programs. There are 24 states that have invested state funds in their Double Up Food Bucks programs, totaling approximately \$158 million from 2015 through 2024.

HAWAII BY THE NUMBERS

16TH HIGHEST POVERTY RATE (10.0% OF THE POPULATION LIVING AT OR BELOW THE POVERTY LINE)

22X INCREASE IN THE ANNUAL TOTAL OF DA BUX DISCOUNTS ISSUED TO SNAP SHOPPERS

DA BUX continues to be an amazing way to connect our farm directly to the consumers who need it most. Being able to offer the best quality fresh locally grown food in a very affordable way removes a big hurdle for people ... [DA BUX] helps to make feeding them and their families easy.

This program helps to support local agriculture so we can more easily compete with imported food and gives us farmers a big incentive to produce more fruits and vegetables to satisfy the increased demand for our goods."

– Ryan Earehart, Farm Owner, Oko'a Farms (Maui)



'DA BUX' Double Up Food Bucks Provides a Triple-Win



HOW 'DA BUX' WORKS

The DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks program offers each Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participant a DA BUX Access Card or voucher to be used at point of sale to double their purchasing power when they buy locally grown fruits and vegetables — \$10 of SNAP benefits is worth \$20 of Hawai'i grown produce. Thus, each \$1 funded into the program provides \$2 worth of local food purchases.

THE CHALLENGE

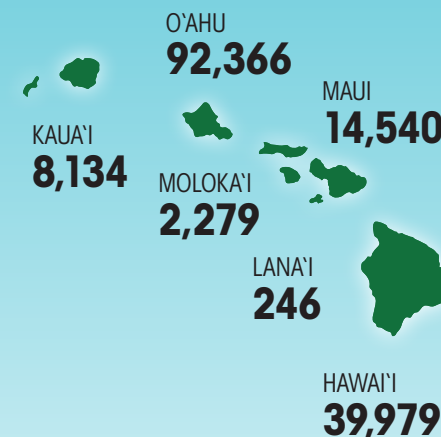
In fall 2023, the program was denied federal funding primarily due to a lack of a sustained State funding. Based on the projected spend down rate, current funding of the DA BUX program will only last through August 2024. Hawai'i SNAP beneficiaries have been hit with both increasing food costs and decreasing SNAP benefits. This situation creates a significant need to help feed low-income families AND support local agricultural food producers.

THE OPPORTUNITY

DA BUX is a triple-win solution because it doubles the purchasing power of low-income SNAP families for healthy, Hawai'i-grown produce; it supports local farmers with an increased customer base; and it benefits the entire island community by keeping dollars in the local economy. **AN APPROPRIATION OF \$2 MILLION IN STATE FUNDS WILL BRING IN ADDITIONAL FEDERAL FUNDS TO SUSTAIN, EXPAND AND EXTEND THE STATEWIDE DA BUX DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS PROGRAM.** Given the broad benefits of DA BUX for our state, it is imperative to secure sustained funding for DA BUX and ensure it is a staple service providing economic relief to SNAP households and directly supporting local agricultural food producers across the islands.



ISLAND BREAKDOWN OF SNAP PARTICIPANTS (as of August 2023)



HAWAII BY THE NUMBERS

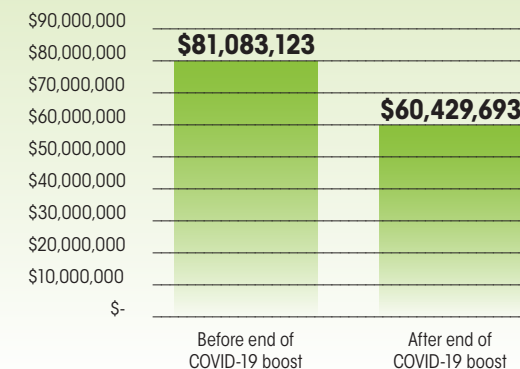
90% IMPORTED FOOD

91% HIGHER FOOD COSTS

26% INCREASE IN FOOD PRICES SINCE JANUARY 2020

With the highest cost of living in the nation, Hawai'i faces growing food costs and food insecurity. About 160,000 residents received SNAP assistance 2023.

THE END OF PANDEMIC-ERA FUNDING IN 2023 HAS DECREASED BENEFITS FOR HAWAII SNAP PARTICIPANTS BY 25%



State Support is Key to Federal and Philanthropic Funding



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

	State Investment of \$2M	
State Funding	\$ 2,000,000	a
Federal GusNIP Grant	\$ 2,000,000	b
Total Funding for DA BUX Discounts	\$ 4,000,000	c = a+b
Economic Multiplier on DA BUX Discounts ¹	1.7	d
Potential Economic Impact of DA BUX Discounts	\$ 6,798,308	e = c*d
<hr/>		
Federal SNAP Benefits	\$ 4,000,000	f = c
Economic Multiplier on SNAP Benefits ²	1.5	g
Potential Economic Impact of SNAP Benefits	\$ 6,000,000	h = f*g
<hr/>		
Total Funding for SNAP & DA BUX	\$ 8,000,000	i = c+f
Potential Economic Impact	\$12,798,308	j = e+h
Economic Impact Multiplier of State Funding	6.4	k = j/a

¹ Based on the "The Economic Contributions of Healthy Food Incentives" report, prepared by Colorado State University, and the percentage of 2021 DA BUX discounts issued via farm-direct outlets and food retailers.

² Based on the "The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Economy: New Estimates of the SNAP Multiplier" report, prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service.



For over a century, KTA Super Stores has strived to serve as an essential source for locally grown produce for our Hawai'i Island community. DA BUX provides us the opportunity to support our local growers.

Since launching DA BUX in Sept 2017, we have seen transactions associated with the DA BUX program more than quadruple at our seven store locations. We see this as positive sign that DA BUX is motivating families to purchase and consume more healthy fruits and vegetables and that this increased demand will drive increases in agricultural production for the state. //

– Toby Taniguchi, President, KTA Super Stores (Hawai'i Island)



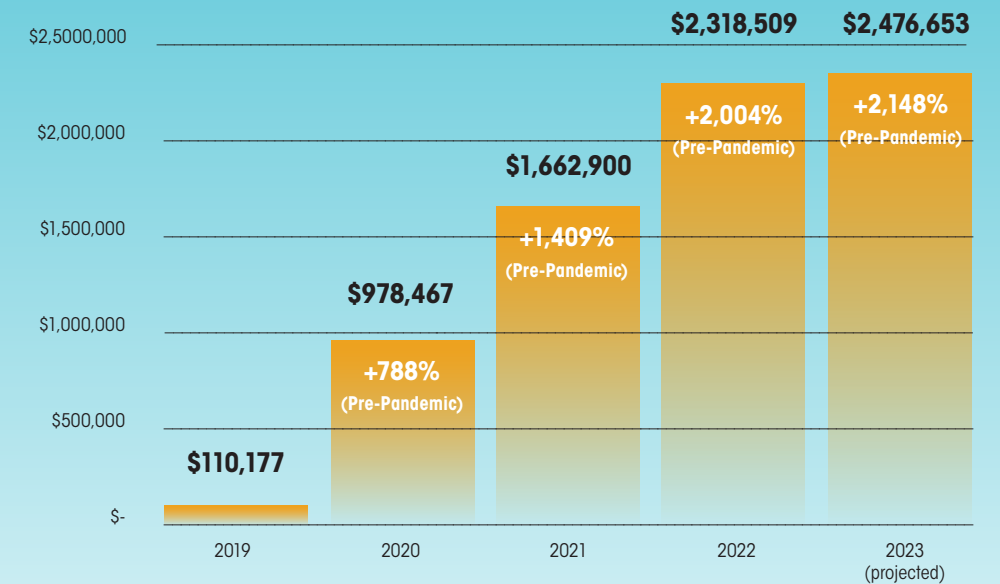
I really love this program because I am diabetic and need fresh veggies and fruits to help keep me healthy.

Mahalo for this amazing program. Also, DA BUX helps me with my kids too. They love looking for the DA BUX label on produce and can choose what they want. They love to eat! Carrots, cabbage and cucumbers are their faves as well as local apple bananas to name a few. //

– Dawn Marquez, SNAP Shopper, Waimānalo (O'ahu)

ANNUAL DA BUX DISCOUNTS ISSUED TO SNAP SHOPPERS

Participation has steadily increased in Hawai'i



- From 2020 through 2021, DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors by incentivizing the sale of their farm products sold at participating farm direct retailers.
- In January 2022, local produce sales to SNAP shoppers at participating farm direct retailers increased an average of 531% from 2019.
- Since the pandemic, DA BUX discounts have increased by 2,148%, totaling more than \$2.4 million.

LOCAL FOOD SALES DRIVEN BY SNAP DA BUX*

Local food sales driven by DA BUX has also steadily increased, especially on Maui

Projected growth in local food sales driven by DA BUX decreased due to a lack of sustained State funding

County	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Annualized)
Honolulu	\$ -	\$ 929,217	\$ 1,659,101	\$ 2,443,673	\$ 2,499,684
% Increase	-	100%	79%	47%	2%
Hawai'i	\$ 220,354	\$ 842,483	\$ 1,125,573	\$ 1,238,329	\$ 1,295,901
% Increase	-	282%	34%	10%	5%
Kaua'i	\$ -	\$ 87,574	\$ 191,309	\$ 224,094	\$ 229,990
% Increase	-	100%	118%	17%	3%
Maui	\$ -	\$ 97,661	\$ 349,817	\$ 730,922	\$ 927,732
% Increase	-	100%	258%	109%	27%
Statewide Total	\$ 220,354	\$ 1,956,934	\$ 3,325,800	\$ 4,637,018	\$ 4,953,307

*50% of the sales include DA BUX incentives and the remaining 50% is comprised of SNAP



'DA BUX' ensures access to essential food resources during challenging times

DA BUX is a triple-win solution that helps low-income families, supports farmers, and benefits the entire community by keeping dollars local. This is especially impactful on Maui, where the August 2023 wildfires severely disrupted lives and livelihoods across the island.

A STATE INVESTMENT OF \$2 MILLION WILL HELP FAMILIES AND FARMERS STRUGGLING IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE WILDFIRES AS THEY WORK THEIR WAY THROUGH RECOVERY.

THE CHALLENGE

- 26% of households considered financial recovery to be their greatest need, according to the Hawai'i State Department of Health's Maui Wildfires Public Health Rapid Needs Assessment preliminary report.¹
- Prior to the wildfires, Maui County experienced the largest increase in poverty in the state as the percentage of households in Maui County living below the federal poverty line rose from 6% in 2018 to 16% in 2022.²
- Approximately 11% of Maui County residents face food insecurity, resulting in \$17 million in annual costs to address food insecurity and hunger in the county, based on data from Feeding America.³

THE OPPORTUNITY

- DA BUX provides economic relief to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants by doubling their purchasing power toward local produce. As of August 2023, there were 14,540 SNAP participants or 7,921 SNAP households on Maui Island.
- DA BUX improves access to affordable and healthy Hawai'i-grown produce. There are 13 DA BUX retail locations across Maui Island including grocers, food hubs, and farmers markets.
- DA BUX alleviates food insecurity by reducing hunger and improving the overall well-being of Maui families.

