

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEXTER KISHIDA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

**RECEIVED**  
**Date & Time**  
Mar 20, 2024, 6:29 am

State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**LATE**

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024**  
**10:15 AM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 43 AND HOUSE RESOLUTION 32**

**REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO DEVELOP A STRATEGIC  
PLAN TO STRENGTHEN FOOD SECURITY FOR LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES IN  
HAWAII.**

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution No. 43 and House Resolution No. 32 requesting the Department of Agriculture (Department) to develop a strategic plan (Plan) to strengthen food security for low-income communities in Hawaii.

The Plan is to address the following elements:

1. Determine the current status of food security and food production in low-income communities,
2. Identify obstacles to accessing affordable local food in underserved areas,
3. Expand access to locally produced food that is affordable,
4. Support local agricultural producers with economic incentives, technical assistance, and other public investments,



5. Evaluate community-based initiatives (such as community gardens, urban farms, agricultural education, and farmers' markets) to mitigate food insecurity in low-income areas,
6. Expand agricultural education and vocational training programs for food production in low-income areas,
7. Assessing efficacy of food security interventions, and
8. Determine the funding and other resources needed to implement a strategic plan to enhance food security for low-income communities.

The Department offers a comment and a recommendation. The Department appreciates the concern about uneven access to locally-produced foods in low-income communities but believes what is being asked of DOA is well beyond its experience and expertise. The Department would be happy to contribute to, but not lead, an effort led by other agencies and organizations that have experience managing and/or participating in the aggregation, distribution, and sale of locally produced food through traditional channels or the hybrid systems that evolved during the food access crises of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department can contribute recent statistics about agricultural producers down to the county level that may indicate opportunities and limitations of Hawaii's 6,569 agricultural operations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these resolutions.



## **TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII**

**COMMITTEE REFERRAL: AGR**

**MARCH 20, 2024**

**HCR 43/HR 32, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN TO STRENGTHEN FOOD SECURITY FOR LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES IN HAWAII.**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

The Democratic Party of Hawaii supports HCR 43/HR 32, which requests the Department of Agriculture to develop a strategic plan to strengthen food security for low-income communities in Hawaii.

Food security is a fundamental human right and a critical component of public health and well-being. Hawaii's Aloha+ Challenge established a goal of increasing access to labor and land resources to support production, processing, distribution, and consumption of local food by 2030, with an overall target of 20 to 30 percent of food consumed in Hawaii being grown locally. Additionally, the state's Sustainable Hawaii Initiative set forth a target of doubling local food production by 2020. Yet, low-income communities in Hawaii face significant challenges in accessing nutritious and affordable food, leading to food insecurity and related health disparities.

Promoting local food production and enhancing food security in underserved areas can contribute to better health and well-being, economic security, and environmental sustainability. Therefore, we support developing a strategic plan to increase food security and food production in low-income communities, which requires a comprehensive approach that addresses issues related to food access,

affordability, land use, agricultural production, education and vocational training programs, and community engagement.

Strategic planning efforts should involve collaboration among government agencies, community organizations, agricultural stakeholders, and other relevant entities to effectively leverage resources and expertise, bringing public and private sector entities together to cooperate in helping to end hunger in the islands. Implementing targeted strategies tailored to the unique needs and priorities of different communities can maximize the impact of food security initiatives and ensure equitable access to nutritious food for all residents. Furthermore, investing in programs and initiatives that support local food production, such as community gardens, urban farms, farmers' markets, and agricultural education programs, can strengthen food systems and reduce dependence on imported food.

No one should go hungry in Hawai'i. For the sake of working families across our island home, we must couple our focus on increasing local food production with an emphasis on meeting the food security needs of our most economically vulnerable populations and those who live in rural and remote areas.

Mahalo nui loa,

**Kris Coffield**

*Co-Chair, Legislative Committee*

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**Abby Simmons**

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**RECEIVED**  
**Date & Time**  
Mar 19, 2024, 1:32 pm



**LATE**

March 19, 2024

Senators Shimabukuro, Chang, Fevella, McKelvey and San Buenaventura  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 South Beretania St  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senators:

**Re: HCR 43 – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program– Support**

The Church State Council is the oldest public interest advocacy and legal services organization in the Western United States devoted exclusively to issues of liberty of conscience and religion and the separation of church and state. We are a Seventh-day Adventist organization serving a five-state western region (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada & Utah) for the Adventist Church. We are writing this letter of support for HCR 43.

The Church State Council supports legislation that helps to bring about equality. All Americans are entitled to the fundamental rights of conscience, religious freedom and the pursuit of happiness.

Everyone needs nutritious food to thrive. And, while people are working hard to provide for themselves and their families, approximately 49 million people—that's one in six people in the U.S.—still relied on food assistance.

Hunger can affect people from all walks of life. Millions of people in America are just one job loss, missed paycheck, or medical emergency away from hunger. But hunger doesn't affect everyone equally - some groups like children, seniors, and people of color face hunger at much higher rates.

Thank you for your important work in authoring this measure. We have an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our vulnerable citizens.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dennis Seaton'.

Dennis Seaton  
Director of Government Relations

W W W . C H U R C H S T A T E . O R G

**HCR-43**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 3:34:55 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/20/2024 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Yes to; REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN TO STRENGTHEN FOOD SECURITY FOR LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES IN HAWAII.

**HCR-43**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 9:44:34 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/20/2024 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

GOOD IDEA.

MAHALO!