

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEXTER KISHIDA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2024
1:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

SENATE BILL 2479
RELATING TO THE HAWAII FARM TO FOOD BANK PROGRAM

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

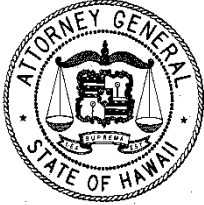
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2479. This bill establishes the Hawaii farm to food bank program and Hawaii food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the state. The Department expresses our **strong support**.

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2024**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 2479, RELATING TO THE HAWAII FARM TO FOOD BANK PROGRAM.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

DATE: Friday, February 02, 2024 **TIME:** 1:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 224 and Videoconference

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Travis T. Moon or Bryan C. Yee, Deputy Attorneys General

Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments regarding this bill.

The bill proposes to establish the Hawaii Farm to Food Bank Program under the Department of Agriculture (DOA) for the purpose of funding food banks and emergency feeding organizations. The bill also creates the Hawaii Food Assistance Program Special Fund to be utilized by the DOA for the purposes of the Hawaii Farm to Food Bank Program.

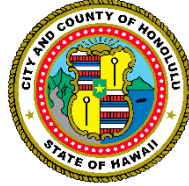
Currently, the bill does not explain why the Hawaii Farm to Food Bank Program could not be implemented with general funds. Section 37-52.3, Hawaii Revised Statutes provides that the Legislature "shall ensure that the special fund: (1) [s]erves a need, as demonstrated by: . . . (C) [a]n explanation of why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process." Thus, we recommend that this bill include an explanation of why the Hawaii Farm to Food Bank Program cannot be implemented successfully with general funds and must instead utilize the Hawaii Food Assistance Program Special Fund.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION
KE KE'ENA HO'OMOHALA WAIWAI
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

711 Kapi'olani Boulevard, FLOOR 12 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-5764 • FAX: (808) 768-4242 • WEBSITE: revitalizeoahu.org

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



AMY ASSELBAYE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PO'O HO'OKO

KYMBERLY SPARLIN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2024

STATE OF HAWAII
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2479
A BILL RELATING TO THE HAWAII FARM TO FOOD BANK PROGRAM

BY
AMY ASSELBAYE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

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

The Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) **strongly supports** SB 2479, which establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawaii farm to food bank program to fund food banks and emergency feeding organizations to purchase, store, and transport fresh, locally grown or produced food to food-insecure communities.

OER has been working towards the goals of this initiative through our Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems programs since 2020. SB 2479 is essential to create a more equitable distribution of locally sourced produce in our islands. Local agriculture is the foundation of a diverse and equitable economy. Through SB 2479, new markets can be established for our local food producers, members of our community will have access to fresh local produce, and our economy will benefit.

Since OER was established in 2020, the Hawai'i Food Bank has been a constant partner in our focus on community, equity, and good jobs. The Food Bank's work not only helps to provide food for our most food insecure communities, but through the purchase of local grown produce positively impacts our economy.

Please pass SB 2479, to secure local food for local people. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 2479.

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 6:14:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Support our local farmers. Feed our residents with locally grown, healthy food. Reduce carbon emissions. Build stronger connected communities.

Strong support for SB2423



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
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Chapter Presidents

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Kohala, Hawai'i

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Chantal Chung
Kona, Hawai'i

Fawn Helekahi-Burns
Hana, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahalawai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Rufina Kaauwai
Molokai

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminka
Kauai

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

The Hawaii Farmers Union United (HFUU) 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 SB2479.**

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

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

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

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF

SB-2479

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 9:36:10 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathryn Ellman	Testifying for The Hawaii Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 1, 2024

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

Re: Testimony in strong support of Bill SB2479

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB2479, which would establish the Hawaii farm to food bank program and Hawaii food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State.

The Hawaii Food Bank serves as a critical first responder during any state crisis and is integral to the health and welfare of our ohana. Food insecurity remains a critical issue in Hawaii. Farm to food bank addresses these food insecurity needs while also investing in local agriculture—a win-win. Hawai‘i Foodbank’s Farm to Foodbank program, launched in March 2020, has been a tremendous success, providing healthy, locally-grown produce to those we serve.

Hawai‘i Foodbank works with a network of more than 200 partner agencies, or emergency feeding organizations, to distribute food to the community. Each partner agency receives food safety and civil rights trainings, and all food is provided to our agencies free of charge. We distributed 19.5 million pounds of food, or food for 16.2 million meals, through these channels in 2023, including nearly 5 million pounds of fresh produce.

Within applicable rules and regulations, I wholeheartedly supports SB2479. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me, (415) 497-7637.

Mahalo,

Kathryn Ellman

First Vice Chair

The Hawaii Food Bank



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

Executive Officers

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

TO: Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 2, 2024
TIME: 1pm
PLACE: Room 224

RE: SB2479 Relating to the Hawaii Farm to Foodbank Program

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.

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

HFIA is in support of this measure. Injecting state funding into our local food systems has a range of benefits. In addition to providing healthy fresh food to people who utilize foodbanks in our state, this measure will also provide a consistent buyer to support our local agricultural producers.