¹ <https://health.hawaii.gov/news/files/2023/10/Maui-Wildfire-RNA-Preliminary-Report.pdf>

² <https://www.mauinews.com/news/local-news/2022/12/52-of-maui-county-homes-live-below-alice-threshold/>

³ <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2021/overall/hawaii/county/maui>



INCREASE FOOD ACCESS FOR MAUI RESIDENTS

“ I’ve been using SNAP this year for about five months. DA BUX is really giving a chance for people to come out and buy from the local farmers and to buy fresh produce that maybe they wouldn’t even have eaten before. DA BUX is good for families. It’s good for Hawai’i. It’s good for me.”

– Stacy Richards, SNAP shopper at Hana Farmers Market (Maui)





STIMULATE ECONOMIC RECOVERY FOR MAUI FARMERS

THE CHALLENGE

- Due to the wildfire’s impact on tourism, many farmers and ranchers have lost key markets such as hotels and restaurants.
- 80% of farmers lost their markets and half of them lost between 75% and 100% of their customers, based on a post-fire survey conducted by Hawai’i Farmers Union United.⁴

THE OPPORTUNITY

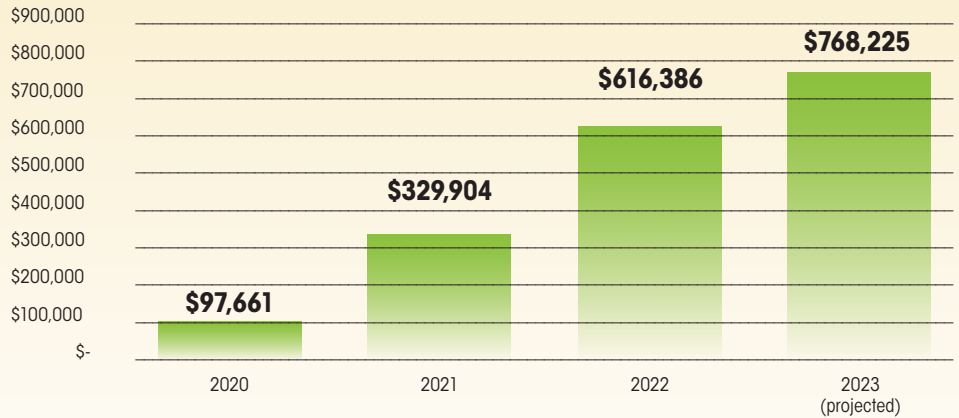
- DA BUX expands the customer base of Maui Island producers. There are currently 72 farmers/producers that are supported by the program.
- DA BUX supports Maui Island farmers and ranchers in continuing to operate by increasing sales and farm profits. Local food sales driven by the program on Maui Island has increased from \$97,661 in 2020 to \$768,225 projected in 2023, nearly a 700% increase.

⁴ <https://www.civilbeat.org/2023/11/hawaiis-food-banks-need-far-more-funding-before-the-next-disaster/>



MAUI ISLAND: LOCAL FOOD SALES DRIVEN BY SNAP DA BUX

(Annual Sales)



“ DA BUX continues to be an amazing way to connect our farm directly to the consumers who need it most. Being able to offer the best quality fresh locally grown food in a very affordable way removes a big hurdle for people.”

– Ryan Earehart, Farm Owner, Oko’a Farms (Maui)



THE FOOD BASKET
HAWAII ISLAND’S FOOD BANK

13 DA BUX RETAIL LOCATIONS ACROSS MAUI ISLAND





HIPHI Board

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Medical-Legal Partnership
For Children in Hawai'i

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HMSA

JoAnn Tsark, MPH

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

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &
Evaluation

Community Health
Worker Initiatives

COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free
Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging
& Community Living

Public Health Workforce
Development

Date: February 20, 2024

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

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

Re: Strong Support for HB2771 HD1, Relating to Food Security

Hrg: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 1:02 PM

The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalitionⁱ, a program of the Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI), is in **Strong Support of HB2771 HD1**, which provides funding to the Department of Agriculture for the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program.

DA BUX is a triple win for families, farmers, and the local economy.

The Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive program, or DA BUX, provides a 50% discount on Hawai'i-grown produce for SNAP recipients. Incentivizing SNAP dollars for local fruits and vegetables stretches food dollars for families, especially with increasing food costs. Through this program, SNAP participants can bring home healthy, local food; local farmers gain new customers and increase income; and more money goes into and grows our local - a "triple win."

The demand for DA BUX has risen significantly over the last several years.

Year after year, this program has significantly grown its impact. Local food sales continue to increase: 2019 saw \$220,354 in sales; by December 2023, local food sales through DA BUX were projected to be \$4.7Mⁱⁱ. That money has brought healthy foods to homes while positively impacting our local economy.

DA BUX provides a strong return on investment.

SNAP is proven to stimulate the economy by being an economic multiplier. Every SNAP dollar spent generates an estimated \$1.54 in economic activityⁱⁱⁱ. These dollars ripple out throughout the supply chain, supporting farmers, retailers, and food distributor employees; these people, in turn, spend their dollars to help support economic activity further and so on. With **\$2M from the state**, the program becomes

eligible for an additional \$2M in federal matching funds from the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive (GusNIP) Program. State funding helps to ensure sustainable funding for DA BUX.

A positive impact on health and food.

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

A \$2 million investment can help expand the program to more stores.

The DA BUX program has seen significant growth. It started with KTA in Hawai'i County and is now accessible statewide through Times, KTA, Foodland, and participating farmers' markets. These stores are locally-based and operated, ensuring economic amplification.

The \$2M state investment will increase the program's reach and participation by engaging more people through educational campaigns in areas where there has been stalled growth, as well as provide the ability to engage more retail outlets that were unable to participate due to limited funding.

DA BUX is a triple win for farmers, families, and the local economy. This investment also supports health. We strongly support this measure and respectfully ask you to **pass HB2771 HD1**.

Mahalo,



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

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

ⁱⁱ <https://dabux.org/for-advocates>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/93529/err-265.pdf?v=958.5>

^{iv} <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4584410/>



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

March 11, 2024

Subject: **Testimony in Strong Support of HB2771, HD1 Relating to Food Security**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair Richards, Vice Chair Aquino, and members of the Senate AEN & HHS Committees,

KRISTIN FROST ALBRECHT

I'm writing in strong support of HB2771, HD1 that will appropriate funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawaii healthy food incentive program, otherwise known as "DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks" or "DA BUX." I have managed the day-to-day operations of the DA BUX program since its launch in 2017 at KTA Super Stores. As a local Hilo girl getting to return home from Texas A&M University, with a Masters of Agribusiness degree in hand, I was proud and honored to have had the opportunity to apply my education towards launching a program that has had such far-reaching impacts for Hawai'i's farmers, food retailers and low-income SNAP-EBT beneficiaries. To date over 530 farmers and exactly 59 retailers are benefiting from DA BUX. And 83% of SNAP households in the state live within shopping distance of a participating retailer.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ANN EBESUNO
BOARD CHAIR

MARK KRZYZANOWSKI
VICE-CHAIR

The survival of DA BUX is completely dependent on funding as our main program activity involves reimbursing participating retailers for discounts issued for SNAP purchases of Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables. This is the first time DA BUX has had less than 12 months of funding, which has forced us to set an expiration date of Aug 31, 2024.

DENNIS LIN
TREASURER

JULIA ZEE
SECRETARY

The program's best chance for survival is the State Legislature's support of a \$2 million recurring line item in the Department of Agriculture's operating budget. We've seen examples of other states, such as Oklahoma, Colorado, Washington, and Illinois, successfully being awarded federal GusNIP grants to continue their SNAP nutrition incentive programs after receiving State appropriations.

STEPHEN UEDA

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA COLLINS

State funding will be leveraged to request matching federal funds from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) in the 2024 funding cycle; applications are due May 14. Multi-year State funding has the potential to unlock these federal GusNIP dollars, as the GusNIP requires funding requests to include documentation of 100% non-federal match as well as a "sustainable funding plan." State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide a positive, lasting impact economically, for farmers, and for the well-being of individuals across the state.

MAURICE MESSINA

CASEY HALPERN

BRANDON LEE

Chelsea Takahashi
Director of Healthy Food Access Initiatives

WWW.HAWAIIFOODBASKET.ORG

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808-933-6030 Phone | 808-934-0701 Fax

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Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

March 13, 2024

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

**TESTIMONY ON HB 2771, HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY**

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:02 PM

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

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the 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 2771, HD1, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and provides matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

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

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

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

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



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

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Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Agriculture and Environment and Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 13, 2024
TIME: 1:02pm
PLACE: Room 224

RE: HB2771 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.

Chairs, Vice Chairs, Members of the Committees,

HFIA is in strong support of this measure. The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program, also know as Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX, is a way combat food insecurity, support healthy eating, and support Hawaii's agricultural sector. This is also an opportunity to bring Federal funds into our local food systems, funds invested into DA BUX are matched by Federal funds.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis, food insecurity in our state soared to unprecedented levels, at the same time the local agricultural sector suffered disproportionate economic losses. The Double Up Food Bucks program has been a vital tool to increase the produce buying power of Hawaii consumers who use the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and help grow our local agricultural sector. Continuing to fund this important program will ensure that the many benefits continue.

Fruits, vegetables, and healthy proteins tend to be more expensive per calorie than less healthy foods, which makes eating healthy a challenge for those with limited food budgets. Doubling the purchasing power for SNAP users makes it easier to choose fruits, vegetables, and healthy proteins when shopping. Data has shown that families that use the Double Up

Food Bucks Program eat more fruits and vegetables, a greater variety of fruits and vegetables, and fewer unhealthy foods. Getting more fruits and vegetables for each SNAP dollar also means that low-income families will have more in their budget to spend on things like housing and healthcare.

By prioritizing locally grown agricultural products this program also helps Hawaii farmers and encourages retailers to stock Hawaii grown produce and protein. This helps promote a resilient food economy where local farmers are selling to local stores that sell to local customers.

This Double Up Food Bucks program also brings vital funds into our state. The program is supported by GusNIP grants and other funding sources. A commitment from the State of \$2 million into DA BUX brings an additional \$2 million in funding into the State. This is an investment that will help bring even more funding into Hawaii's food systems. Each dollar spent in this program goes into Hawaii's agricultural sector and circulates from there into the larger local economy. This is a win for SNAP users, a win for Hawaii farmers, a win for Hawaii retailers, and a win for Hawaii's economy.

We urge you to vote yes on this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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State President

Anabella Bruch
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Kohala, Hawaii

Odysseus Yacalis
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Maui

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Molokai

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Lana'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kauai

Aloha Chairs Gabbard & San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Richards & Aquino, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment & Health and Human Services 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 HB2771.**

The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program has been instrumental in enabling SNAP beneficiaries to access more fresh, locally-grown produce. By providing matching funds to SNAP participants, this program not only increases their buying power but also encourages healthier food choices. This has resulted in the increased purchasing of nutrient-rich fruits, vegetables, and other agricultural products from our hardworking farmers.

The financial support provided to SNAP beneficiaries will not only help families put food on the table but also contribute to the profitability and vitality of our local farms. Furthermore, funding for this program is critical to attain federal funding matches. The state needs to ensure that this critical support for local families, and subsidy for local farmers, is fully funded and continues to deliver critical relief to both parties.

This program has proven to be a win-win for our farmers and SNAP beneficiaries, and its continuation will foster a healthier, more sustainable future for the people of Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for H.B. 2771 – Relating to Food Security
Senate Committees on Agriculture & Environment and Health & Human Services
Wednesday March 13, 2024, at 1:02PM

Dear Chairs Gabbard and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Richards and Aquino, and members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of H.B. 2771** which would appropriate funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Hawai'i Appleseed is committed to a more socially and economically just Hawai'i, where everyone has genuine opportunities to achieve economic security and fulfill their potential. The strengthening of SNAP through incentive programs is a critical evidence-based approach to achieving this vision. **Serving more than 130,000 residents and generating \$630 million annually in our state's local economy, SNAP is an economic lifeline for Hawai'i's struggling households.**

2023 brought several devastating cuts to SNAP benefits in Hawai'i:

- 1) The end of the SNAP emergency allotments left SNAP participants facing the largest SNAP benefit cliff in history. The average household lost \$82 in monthly benefits and some of our most vulnerable households like those with kupuna lost up to \$238.¹
- 2) The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) updated its estimates of how much it costs the average family to buy food in each U.S. state and territory. This data is used to set the maximum amount of SNAP EBT benefits a household can receive for groceries each month. While every other state in the nation saw an increase in their monthly SNAP benefits, Hawai'i received a 20 percent drop in its adjustment (spread over the next five years) because of gaps in Hawai'i-specific food price data available to the USDA. While local advocates and the federal delegation are working hard to inform the federal government on how to remedy this issue, the benefits cut will stay in place until federal regulations are able to be changed.

Already food insecure households are seeing hundreds of dollars less in benefits while Hawai'i residents continue to experience the highest cost of groceries in the nation.

SNAP incentives like those proposed in H.B. 2771 help increase SNAP participants' purchasing power by providing an additional subsidy for SNAP users when they purchase local fruits and vegetables. The federal program that funds this incentive requires a one-to-one match, meaning that every dollar the state invests will be matched by federal funding. Therefore, a \$2 million investment by the state would be doubled with matching federal funds. Factoring in the \$2.10 multiplier would ultimately result in more than \$8M in local economic impact.² Passing this bill would be an impact investment for the State, channeling much-needed capital into local businesses and farms.

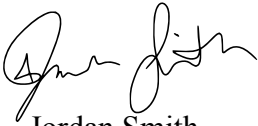
¹ [Hunger Cliff 2023: HAWAII](#)

² For each program dollar issues for local produce incentives generate \$2.10 in Hawai'i's economy.

Hawai‘i’s existing SNAP incentive program, known as [DA BUX](#), has already been enormously successful and popular among SNAP users, retailers, and farmers alike. According to the latest program outcomes report, DA BUX has already directly supported 470 farm producers, eight distributors, and increased local produce sales by 531% at farm-direct retailers.

This small investment is a win-win-win for Hawai‘i’s families, farmers, and local economy. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of H.B. 2771.

Mahalo,



Jordan Smith
Senior Policy Analyst
Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice



2024 Network Members

City and County of Honolulu
County of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Appleseed
Hawai'i Children's Action
Network
Hawai'i Department of
Agriculture
Hawai'i Food Bank
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Kōkua Kalihi Valley
Comprehensive Health Center
Lanakila Pacific
Mālama Kaua'i
Maui Nui Food Alliance
Parents and Children Together
Supersistence
The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i
Island's Food Bank
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i
Together
UH Center for Indigenous
Innovation/ Health Equity
Wai'anae Coast
Comprehensive Health Center

Hawaiihungeraction.org

Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Health and Human Services

March 13, 2024, 1:00PM

RE: SUPPORT FOR SB 2771, RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs, and members of the committees,

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, appreciates the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2771**. This bill would provide matching funds to support the successful Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program (better known as DA BUX), which provides a 50% discount on locally-grown fruits and vegetables for Hawai'i customers who use the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

SNAP is an economic lifeline for low-income Hawai'i residents, providing around \$60 million per month in federal dollars to purchase groceries to nearly 100,000 Hawai'i families. While this is a vital asset for Hawai'i's economy, the individual monthly allotment is often still not enough to afford fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables, which can be more expensive than imported or packaged foods. This results in most of these dollars leaving the islands—right into the pockets of major mainland food companies, rather than getting recirculated locally into our local agriculture industry.

DA BUX is an elegant and cost-effective solution. By offering a 50% discount on locally-grown produce to SNAP shoppers, the program channels more of these federal stimulus monies to our local farms and food businesses. In fact, to date, DA BUX has directly supported over 530 local farms. Local food hubs have reported a 186% increase in local

produce sales to SNAP shoppers. And the program is projected to directly result in nearly \$5 million annually (2023) in local produce sales.

DA BUX has been thus far funded almost entirely by a federal (USDA) grant program known as GusNIP, matched with philanthropic donations and in-kind support from local nonprofit organizations. While this has worked for several years, the program is in grave danger of losing its federal match unless we can prove dedicated annual match funding. This legislation would provide not just funding, but also assurance to the USDA that Hawai'i is committed to seeing this program succeed well into the future. The \$2 million proposed in this bill would be matched with another \$2 million in federal dollars, and this will allow the program to expand to even more retailers and communities across the islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. DA BUX is a rare opportunity that benefits everyone: families, farmers, and the business community. We appreciate your consideration and encourage you to pass HB 2771.



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAI'I

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

MARCH 13, 2024

HB 2771 HD1

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports HB2771 HD 1, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

Pursuant to the "Economic Justice and Labor" section of the official Democratic Party of Hawai'i platform, the party "supports government investments of tax revenue in community development, government anti-poverty programs, and the transition to a sustainable, green economy."

Investment in the healthy food incentive program is not only the right thing to do, it makes economic sense. As is stated in the bill, a \$2,000,000 investment by the State in this program would allow for a federal funding match that will contribute at least \$12,800,000 to the local economy annually, supporting families, farmers, and the local economy. This investment will yield an ROI of 540%!

Leveraging federal dollars to boost the health and economy of our island home by approving this bill will also send a signal to the USDA that we are committed to making this program succeed.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kris Coffield

Co-Chair, Legislative Committee

(808) 679-7454

kriscoffield@gmail.com

Abby Simmons

Co-Chair, Legislative Committee

(808) 352-6818

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Testimony to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 1:02PM

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

RE: HB 2771 HD1 Relating to Food Security

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committees:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii Supports ("The Chamber") **supports HB2771 HD1**, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawaii healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

Initiatives such as the DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks Program, provide a dollar-for-dollar match to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program beneficiaries who purchase Hawaii grown fruits and vegetables at participating food retailers. The Chamber supports legislation that benefits the local community and our quality of life. Hawaii's high cost of living is a challenge identified by the Chamber's 2030 Blueprint Hawaii strategic plan to improve economic competitiveness. Initiatives like DA BUX provides a "triple win" for local families, farmers, and Hawaii's economic climate.

This measure, if passed, would not only expand critical access to quality nutrition for local families, but also open significant avenues for growth in progress towards greater food self-sufficiency in Hawaii. This measure would also provide key support that would empower local farmers and encourage the sustained growth of Hawaii's agricultural industries.

It's important to note that SNAP does not just benefit SNAP recipients. By injecting consistent and predictable Federal and state funds into our local food systems SNAP helps keep the whole food system stable for all consumers as well as local providers. Support for increased access to SNAP is support for Hawaii's entire food system including local farmers, diversification of our economy, local food and beverage producers and manufacturers, local retailers, and all Hawaii customers.

The Chamber is in alignment with the incentives and positive impacts that come with the passage of this measure. The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



**Testimony to the Senate Joint Committee on Agriculture and Environment and Health
and Human Services
Wednesday, March 13, 2024; 1:02 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 224
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 2771, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Chair Gabbard, Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 2771, House Draft 1, RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2024-2025, to be expended by the Department of Agriculture, for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

This bill would take effect on July 1, 3000.

SNAP, formally known as the "Food Stamps Program", is the largest federal food assistance program that is currently in operation. It provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people. SNAP provided assistance to approximately 40 million persons in 2018, at an expenditure of \$57.1 billion. Approximately 9.2% of American households received SNAP benefits at some point during 2017, with approximately 16.7 of all children living in households receiving SNAP benefits.

Testimony on House Bill No. 2771, House Draft 1
Wednesday, March 13, 2024; 1:02 p.m.
Page 2

Founded during the height of the Great Depression, SNAP is the cornerstone of our national social safety net. It is intended to prevent mass starvation precipitated from unemployment and homelessness. The program was also seen as a way of helping the poor while boosting the economy and ensuring that America's farmers would obtain a fair price for their labors by allowing government to purchase and distribute excess goods in time of crisis.

The COVID-19 Pandemic demonstrated how food scarcity and poverty threatened the health and welfare of our citizens in times of dire crisis. With so many people unemployed, entire families struggled to put food on the table on a consistent basis. Lines at the food bank and food drives stretched for miles and people waited for hours to receive surplus food.

The HPCA has strongly endorsed this Program in previous years and we continue to urge your support. Additional SNAP benefits for a recipient can mean the difference between having to decide whether someone's last amount of cash will go for food or rent or medications or other necessities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



To: The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)
and
The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 1:02pm

In strong support of HB2771 HD1

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

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **strongly supports HB2771 HD1.**

The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program helps keep federal funding circulating in the local economy and incentivizes the use of SNAP benefits for the purchase of fresh local produce. HB2771 HD1 will help low-income families bring home more healthy food, area farmers gain new customers and make more money, and more food dollars stay in the local economy.

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

Please pass HB2771 HD1 so that we can reap all these benefits!

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

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 10:18:17 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zonta Club of Hilo c/o Advocacy Chair	Testifying for Zonta Club of Hilo	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Zonta Club of Hilo supports HB 2771, HD1 Relating To Food Security, a program more commonly known as Da Bux Program. The state funding enhances federal benefits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The program has proven that it provides more fresh fruits and vegetables to economically challenged women, keiki and kupuna who use SNAP.

Additionally, the program supports Hawai'i's local agricultural sector economically. Da Bux was a model developed on Hawaii Island through the Blue Zones Project to help the ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) sector. The program provides for food security, healthier diets of fresh fruits and vegetables, and supports buying of locally-grown products.

Women, who are more likely the caregivers of children and elders, benefit from the Da Bux Program. The state can provide more nutritious meals for our vulnerable population and support our agricultural economic sector through this measure. The Zonta Club of Hilo supports HB 2771, HD1. Relating To Food Security through the Heawai'i healthy food incentive program.

Mahalo for considering our testimony. Zonta Club of Hilo



March 13, 2024

Senate Committee and Agriculture and Environment
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

RE: Testimony in support of HB 2771, Relating to Food Security

Dear Chairs Gabbard and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Aquino and Richards, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, **I support HB 2771**, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.


Food security is a critical issue in Hawai'i, where one in six residents lacks comprehensive access to healthy, nutritious food. SNAP is one of our most important anti-hunger programs, offering choice and healthy options for families who need extra support putting food on the table. We strongly support DA BUX, which doubles the purchasing power of SNAP when it is used for locally produced food.