We believe that in order to improve food security, local food production, and resiliency in Hawaii it's vital for the State to support programs like this which support our food industry. We thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2479

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 11:28:38 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Violette Nacapoy	Testifying for Giving Hope Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 1, 2024

Sen. Mike Gabbard, Chair

Sen. Herbert M. “Tim” Richards III, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Testimony in support of SB2479, Relating to the Farm to Food Bank Program

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richard III, and Committee Members:

I am testifying on behalf of Giving Hope Hawaii.

I support SB2479, which will establish the Hawaii farm to food bank program and Hawaii food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Without the help and partnership with Hawai‘i Foodbank, Giving Hope Hawaii would not be able to feed over 3800 families a month suffering from food insecurity. Since January 2023 we have be able to service families, kupuna’s and children with special needs from Waimanalo to Kahuku. Our pantry could not do this without the support from Hawaii Food Bank.

With Hawaii Foodbanks continued support and to get more food we can certainly stomp out food hunger in all our communities.

Our mission is simple: **To give glory to God and to promote human dignity.** Through the tireless efforts of our staff, volunteers, and corporate partners, we provide food and support to the

hungry and needy on Oahu's Windward Side especially our Kūpuna and Keiki with special needs.

"For I was hungry and you fed me. For I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. For I was a stranger and you invited me into your home. For I was naked and you clothed me. For I was sick and you cared for me. For I was in prison and you visited me."

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,

Violette Nacapoy

Chief of Operations, Director

Giving Hope Hawaii



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

February 1, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 2479
RELATING TO THE HAWAII FARM TO FOOD BANK PROGRAM

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:00 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, 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 SB 2479, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Food Bank Program and Hawai'i Food Assistance Program Special Fund to alleviate food shortages in the State.

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

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

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

sources due to COVID-19 with the Hawai'i Foodbank to meet the increased demands of feeding Hawai'i's communities.

A Hawai'i Farm to Food Bank Program with dedicated funding will provide funds to Hawai'i's food banks that support non-profit and community feeding programs by providing locally grown or produced foods to communities in need. This will also help Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers while also providing local nutritional food to those who need it most.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Friday, February 2, 2024; 1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 224
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 2479 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII FARM TO FOOD BANK PROGRAM.

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, 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** Senate Bill No. 2479, RELATING TO THE HAWAII FARM TO FOOD BANK PROGRAM.

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 establish the Hawaii Farm to Food Bank Program (Program) to purchase, store, and transport fresh, locally-grown or produced food to food insecure communities. To accomplish this, this bill would also appropriate \$5,000,000 from the Hawaii Food Assistance Program Special Fund for fiscal year 2024-2025, for uses consistent with the Program.

The HPCA asserts that the COVID-19 pandemic severely threatened the health and welfare of our citizens, especially Hawaii's underprivileged and rural communities. Entire families continue to struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. Our overreliance on tourism has weakened our ability to bounce back from COVID's dire economic realities. The only way for us to protect ourselves from the next global pandemic is for Hawaii to diversify its economic base and become more self-sufficient. And for us to do that, we need to grow more food.

Accordingly, the HPCA urges your favorable consideration of this bill.

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.



46-056 KAMEHAMEHA HWY, SUITE 111
KANEEOHE, HI 96744

February 1, 2024

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

Testimony in support of SB2479, Relating to the Farm to Food Bank Program

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richard III, and Committee Members:

We are testifying on behalf of the Aloha Diaper Bank.

We support SB2479, which will establish the Hawaii farm to food bank program and Hawaii food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Hawai'i Foodbank plays a crucial role in supporting our hunger relief efforts by serving as a vital partner in the fight against food insecurity. Through collaborative initiatives and resource-sharing, Hawai'i Foodbank enables partners like ourselves to access a diverse range of nutritious food supplies, amplifying its capacity to serve the community. Their steadfast commitment to addressing hunger fosters a stronger network that allows partners to reach more individuals in need and provide essential nourishment to build a healthier, more resilient community.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,

Anne Komatsu
Executive Director

Cathy Kerch
Director of Programs and Operations

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Director

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

February 2, 2024
1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference

Re: SB 2479, Relating to Hawai‘i Farm to Food Bank Program

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and committee members thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 2479, which establishes the Hawai‘i farm to food bank program and Hawai‘i food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i SUPPORTS SB 2479.

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 advance practice providers work in our integrated health system to provide our members 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 Hawai‘i supports policies that ensure all Hawai‘i residents have access to affordable, high-quality health care. Further, we support “whole-person care,” including providing access to services and resources that address beneficiaries’ physical, mental, and social needs.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i 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 Hawai‘i provides grants to Hawai‘i food banks administering The Emergency Food Assistance Program’s (TEFAP) Farm to Food Bank Program, which is critical 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 Hawai'i'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.

Last year, these grant funds helped provide over 770,000 meals to kūpuna, keiki, and their families, including: purchasing 38,724 pounds of fresh produce directly from local farm partners, and distributing more than 7,000 farmers market vouchers and 24,000 food boxes.