- **DA BUX increases consumer purchasing power.** Locally grown produce is often more expensive than imported items. DA BUX stretches dollars farther and makes it possible for more people to choose local.
- **DA BUX advances nutrition, health and well-being.** Healthy food can also be more expensive, and we consistently hear requests for more produce and healthy proteins from our distribution partners and the people we serve. DA BUX makes these desired, healthier food items more affordable.
- **DA BUX invests in farmers and statewide food security.** With an estimated 85%-90% of our food imported, programs that support Hawai'i farmers are important to us all. Hawai'i Foodbank regularly purchases from local farmers, and programs that invest in local production capacity help us better support those we serve.

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 200 partner agencies across O'ahu and Kaua'i to provide food assistance to an average of more than 150,000 people each month. Last year, we distributed food for more than 16.2 million meals across the islands we directly serve, including 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

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Director

Before:
House Committee on Agriculture and Environment
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Herbert “Tim” Richards, Vice Chair

House Committee on Health and Human Services
The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

March 13, 2024
1:02 p.m.
Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference

Re: HB 2771, HD1, Relating to Food Security.

Chair Gabbard, Chair San Buenaventura, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2771, HD1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawai‘i Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i SUPPORTS HB 2771, HD1.

Kaiser Permanente is one of the nation’s largest not-for-profit health plans, serving 12.6 million members nationwide, and more than 274,000 members in Hawai‘i. In Hawai‘i, more than 4,200 dedicated employees and more than 650 Hawai‘i Permanente Medical Group physicians and advanced practice providers work in our integrated health system to provide our members with coordinated care and coverage. Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i has more than 19 medical facilities, including our award-winning Moanalua Medical Center. We continue to provide high-quality coordinated care for our members and deliver on our commitment to improve the health of our members and the 1.4 million people living in the communities we serve.

Kaiser Permanente supports policies that ensure all Hawaii residents have access to affordable, high-quality health care. Further, Kaiser Permanente supports “whole-person care,” including the provision of access to services and resources that address beneficiaries’ physical health, mental health, and social needs.

Kaiser Permanente prioritizes food security as an area of community health focus, meaning that all people, in all communities, have access to sufficient, affordable, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy lifestyle. However, we know

that food insecurity has increased due to the effects of inflation and the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, Kaiser Permanente provides grants to Hawai'i food banks administering The Emergency Food Assistance Program's (TEFAP) Farm to Food Bank Program, which serves a critical role for many families facing food insecurities.

The grant funds served a twofold purpose through the food purchasing program. First, the funds are used as a match to draw down Federal funds, which require a 1:1 match. Additionally, Kaiser Permanente's grant funds support farm-direct bags of fresh produce for low-income seniors receiving a monthly supplemental food box through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), a USDA program that Hawai'i Foodbank runs in partnership with the Office of Community Services.

To ensure communities have reliable access to healthy food, Kaiser Permanente supports policies that minimize barriers to and maximize enrollment in federal nutrition assistance programs, such as SNAP, and support for federal nutrition standards for school meals, including meals with more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and less sodium and trans fats.

Our work is guided by our belief that access to nutritious food plays a critical role in supporting community health. Kaiser Permanente has also piloted interventions using medically tailored meals and launched a prescription produce program to help patients access fresh produce. By studying the effectiveness of these programs, Kaiser Permanente is building an evidence base for future policy interventions that reduce healthcare costs and improve patient outcomes.

We support HB 2771, HD1 because it will continue to fund the continued administration of the much-needed Hawaii healthy food incentive program which helps to continue to meet the food security needs of the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



Randy Perreira
President

HAWAII STATE AFL-CIO

888 Mililani Street, Suite 501 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Telephone: (808) 597-1441
Fax: (808) 593-2149

The Thirty-Second Legislature
The Senate
Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Committee on Health and Human Services

Testimony by
Hawaii State AFL-CIO

March 13, 2024

TESTIMONY ON HB2771 HD1 - RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Chairs Gabbard and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Richards and Aquino, and members of the committee:

The Hawaii State AFL-CIO is a federation of 74 affiliate labor organizations who represent over 68,000 union members within the State of Hawaii. The Hawaii State AFL-CIO serves its affiliates by advocating for workers and their families before the state legislature and other branches of state and county government.

We are in **support** of HB2771 HD1, which would appropriate funds for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and provides matching funds to beneficiaries participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This critical measure addresses the pressing issue of food insecurity faced by many residents in our state, particularly in the rising cost of living.

We recognize the importance of initiatives like the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program in ensuring that all individuals have access to nutritious food. Programs such as the DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks Program play a vital role in promoting healthy eating habits and supporting our local agriculture industry. Food insecurity is a significant challenge faced by many families in Hawaii, and SNAP benefits are a lifeline for those struggling to put food on the table. This bill not only helps alleviate food insecurity but also strengthens our local food system and supports our agricultural community.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Perreira".

Randy Perreira
President



March 11, 2024

Rep. Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

Chairman of the Board
Brandt Farias

President
Zia Khan, MD

Board Members

Greg Christian
Jason Fujita
Michael Lui, MD
Ben Morgan
Matthew Reeves, D.O., MBA
Ben Salazar
Michael Tanoue, M.D.
David Underriner

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For more information on the AHA’s educational or research programs, visit www.heart.org or contact your nearest AHA office.

**American Heart Association Testimony for HB 2771 HD1
“Relating to Food Security”**

The American Heart Association is pleased to support HB 2771 HD1. This bill will provide funding to the Department of Agriculture for the Hawai’i Healthy Food Incentive Program. This program is a “triple win” for Hawai’i: making healthy food more accessible for families in need, supporting agriculture and farmers, and keeping money within the local economy. Continued funding is needed to support this important program.

For more than 50 years, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has been vital in addressing food insecurity in the U.S. In 2021, 41.5 million people participated in SNAP, up from 35.7 million people pre-pandemic, once again proving to be an essential safety net during the pandemic and economic downturn. The majority of SNAP benefits go to households with children, older adults, or those with disabilities.

SNAP nutrition incentive programs across the country like Hawaii’s DA BUX program have existed to reduce hunger and improve nutrition among low-income families while also supporting local agriculture and the economy. The DA BUX program works by providing matching dollars to SNAP recipients to purchase additional fresh fruits and vegetables at participating retailers and farmers markets.

DA BUX directly addresses nutrition insecurity by helping families stretch food dollars and incentivizes the purchase of healthier options. The program helps families teach their children healthy behaviors, establishing lifelong habits that will support their overall health and wellness. Roughly half of all SNAP recipients have children in their homes. In addition, DA BUX acts as a catalyst for the local economy. Farmers and retailers alike benefit from increased sales of local produce.

The American Heart Association urges your support of HB 2771 HD1 to help reduce health disparities in our state by expanding access to fresh fruit and vegetables to those who might be economically challenged to afford access to those foods vital to improved health.

Sincerely,

Jamie Morgan
Sr. Region Lead, State Government Relations



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

BILL HB2771 HD1
POSITION: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: March 13, 2024

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards III
Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way supports HB277 HD1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In addition, this bill makes locally grown produce affordable to Hawaii's low-income residents, while also supporting our local farmers, and reduces our need to import healthy food that can be produced locally.

Food insecurity has doubled since the pandemic, making 1 in every 6 individuals in our state food insecure. This not only impacts those in poverty, but our ALICE households as well. Recent data shows that 44% of our community is living below the ALICE threshold. **ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed**, and refers to households who are employed but whose incomes are not sufficient to meet their basic costs.

Aloha United Way's 211 Information & Referral call center has been the primary entity conducting SNAP prescreening in our community since FY2018. Food as a category remains the second highest requested need from 211 callers after affordable housing. Access to healthful food that is *also* affordable is a rare commodity for SNAP beneficiaries, and measures like HB2771 HD1 make this easily available, affordable, and accessible to our food insecure families.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your action to support Hawaii's households with this lifesaving program. We urge you to pass HB2771 HD1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kayla Keehu-Alexander".

Kayla Keehu- Alexander
Vice President, Community Impact
Aloha United Way

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Suzanne Skjold".

Suzanne Skjold
Chief Operating Officer
Aloha United Way



**Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment / Senate Committee on Health
and Human Services**

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: HB2771 HD1

Wednesday, March 13th, 2024 1:02pm, Conference Room 224

Aloha Chair Gabbard/San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Richards/Aquino and Members of the Committees,

HAPA strongly supports HB2771 HD1 that appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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

Anne Frederick
Executive Director

PUKALANI SUPERETTE

March 11, 2024

To: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Committee on Health and Human Services

Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of HB2771

I am in strong support of bill HB2771 that appropriates funds to the State Department of Agriculture (DOA) for the implementation of Act 153, SLH 2019. This law authorizes DOA as the administering agency of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program (HHFIP), otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

DA BUX benefits many aspects of the state's food system. By offering a 50% discount on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables for low-income SNAP-EBT shoppers, DA BUX helps farmers increase their customer base and compete with imported produce, while also supporting the local economy, generating increased revenue for 59 participating food retailers across 100+ statewide locations. Additionally, DA BUX is stretching the food budgets of low-income households and increasing their consumption of Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables.

DA BUX is also providing critical support for Maui's economic recovery from the Maui wildfires. DA BUX has already proven it can increase sales and profits for Maui County farmers. Three Maui County food hubs report an average 114% increase in local produce sales to SNAP shoppers over the past two years. Statewide, a \$2 million State investment has the potential to generate \$12.8 million in economic activity.

As a small locally owned grocery store located in Upcountry, Maui, we are committed to supporting our local farmers – many who are our friends and long time business partners. We are not able to participate in the DA BUX program as it is currently funded. Regardless if we ever get to participate, we can see the value in this program and what it is doing to help our community. We need the DA BUX program more than ever now.

Furthermore, a **\$2M per year recurring State investment will ensure the survival of the DA BUX program, which is currently set to expire on August 31, 2024.** State funding will be leveraged to request matching federal funds from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) in the 2024 funding cycle. State funding has the potential to unlock these federal GusNIP dollars, as the GusNIP requires funding requests to include documentation of 100% non-federal match as well as a "sustainable funding plan." State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide a positive, lasting impact economically, for farmers, and for the well-being of individuals across the state.

Sincerely,



Megan Nakashima
President

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 7:37:03 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Green Party of Hawai'i, we stand in strong support of HB2771 HD1. As a farm worker on the Hamakua coast of the Big Island, I see, first hand, the benefits of fresh food grown on our Island and how it allows our communities to thrive.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1, with an unanimous vote of support!

Mahalo,

Susan RobertsEmery

Co-chair GPH

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 8:18:29 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Matsunaga	Testifying for Save Medicaid Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Save Medicaid Hawaii supports HB 2771 HD1

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 9:04:26 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jana Bogs	Testifying for Beyond Organic Consulting, Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dr. Jana Bogs



HB2771 HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

March 13, 2024

01:02 PM

Conference Room 224

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HB 2771 HD1** which addresses the critical issue of food security in Hawaii. **OHA wishes to highlight that this legislation is a pivotal step towards creating a resilient and thriving local food system for the State.**

With 85-95% of the total food supply being sourced from the continental United States, Hawai'i's food supply is predominantly imported. This demonstrates the dire need to support local farmers and address the barriers hindering their growth. The estimated annual cost of food insecurity in Hawai'i is \$83 million, underscoring the need for urgent action. The current situation, compounded by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and rising inflation, has resulted in escalating food costs, making it critical to comprehensively address this issue.

Innovative and effective food assistance programs like Hawai'i's DA BUX double-up food bucks program, allow for an increased investment when it is most needed. Pandemic-era Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) increases have ended despite food insecurity remaining high. The Hawai'i's DA BUX double-up food bucks program, which is unified under the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive program, has had noticeable impacts on our communities. The program supports 470 farm producers and eight distributors through 59 food retailers across 100 market sites and pick-up locations.

OHA strongly urges the committee to **ADVANCE HB2771 HD1**. By allocating funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive program, we can address food insecurity, stimulate local economies, and support Hawai'i's agricultural sector. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.



March 12, 2024

Chairman of the Board
Brandt Farias

President
Zia Khan, MD

Board Members
Greg Christian
Jason Fujita
Michael Lui, MD
Ben Morgan
Matthew Reeves, D.O., MBA
Ben Salazar
Michael Tanoue, M.D.
David Underriner

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Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Tim Richards, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry Aquino, Vice Chair
Member of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

American Heart Association Testimony for HB 2771 HD1 "Relating to Food Security"

The American Heart Association is pleased to support HB 2771 HD1. This bill will provide funding to the Department of Agriculture for the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program. This program is a "triple win" for Hawai'i: making healthy food more accessible for families in need, supporting agriculture and farmers, and keeping money within the local economy. Continued funding is needed to support this important program.

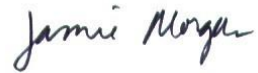
For more than 50 years, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has been vital in addressing food insecurity in the U.S. In 2021, 41.5 million people participated in SNAP, up from 35.7 million people pre-pandemic, once again proving to be an essential safety net during the pandemic and economic downturn. The majority of SNAP benefits go to households with children, older adults, or those with disabilities.

SNAP nutrition incentive programs across the country like Hawaii's DA BUX program have existed to reduce hunger and improve nutrition among low-income families while also supporting local agriculture and the economy. The DA BUX program works by providing matching dollars to SNAP recipients to purchase additional fresh fruits and vegetables at participating retailers and farmers markets.

DA BUX directly addresses nutrition insecurity by helping families stretch food dollars and incentivizes the purchase of healthier options. The program helps families teach their children healthy behaviors, establishing lifelong habits that will support their overall health and wellness. Roughly half of all SNAP recipients have children in their homes. In addition, DA BUX acts as a catalyst for the local economy. Farmers and retailers alike benefit from increased sales of local produce.

The American Heart Association urges your support of HB 2771 HD1 to help reduce health disparities in our state by expanding access to fresh fruit and vegetables to those who might be economically challenged to afford access to those foods vital to improved health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jamie Morgan
Sr. Region Lead, State Government Relations

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 9:17:37 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

DA BUX program has shown to improve the lives of the people of Hawaii by supporting local farmers and improving the diet of participants and reducing carbon emissions by keeping it local. Let's expand a good thing. Strong support for the continuation and expansion of the DA BUX program



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

HB2771 HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 1:02PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB2771 HD1** which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and provides matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

SNAP is a key assistance program for low-income individuals and families and is beneficial in encouraging a healthy diet. The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program helps to double purchasing power in buying fresh foods, which helps our farmers and ranchers, as well as personal health. HCC supports the continuation of this program.

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



To: Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment and on Health and Human Services
Re: **HB 2771 HD1 – Relating to Food Security**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
March 13, 2024, 1:02 PM

Dear Chairs Gabbard and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Richards and Aquino, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB 2771 HD1**. This bill appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program ("DA BUX") and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Investing DA BUX is investing in our keiki, as nearly two-thirds of SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) participants in Hawai'i are in families with children.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 who qualify for SNAP to afford to buy healthy food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

That's where DA BUX comes in. It is designed to help low-income families afford fresh produce, by doubling the value of their SNAP benefits when they purchase Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables.

DA BUX truly is a triple-win for our state. First, it **helps families** afford fresh produce, which benefits their health and well-being.³ Second, it **helps local farmers** by increasing their sales. And third, it **helps our local food stores and markets** by bringing more dollars to them and keeping those dollars in the local economy.

SNAP shoppers' local produce purchases at DA BUX grocery stores nearly tripled in January 2022 compared to 2019, and at DA BUX farm direct retailers those sales were more than five times larger.⁴ In addition, every \$1 spent on DA BUX is estimated to create \$2.30 in local economic activity.⁵

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

Sincerely,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_hawaii.pdf

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

³ <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/vegetables-and-fruits/>

⁴ <https://dabux.org/for-advocates>

⁵ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oU3wNy7IKmJ4ITLEgR6Td-o1_DscDPzX/view

To: The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Herbert M. Richards, III, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Public Policy Manager

Hearing: Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 1:02 PM, Conference Room 224

RE: **HB2771 HD1 Relating to Food Security**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB2771 HD1**. This measure appropriates funding to the Department of Agriculture to restore state funding for the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 84,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 40 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

AlohaCare's commitment to whole-person care and health equity includes addressing social determinants of health, including housing, language access, and nutrition among other factors. We understand that without access to affordable, healthy food, the health and well-being of our communities is negatively impacted. For example, researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that food insecurity is associated with obesity among U.S. adults in Hawai'i and 11 other states.¹

AlohaCare is proud to be an early supporter of this program through our grant funding to Kōkua Kalihi Valley and others, and we endorse continued State investment. The Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program is an innovative and successful solution, which supports local farmers, low-income families who receive double the purchasing power for Hawai'i-grown fresh fruits and vegetables, and our entire community by keeping dollars in the local economy. This program is particularly important during this time of rising costs for food among other necessities.

¹ J Acad Nutr Diet. 2012 Sep; 112(9): 1403–1409. Accessed at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/eutils/elink.fcgi?dbfrom=pubmed&retmode=ref&cmd=prlinks&id=22939441>



Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of HB2771 HD1.**



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

March 12, 2024

To: The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J. C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Committee on Health and Human Services

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

Subject: **Testimony in Strong Support of HB2771 HD1, Relating to Food Security**

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST
ALBRECHT

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

ANN EBESUNO
BOARD CHAIR

MARK
KRZYZANOWSKI
VICE-CHAIR

DENNIS LIN
TREASURER

JULIA ZEE
SECRETARY

STEPHEN UEDA

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA
COLLINS

MAURICE
MESSINA

CASEY HALPERN

BRANDON LEE

The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank is in strong support of HB2771 HD1 and the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

In keeping with The Food Basket's (TFB) overarching mission to "end hunger", we are the statewide administrator for DA BUX. TFB established DA BUX as a statewide program in partnership with the Hawai'i Good Food Alliance upon receiving a \$985K federal grant through the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) in 2019. Additionally, we secured the 100% non-federal matching funds that GusNIP requires. We scaled the program in 2021 after receiving two additional GusNIP awards totaling \$7.6M in federal dollars. Today, TFB administers DA BUX at 59 food retailers across 100+ locations statewide, including grocery stores, farmers markets and food hubs, providing support to more than 530 farms. DA BUX partner retailers continue to offer 50% discounts on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables solely to low-income customers paying with SNAP food dollars (formerly known as food stamps).

Philanthropy has largely carried the weight of our GusNIP match needs over the years; however, we cannot expect philanthropy to meet this need over the long term. We are

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

humbly requesting the State to invest \$2M per year in DA BUX to support program sustainability and continuous affordable healthy food access to SNAP recipients. Furthermore, a State commitment will be leveraged in our FY'24 GusNIP application to unlock \$2M in federal funds to meet the grant's requirement of a 100% non-federal match. While a wide range of financial support and programs were available during the pandemic, Hawai'i's low-income residents are perhaps now more in dire need of this support as pandemic relief wanes and inflation rates have soared above historical averages. Sustained high participation in SNAP above pre-pandemic levels and climbing food insecurity in Hawai'i are indicative of the widespread economic hardship residents continue to face. The Food Basket remains steadfast in our commitment to ensuring DA BUX savings for local fruits and vegetables will be continuously available for these households.

We respectfully ask your committees to pass this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

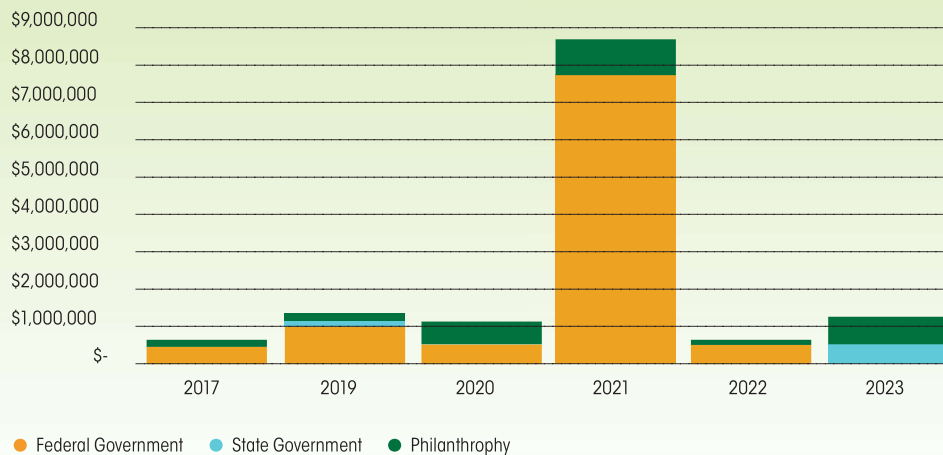
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KF Albrecht', written in a cursive style.

Kristin Frost Albrecht
Executive Director

Opportunity to Expand a Proven, Highly Impactful Program

DA BUX FUNDING BY SOURCE (2017 - 2023)

State funds have historically represented just 4% of total funding to DA BUX



\$2 MILLION IN STATE FUNDING HAS A POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF \$12.8 MILLION

Historically, the DA BUX program has been primarily funded by federal grants and philanthropic/private funding (representing almost all of total program funds). Since its inception, DA BUX has received **\$13.7 MILLION** in funding. The State funding of \$594,000 represents **4%** of total funding to the program to date.

Secure and sustained State funding for DA BUX program is the key to federal and philanthropic funding matches. An appropriation of \$2 million in State funds can generate significant leverage:

- Stimulate economic activity of about \$13 million (6.4x State funding) while increasing local food production for local consumption.
- \$2 million in State funds can be matched by \$2 million in federal dollars from a Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) grant, as well as \$4 million from SNAP purchases, resulting in \$8 million going toward local food purchases and supporting local farmers.
- Given the impact achieved and successful track record, State funding will be a worthwhile investment and position the DA BUX program for future federal funding.
- Other states have recognized the benefit and impact of Double Up Food Bucks programs by investing their state funds in expanding and sustaining their programs. There are 24 states that have invested state funds in their Double Up Food Bucks programs, totaling approximately \$158 million from 2015 through 2024.

HAWAII BY THE NUMBERS

16TH HIGHEST POVERTY RATE
(10.0% OF THE POPULATION LIVING AT OR BELOW THE POVERTY LINE)

22^X INCREASE IN THE ANNUAL TOTAL OF DA BUX DISCOUNTS ISSUED TO SNAP SHOPPERS

DA BUX continues to be an amazing way to connect our farm directly to the consumers who need it most. Being able to offer the best quality fresh locally grown food in a very affordable way removes a big hurdle for people ... [DA BUX] helps to make feeding them and their families easy.

This program helps to support local agriculture so we can more easily compete with imported food and gives us farmers a big incentive to produce more fruits and vegetables to satisfy the increased demand for our goods. //

– Ryan Earehart, Farm Owner,
Oko'a Farms (Maui)



THE FOOD BASKET
HAWAII ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

'DA BUX' Double Up Food Bucks Provides a Triple-Win



HOW 'DA BUX' WORKS

The DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks program offers each Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participant a DA BUX Access Card or voucher to be used at point of sale to double their purchasing power when they buy locally grown fruits and vegetables — \$10 of SNAP benefits is worth \$20 of Hawai'i grown produce. Thus, each \$1 funded into the program provides \$2 worth of local food purchases.

THE CHALLENGE

In fall 2023, the program was denied federal funding primarily due to a lack of a sustained State funding. Based on the projected spend down rate, current funding of the DA BUX program will only last through August 2024. Hawai'i SNAP beneficiaries have been hit with both increasing food costs and decreasing SNAP benefits. This situation creates a significant need to help feed low-income families AND support local agricultural food producers.

THE OPPORTUNITY

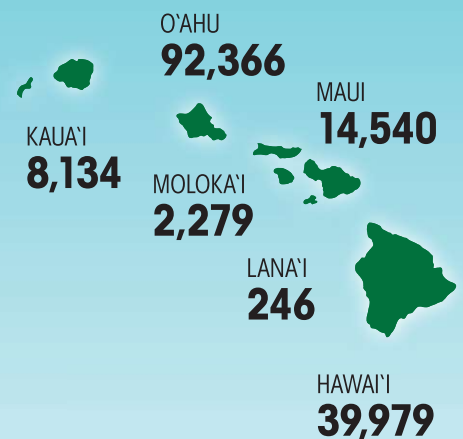
DA BUX is a triple-win solution because it doubles the purchasing power of low-income SNAP families for healthy, Hawai'i-grown produce; it supports local farmers with an increased customer base; and it benefits the entire island community by keeping dollars in the local economy.

AN APPROPRIATION OF \$2 MILLION IN STATE FUNDS WILL BRING IN ADDITIONAL FEDERAL FUNDS TO SUSTAIN, EXPAND AND EXTEND THE STATEWIDE DA BUX DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS PROGRAM. Given the broad benefits of DA BUX for our state, it is imperative to secure sustained funding for DA BUX and ensure it is a staple service providing economic relief to SNAP households and directly supporting local agricultural food producers across the islands.



ISLAND BREAKDOWN OF SNAP PARTICIPANTS

(as of August 2023)

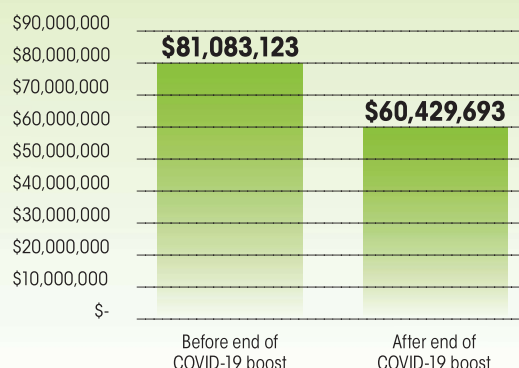


HAWAII BY THE NUMBERS

- 90%** IMPORTED FOOD
- 91%** HIGHER FOOD COSTS
- 26%** INCREASE IN FOOD PRICES SINCE JANUARY 2020

With the highest cost of living in the nation, Hawai'i faces growing food costs and food insecurity. About 160,000 residents received SNAP assistance 2023.

THE END OF PANDEMIC-ERA FUNDING IN 2023 HAS DECREASED BENEFITS FOR HAWAII SNAP PARTICIPANTS BY 25%



State Support is Key to Federal and Philanthropic Funding



For over a century, KTA Super Stores has strived to serve as an essential source for locally grown produce for our Hawai'i Island community. DA BUX provides us the opportunity to support our local growers.

Since launching DA BUX in Sept 2017, we have seen transactions associated with the DA BUX program more than quadruple at our seven store locations. We see this as positive sign that DA BUX is motivating families to purchase and consume more healthy fruits and vegetables and that this increased demand will drive increases in agricultural production for the state.

– Toby Taniguchi, President,
KTA Super Stores (Hawai'i Island)

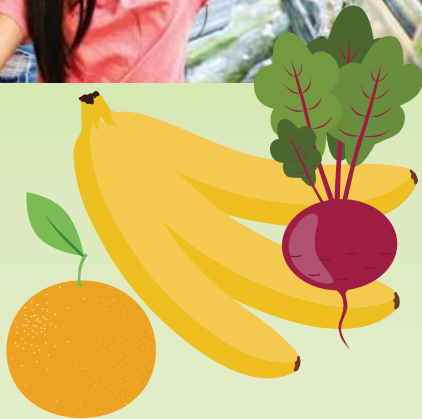
DA BUX has become a critical service for low-income SNAP beneficiaries struggling with economic hardship and food insecurity. There has been significant growth and demand for the program due to the increase in SNAP participation and participating DA BUX retail locations across the state.

	State Investment of \$2M	
State Funding	\$ 2,000,000	a
Federal GusNIP Grant	\$ 2,000,000	b
Total Funding for DA BUX Discounts	\$ 4,000,000	c = a+b
Economic Multiplier on DA BUX Discounts ¹	1.7	d
Potential Economic Impact of DA BUX Discounts	\$ 6,798,308	e = c*d
Federal SNAP Benefits	\$ 4,000,000	f = c
Economic Multiplier on SNAP Benefits ²	1.5	g
Potential Economic Impact of SNAP Benefits	\$ 6,000,000	h = f*g
Total Funding for SNAP & DA BUX	\$8,000,000	i = c+f
Potential Economic Impact	\$12,798,308	j = e+h
Economic Impact Multiplier of State Funding	6.4	k = j/a

¹ Based on the "The Economic Contributions of Healthy Food Incentives" report, prepared by Colorado State University, and the percentage of 2021 DA BUX discounts issued via farm-direct outlets and food retailers.

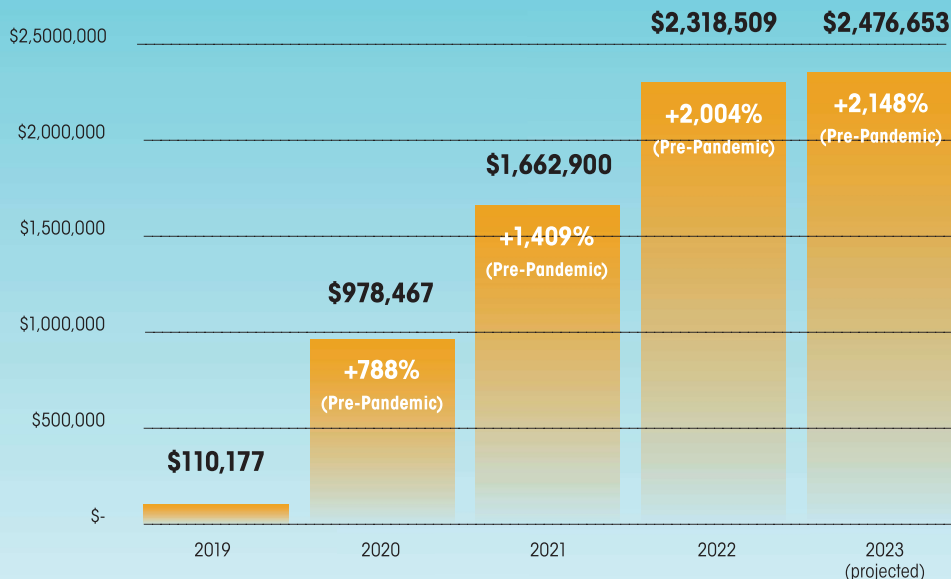
² Based on the "The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Economy: New Estimates of the SNAP Multiplier" report, prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service.





ANNUAL DA BUX DISCOUNTS ISSUED TO SNAP SHOPPERS

Participation has steadily increased in Hawai'i



- From 2020 through 2021, DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors by incentivizing the sale of their farm products sold at participating farm direct retailers.
- In January 2022, local produce sales to SNAP shoppers at participating farm direct retailers increased an average of 531% from 2019.
- Since the pandemic, DA BUX discounts have increased by 2,148%, totaling more than \$2.4 million.

“I really love this program because I am diabetic and need fresh veggies and fruits to help keep me healthy.

Mahalo for this amazing program. Also, DA BUX helps me with my kids too. They love looking for the DA BUX label on produce and can choose what they want. They love to eat! Carrots, cabbage and cucumbers are their faves as well as local apple bananas to name a few. //

– Dawn Marquez, SNAP Shopper, Waimānalo (O’ahu)

LOCAL FOOD SALES DRIVEN BY SNAP DA BUX*

Local food sales driven by DA BUX has also steadily increased, especially on Maui

Projected growth in local food sales driven by DA BUX decreased due to a lack of sustained State funding

County	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Annualized)
Honolulu	\$ -	\$ 929,217	\$ 1,659,101	\$ 2,443,673	\$ 2,499,684
% Increase	-	100%	79%	47%	2%
Hawai'i	\$ 220,354	\$ 842,483	\$ 1,125,573	\$ 1,238,329	\$ 1,295,901
% Increase	-	282%	34%	10%	5%
Kaua'i	\$ -	\$ 87,574	\$ 191,309	\$ 224,094	\$ 229,990
% Increase	-	100%	118%	17%	3%
Maui	\$ -	\$ 97,661	\$ 349,817	\$ 730,922	\$ 927,732
% Increase	-	100%	258%	109%	27%
Statewide Total	\$ 220,354	\$ 1,956,934	\$ 3,325,800	\$ 4,637,018	\$ 4,953,307

*50% of the sales include DA BUX incentives and the remaining 50% is comprised of SNAP





March 13th, 2024

To: Joint Senate Committees on Agriculture & Environment and Health & Human Services

Subject: **Testimony in Strong Support of SB2771, Relating to Food Security**

I am writing to express my strong support for SB2771, "Relating to Food Security"

As the co-founder and executive director of Ho'ōla Veteran Services 501c3 dba Ho'ōla Farms, I have witnessed firsthand the positive impact that SNAP and DABUX healthy food incentive programs have had on our community, particularly in East Hawaii.

Ho'ōla Farms, established in 2015, was created with the mission of providing natural agriculture educational training and hands-on experiences for military veterans, their families, and the wider community. Over the years, our organization has evolved to adopt a full agribusiness incubator model, encompassing programs such as the Hilo Food Hub and the Hawai'i Farm to Car online farmers market.

One of the key initiatives we have implemented is the offering of SNAP and DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks incentives at Hawaii Farm to Car. Since the introduction of these programs, we have seen a remarkable increase in the use of SNAP/DABUX from \$31,000 in 2023 to \$99,500 in 2024. This growth is not only indicative of the success of our efforts but also underscores the critical role that SNAP/DABUX plays in supporting local economies and promoting access to healthy, locally grown produce.

Moreover, we have received numerous expressions of gratitude from low-income families in our community who now have access to fresh, nutritious food through SNAP/DABUX. Their ability to purchase "stuff they actually want to eat" has significantly improved their overall well-being and quality of life.

SB2771 represents a vital opportunity to continue and expand upon the positive impact of SNAP/DABUX. By making healthy food more accessible to families in need, supporting local agriculture and farmers, and bolstering the local economy, this program embodies a "triple win" for our state.

I urge you to lend your support to SB2421 and ensure the continued funding of this important program. Together, we can create a more sustainable and equitable future for all residents of Hawai'i.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.
Sincerely,

Emily Emmons
Executive Director
Ho'ōla Farms

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 3:20:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carmelita Phillips	Testifying for KYD, inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We support HB2771 HD1



ABC Stores
766 Pohukaina Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813-5391
www.abcstores.com

Telephone: (808) 591-2550
Fax: (808) 591-2039
E-mail: mail@abcstores.com

To: Committee on Agriculture and Environment, Committee on Health and Human Services.

Re: HB 2771 HD1 Relating to Food Security

Date: March 13, 2024

Time: 1:02 p.m.

Place: Conference Room 224

Position: Strongly Support

Good afternoon, Chairperson Mike Gabbard & Joy A San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III & Henry J.C. Aquino and members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment & Committee on Health and Human Services. I am Curtis Higashiyama Employee Relations and Government Affairs Manager, and we appreciate this opportunity to testify.

ABC Stores **Strongly Supports** measure HB2771 HD1. Appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawaii healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

As the need for food security increases so is there a need for support not only from local businesses but also for assistance for funding. Federal matching funds as from the Gus Schumacher nutrition incentive program which provides matching federal grant moneys to state programs that incentivizes the use of SNAP benefits for the purchase of fresh produce is one example of a source of funding to help reduce food insecurities.

The Gus Schumacher incentive program along with the enactment of Act 153 in 2019 formed a powerful program, DA BUX, for SNAP beneficiaries. This program over the years supported farmers, retailers, grocery stores, community supported agriculture programs and other farm direct food hubs. The big win is the support it gives to those in need by doubling the SNAP money that can be used to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables and at the same time allowing healthier choices.

We **strongly support** this measure and ask you to pass HB2771 HD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,
Curtis Higashiyama
ABC Stores
Employee Relations and Government Affairs

Wednesday, March 13, 2024; 1:00 pm
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

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

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

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

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

**Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2771, HD1
Relating To Food Security**

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

I write in support of HB 2771, HD1 which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

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

HPH has contributed to the Double Up food bucks program since 2019 and plans to continue to do so. The program has been successful in encouraging SNAP recipients to make healthy food choices, as well as supporting families, farmers, and the local economy. Continued funding of the program would increase the outcomes achieved and

enable The Food Basket on the island of Hawai'i, to obtain matching federal funds for continued support of the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



March 12, 2024

Testimony in Support of HB 2771, Relating to Food Security

House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance (HAPA) Supports: HB2771
Wednesday, March 13 at 1:02 PM

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committees,

The Hawai'i Good Food Alliance is writing to voice our **strong support of HB 2771** and the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

HGFA is a 501(c)(3) corporation formed by a statewide collaboration of organizations that are engaged in the production and distribution of food with the goal of rebuilding thriving community food systems. HGFA is a cross-sector network of food producers, food hubs, food banks, farmers markets, and healthcare providers from each major Hawaiian island. We join together - with a sense of urgency - to raise community voices and support one another in the belief that each and every person in Hawai'i can share in healthy, locally produced food.

DA BUX benefits the state's food system through three different ways. First, DA BUX offers a 50% discount on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables to low-income recipients of the SNAP program (formerly known as food stamps), allowing them to purchase more, healthy food. Second, DA BUX helps farmers increase their customer base and compete with imported produce. And third, DA BUX supports the local economy, generating increased revenue for the participating food retailers across 100+ statewide locations. Several of our member organizations offer DA BUX through their retail operations, allowing them to offer affordable local produce to all of their SNAP customers.

A \$2 million State investment will serve as significant match funds needed to unlock federal grant dollars from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). As the GusNIP only accepts proposals that secure 100% non-federal matching funds, a State investment will strengthen the program's FY '24 GusNIP application. State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide positive, lasting impact both for the economy and the well-being of individuals across the state.

Sincerely,

Lucas McKinnon
Managing Director

Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
lucas@hawaiigoodfoodalliance.org

The Hawai'i Good Food Alliance is a diverse hui of individuals and organizations who share in the production, aggregation, and distribution of food, and share in the practice of mālama 'āina to re-build thriving community food systems. We join together—with a sense of urgency—to raise community voice and support one another in the belief that each and every person in Hawai'i can share in healthy, locally produced food.





March 13, 2024

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Herbert Richards, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: HB 2771 HD1– RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Dear Chair Gabbard, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Richards, Vice Chair Aquino, and
Members of the Committees:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2771 HD1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

HMSA recognizes the impact that healthy foods have on a person's overall wellness. Conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity can be positively impacted by maintaining a healthy diet. We support this effort to increase affordability and accessibility to healthy foods in Hawaii, especially to individuals and families who could truly benefit. An added benefit to this program is that it also supports our local agriculture sector and farmers as we take steps towards addressing food security and strengthening health and well-being in our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2771 HD1.

Sincerely,

Dawn Kurisu
Assistant Vice President
Community and Government Relations

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 9:52:52 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Krzyzanowski	Testifying for The Food Basket	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the committee,

I am reaching out to express my fervent support for HB2771 HD1, aimed at funding the Double Up Food Bucks program in Hawai'i. This program plays a crucial role in making locally-sourced fruits and vegetables more accessible and affordable for low-income families in our state.

The SNAP program is essential for mitigating hunger among low-income families in Hawai'i, yet the benefits provided often fall short of covering the costs of fresh, locally produced fruits and vegetables.

The DA BUX initiative promises significant benefits from a relatively small investment. The \$2 million allocation proposed by this bill, matched by an additional \$2 million in federal funds, would enable the program's expansion, reaching more retailers and communities throughout the islands.

This program represents a triple win: benefiting families, supporting farmers, and boosting local businesses, with absolutely no drawbacks. I appreciate the chance to offer my support.

Mahalo,

Mark Krzyzanowski, AICP

Vice Chair

The Food Basket

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 12:51:51 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

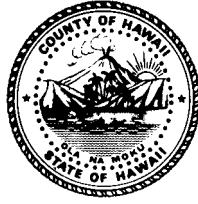
Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Yes to appropriating funds for the continued administration of the Hawaii healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program

Susan L.K. Lee Loy
Council Member
District 3



Office: (808) 961-8396
Fax: (808) 961-8912
Email: sue.leeloy@hawaiiicounty.gov

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

25 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

March 11, 2024

The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Senator Herbert "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

The Honorable Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Senator Henry Aquino, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Support for HB 2771, HD1 Relating to Food Security

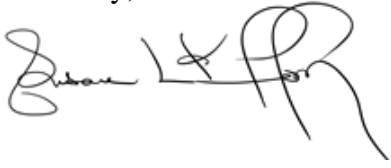
Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Health and Human Services,

Mahalo for the opportunity to express support for House Bill No. 2771, HD1. This bill is a forward-thinking approach to addressing poverty and food insecurity while strengthening Hawai'i's agricultural industry. High food costs are a significant barrier to food security and this DA BUX program makes it possible to put enough food on the table without sacrificing nutrition or quality.

This program is a "triple win" for Hawai'i, making healthy food more accessible for families in need, supporting agriculture and farmers, and keeping money within the local economy.

HB 2771, HD1 reflects our local community's recognition of the urgency to address the issue of food security and is a positive step towards supporting our most vulnerable families in need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan L.K. Lee Loy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "R" at the end.

Susan "Sue" L.K. Lee Loy
Council Member, County of Hawai'i

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 1:03:51 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The federal food stamp program—better known as SNAP—is vital for alleviating hunger in low-income Hawai‘i households. However, the household monthly benefit is often still not enough to afford fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables. This results in most of these dollars leaving the islands—right into the pockets of major mainland food companies, rather than getting recirculated locally into our local agriculture industry.

DA BUX offers a huge return on a very modest investment. The \$2 million proposed in this bill would be matched with another \$2 million in federal dollars, and this will allow the program to expand to even more retailers and communities across the islands.

This program is truly a win for everyone—families, farmers and local businesses. There is no downside. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 12:15:03 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is an extremely popular and common-sense program, which I fully support. Please continue to fund it.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 12:30:55 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isis Usborne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committee,

Please support this vital bill to allow more fresh produce to be bought and consumed by low income people across the islands. With rising rates of health issues like diabetes and heart diseases affecting our most vulnerable communities, we need to make sure that good nutrition is accessible for all.

Mahalo,

- Isis Usborne, 96815
Student at William S. Richardson School of Law

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 2:15:48 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In strong support of HB2771 HD1. Thank you.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 4:05:25 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diliaur Tellei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support and urge the committee to pass this measure. We're feeding two birds from one hand here -- making sure our vulnerable community members have access to fresh produce as well as pulling in our local farmers and potentially bolstering local food supply (another huge issue in our islands).

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 5:14:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Leake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration,

David Leake, Kaneohe

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 5:20:50 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

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- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration,
Stacey Alapai, Makawao 96768

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 5:21:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration, Eliel Starbright, Kapaa

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 6:04:14 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 6:12:25 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support this important bill!

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 6:12:37 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration,
Marilyn Mick, Honolulu

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 6:12:55 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is important for Hawaii's goals on food security!

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 6:15:09 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support this important legislation to protect our food sustainability.

Judith Mick, Kailua

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 6:20:22 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lillian Coltin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support this successful program that benefits so many

Mahalo

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 6:25:25 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ezgi Green	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods, and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, the DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways, including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

The DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. It is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

I appreciate your consideration,

Ezgi Green, Waialua

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 6:39:02 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration, Susan Douglas, Kihei

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 9:25:19 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 7:10:51 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debbie Millikan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration,

Debbie Millikan, Honolulu

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 7:27:09 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dennis Lin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I am writing to you in strong support of HB2771 HD1 to fund Hawai‘i’s Double Up Food Bucks program, which makes locally-grown produce affordable for Hawai‘i’s low income consumers.

The federal food stamp program—better known as SNAP—is vital for alleviating hunger in low-income Hawai‘i households. However, the household monthly benefit is often still not enough to afford fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

DA BUX offers a huge return on a very modest investment. The \$2 million proposed in this bill would be matched with another \$2 million in federal dollars, and this will allow the program to expand to even more retailers and communities across the islands.

This program is truly a win for everyone—families, farmers and local businesses. There is no downside. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 7:35:14 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1. Incentivizing local food production is important for our farmers, and for our climate, as we reduce miles our food has to travel.

Thank you for your consideration,

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 7:35:55 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I strongly support HB2771 HD1.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 7:39:29 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KIMI ABBOTT- JACKSON	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill This program has helped me and my family be able to afford more nutritious produce. Without this discount it's less affordable and harder to eat healthy. Thank you

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 7:50:50 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Boscole	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

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- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration,

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 8:01:44 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Committee members and Chairs,

I support this legislative measure as it will help two important groups of people in Hawaii. The Farmers and the citizen that rely on SNAP-like benefits. It's a win- win situation. There aren't too many of those situations available, so take advantage of this beneficial opportunity. Thank You

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 7:53:33 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha legislators,

Please support this bill to help local families in need, encourage buying locally grown and produced food, keep more dollars in Hawai'i, and improve people's health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.

mahalo,

Cory

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 8:03:02 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raelyn Reyno Yeomans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in Strong Support! Thank you.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 8:33:32 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephen Ueda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 9:53:28 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathleen Hagan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in **strong support of HB2771** as the DA BUX program serves as an example of a win-win-win for our state. Many of us are concerned about food self-sufficiency for our islands, the need to grow our local economy, and the rise in diet-related diseases. Providing a substantial discount on produce grown in the state for SNAP participants has supported local farmers and businesses, boosted money staying in the local economy, and increased consumption of fruits and vegetables by participating families. Please allow this program to keep doing its good work by supporting HB2771.

Mahalo,

Kathleen Hagan, APRN

Paia, Maui

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 9:56:11 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noa Lincoln	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

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- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration,

Noa Lincoln, Hilo, Hawai'i Island, Hawai'i

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 10:02:07 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lei Hacoba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I write today in support of HB2771 and its continuation. As a low-income family our 'ohana highly relies on the services provided by the state and are SNAP recipients. Many times as a family of seven this requires me to check and balance what we're able to purchase and afford to eat. Sadly, it is not the local or healthy items that I am able to mostly support due to the higher cost of these items and rightly so. However, Da Bux program has provided me the opportunity to increase the number of healthier options for myself and keiki by doubling my purchasing power of these items. Therefore, creating more healthier balanced meals.

Furthermore, as a resident of Hawaii and having family whose livelihood comes from farming I am honored to be able to make the choice through this program to put back into my community and support their laborous efforts.

I ask that you all please also support HB2771 and its continuation as it serves so much nourishment to both our stomachs and soul.

Aloha,

Lei Hacoba

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 10:05:29 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Zee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to you in strong support of HB2771 HD1 to fund Hawaii's Double Up Food Bucks program (DA BUX), which makes locally-grown produce affordable for Hawaii's low income consumers. The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (aka food stamps) is vital for alleviating hunger for Hawaii's families, keiki, and kupuna. However, the monthly SNAP benefits are often not enough to afford fresh fruits and vegetables, which are necessary for healthy diets and healthy bodies.

DA BUX also offers a huge return on a modest investment--the \$2M proposed in this bill would be doubled with another \$2M in federal dollars! This will allow the program to expand to more retailers and communities throughout the State, and help thousands of our neighbors access healthier food. Additionally, you would be helping local farmers and local businesses who grow and sell locally grown fruits and vegetables. This is win, win, win!

Thank you for your support and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Aloha,

Julia Zee, retired registered dietitian nutritionist and nutrition educator

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 11:42:53 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration,

Keala Fung, Honolulu

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 10:22:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
L. Osterer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

DA BUX is a highly effective program with multiple benefits. The program essentially doubles SNAP EBT benefits for buying locally grown produce. DA BUX also benefits Hawai'i farmers Program (SNAP). While the program helps recipients access nutritious, locally grown food, it bolstering our local economy and leverages federal funds. It's a triple win!

Please support this bill.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 11:47:56 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Strong support!

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 11:58:28 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Lu Kelley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1. Do the right thing.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mary Lu Kelley

Koloa, HI

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 1:08:55 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai‘i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they’re spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai‘i’s food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai‘i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono.

Mahalo nui for your consideration,

Irena Bliss

Ha‘ikū, Maui 96708

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 12:19:23 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sven Sorge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration!

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 6:04:48 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Strongly support.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 7:39:11 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!

MAHALO!

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 7:59:35 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Barker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am writing to ask that you please support HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 8:07:16 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Warren lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable committee members,

I am in strong support of hb2771. It is a win-win-win bill.

1. Low income families and kapuna are able to supplement their nutritional needs with healthy items

2. the local retailers are financially supported by state and federal funds via local expenditures which in turn supports the state tax g.e.t.

3.And provides jobs for local farmers and merchants.

hb2771 needs to be approved.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 9:43:35 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Gollin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy. Better for our SNAP-holders, better for our local economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1!

Mahalo, Lisa Gollin

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 9:03:42 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Patti Hatzistavrakis, fully support Bill 2771 HB RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY because the DA BUX program is a “triple win” for Hawai‘i.

1. DA BUX discounts are encouraging low-income **SNAP-EBT shoppers to buy more local fruits and vegetables**. In 2023, SNAP-EBT shoppers participating in DA BUX reported consuming more fruits and vegetables than the average U.S. adult.
2. DA BUX **supports over 530 farms across the state**. In 2023, participating food hubs, including farmer’s markets, increased local produce sales to SNAP shoppers by 186% on average.
3. The DA BUX program has a positive financial effect. **For every SNAP dollar spent, an additional \$1.54 goes into the local economy.**

Continued funding is needed to support this important program. By allocating \$2M for DA BUX, Hawai‘i is eligible for an additional \$2M in federal matching funds from the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). State funding supports the program’s “sustainable funding plan,” a requirement of proposals for federal GusNIP funding.

Again, **I fully support Bill 2771 HB RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY** and urge the Joint Senate Committees on Agriculture & Environment and Health & Human Services to pass it. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 10:31:25 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jodi Robinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill and fully funding of Da Bux. Mahalo.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 10:42:39 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anna Ezzy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Richards and Aquino, and honorable members of the Committees,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of HB2771 HD1, to fund and grow the DA BUX program. This program is building a more food-secure future in Hawai'i. By enabling families to more easily purchase healthy, nutrient-dense foods produced by over 500 local farmers across the state, DA BUX has proven its effectiveness as a solution to multiple food system problems (DA BUX 2020-2021 Impact Report).

Importantly, by allocating \$2M for DA BUX, Hawai'i is eligible for an additional \$2M in federal matching funds. This bill is an opportunity to increase economic growth in Hawai'i as well as reduce negative health outcomes and diet-related chronic illnesses among Hawai'i families. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today, please pass HB2771 HD1 favorably out of committee.

Mahalo,

Anna Ezzy

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 10:45:13 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle K.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I am **strongly supportive** of this bill because many folks on SNAP will continue to benefit when the DA BUX program is sustain to feed them while at the same time, encouraging healthy eating from consumption of fruits and veggies. In addition, local businesses including 470 farm producers and 8 distributors also benefit from this program. Please do the right thing by providing funding because this program is a win-win for everyone participating. Thank you for your kind consideration!

Mahalo,
Michelle K.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 11:43:22 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lela Kalama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lela Kalama, Keaau, HI

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 11:06:58 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 1:04:20 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suzanne Fields	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The State of Hawaii must NOT MISS OUT on this triple win for families, farmers, and the local economy

[DA BUX](#) is a program for SNAP recipients that makes fresh, local produce more affordable by doubling their purchasing power. High food costs are a significant barrier to food security. The ability to prioritize fresh produce over less expensive food options is a luxury many Hawai'i families cannot afford. DA BUX makes it possible to put enough food on the table without sacrificing nutrition or quality.

[HB 2771](#), which will provide funding for the DA BUX program, has crossed over from the House to the Senate. **Please continue to [submit testimony](#)** on this important measure to address poverty and food insecurity while strengthening Hawai'i's agricultural industry.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 12:22:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Funding, growing and continuing the DA Bux program is important because it helps families eat more healthy by encouraging SNAP-EBT shoppers to buy more veggies. It also supports local farms and businesses by giving opportunities to feed local residents rather than exporting products to the mainland. DA Bux also supports Hawaii's economy by having a positive financial effect (about \$1.54 goes into the local economy when a SNAP dollar is spent). And it is a great opportunity for federal match; if two million is allocated for it, an additional two million will be matched by the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusSNIP).

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 1:53:14 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maurice C. Messina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I am writing to you in strong support of HB2771 HD1 to fund Hawai‘i’s Double Up Food Bucks program, which makes locally-grown produce affordable for Hawai‘i’s low income consumers.

The federal food stamp program—better known as SNAP—is vital for alleviating hunger in low-income Hawai‘i households. However, the household monthly benefit is often still not enough to afford fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

DA BUX offers a huge return on a very modest investment. The \$2 million proposed in this bill would be matched with another \$2 million in federal dollars, and this will allow the program to expand to even more retailers and communities across the islands.

This program is truly a win for everyone—families, farmers and local businesses. There is no downside. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 1:39:07 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Hello Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2329 SD1.

Loko 'ia (fishponds) remain an important resource for feeding local communities and providing community and cultural connection. Healthy fishponds also support healthy nearshore fisheries.

Loko 'ia are not only important food sources for our local communities but important cultural sites providing space for communities to gather, connect to place and mālama.

Supporting the health of Loko 'ia will accelerate Hawai'i's local food production and food security goals while also supporting indigenous traditional and customary cultural practices and community resilience.

Please support SB 2329 SD1.

me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili, O'ahu

To: Hawaii State Senate Committees on Agriculture & Environment and on Health & Human Services

Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 1:02pm

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, CR 224 & Videoconference

Re: Judith Ann Armstrong supports HB2771 HD1 Relating to Food Security

Dear Chairs Senator Mike Gabbard and Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III and Senator Henry J.C. Aquino and members of the Committees on Agriculture & Environment and on Health & Human Services

I, Judith Ann Armstrong, support HB1771 HD1 Relating to Relating to Food Security.

DA BUX offers a huge return on a very modest investment. The \$2 million proposed in this bill would be matched with another \$2 million in federal dollars, and this will allow the program to expand to even more retailers and communities across the islands.

This program is truly a win for everyone—families, farmers, and local businesses. There is no downside.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB2771 HD1.

Sincerely,

Judith Ann Armstrong

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 3:59:36 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
casey halpern	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I am writing to you in strong support of HB2771 HD1 to fund Hawai‘i’s Double Up Food Bucks program, which makes locally-grown produce affordable for Hawai‘i’s low income consumers.

The federal food stamp program—better known as SNAP—is vital for alleviating hunger in low-income Hawai‘i households. However, the household monthly benefit is often still not enough to afford fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

DA BUX offers a huge return on a very modest investment. The \$2 million proposed in this bill would be matched with another \$2 million in federal dollars, and this will allow the program to expand to even more retailers and communities across the islands.

This program is truly a win for everyone—families, farmers and local businesses. There is no downside. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Mahalo,

Casey Halpern

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 3:08:37 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Best	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting this will accelerate local food production and security and also indigenous traditional cultural practice and community resilience.

Mahalo

Bobbie Best, Wailuku

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 5:30:10 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pamela burrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration,

pamela burrell, Kalihiwai, Kaua'i

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 5:57:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771 HD1.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- Putting more food on the tables of local families in need
- Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai'i
- Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB 2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 11:28:36 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dylan Ramos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a taxpayer and voter born and raised in Hawai'i, I support this bill.

Mahalo,
Dylan Ramos
96816

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2024 8:55:27 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/13/2024 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Greenleaf	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 2771 supports us...Greenleaf Farm and makes fresh local food more affordable for residents. The news constantly talks about the price of food...it's a real problem with DaBux being an important support for people who are income challenged.