We support SB 2479 because it will help to further the state's food needs, provide local food producers with a market to support their operations and keep money circulating within the State to boost the local economy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure.



February 2, 2024

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

RE: Testimony in support of SB 2479, Relating to the Hawaii Farm to Food Bank Program

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I am writing in **strong support of SB 2479**, which seeks establish the Hawai'i farm to food bank program and Hawai'i food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State and appropriates funds for this purpose.

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

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

Hawai'i Foodbank established our Farm to Foodbank program during the pandemic through a partnership with the Hawai'i Farm Bureau, with a commitment to purchase locally produced foods from local farmers and ranchers when their regular markets shut down. For the first three years of the Farm to Foodbank program, Hawai'i Foodbank purchased and distributed more than seven million pounds of local produce and proteins, funded primarily through COVID-era federal pandemic relief funds. Since those funds have lapsed, we have continued to fund our Farm to Foodbank program through private philanthropic support and other sources, and are currently purchasing between 25,000 – 30,000 pounds of local produce per week, including culturally relevant products such as poi, 'uala, and 'ulu. SB 2479 would allow us to continue and grow these important programs.



We do request clarification on eligibility to participate in the program as described in the bill. “Food bank” is defined, but “emergency feeding organization” is not; clarification here would be helpful.

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

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

Mahalo for your consideration.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank



To: The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Friday, February 2, 2024, 1pm

In strong support of SB2479

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

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **strongly supports SB2479** that establishes the Hawaii Farm to Food Bank Program and Hawaii Food Assistance Program Special Fund to alleviate food shortages in the State.

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

Please pass **SB2479** so that we all may reap these benefits.

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

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: SB2479

Wednesday, February 2nd, 2024 1:00pm, Conference Room 224

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

HAPA strongly supports SB2479, which establishes the Hawai'i farm to food bank program and Hawai'i food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State.

This measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai'i to local communities for distribution. This program will address rising hunger and food insecurity in Hawai'i¹² while providing local food producers with additional markets thus benefiting our economy and ag sector.

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

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

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

Please support SB2479 to help support our local food markets and help grow our local food economy while supporting local families in reducing hunger and obtaining quality food.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Gabbard', written in a cursive style.

¹ <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2023/12/28/report-food-insecurity-soared-hawaii-inflation-pushed-up-prices/>

² <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2023/12/28/hawaii-news/food-insecurity-rises-in-hawaii-amid-increasing-costs/>



Anne Frederick
Executive Director

Friday, February 2, 2024; 1:00 pm
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

To: Senator Michael Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert Richards, Vice Chair

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

Re: **Testimony in Support of SB 2479
Relating To The Hawai'i Farm To Food Bank Program**

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 SB 2479 which establishes the Hawai'i farm to food bank program and the Hawai'i food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the state.

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. The Hawai'i farm to food bank program will serve the State's food needs, provide local food producers with a market to support their operations, and keep moneys circulating within the State to boost the local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

February 1, 2024

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

Testimony in support of SB2479, Relating to the Farm to Food Bank Program

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richard III, and Committee Members:

I am testifying on behalf of Angel Network Charities.

I support SB2479, which will establish the Hawaii farm to food bank program and Hawaii food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State.

The Hawaii Foodbank provides us food to serve over 1200 families in our community a week. Without this much needed food support and help, our community would be food deprived

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,

*Jewell Tuitele
President
Angel Network Charities*



ARMED SERVICES YMCA

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

February 1, 2024

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

Testimony in support of SB2479, Relating to the Farm to Food Bank Program

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richard III, and Committee Members:

I am testifying on behalf of the Hawaii Foodbank,

I support SB2479, which will establish the Hawaii farm to food bank program and Hawaii food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Through our partnership with the Hawaii Foodbank our Armed Services YMCA Hawaii is able to provide much needed nourishment to military families here in Hawaii experiencing food insecurity. We know that a happy and healthy military force provides for a more secure nation, and it's our honor to help in those efforts alongside the Hawaii Foodbank.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Keola Taniguchi

Keola Taniguchi
Deputy Director
Armed Services YMCA Hawai`i
100 McChord Street, Building 1859
JBPHH, Hawaii 96853
Phone: 808-448-1972
Email: ktaniguchi@asymcahi.org

ARMED SERVICES YMCA HAWAI`I
100 McCHORD ST., BLDG. 1859, JBPHH, HI 96853
STRENGTHENING OUR MILITARY `OHANA SINCE 1917



February 1, 2024

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

Testimony in support of SB2479, Relating to the Farm to Food Bank Program

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richard III, and Committee Members:

I am testifying on behalf of *Elepaio Social Services and the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center*.

I support SB2479, which will establish the Hawaii farm to food bank program and Hawaii food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State.

The Hawaii Foodbank, Elepaio Social Services and the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center has a long-standing relationship, working together since 2018 to provide healthy, nutritious food to our most vulnerable on the Waianae coast. Through our partnership we have fed community through large scale emergency food distributions during the pandemic and continue to feed through our 11 weekly school pantries, 5 weekly kupuna pantries and quarterly community food distributions. Early on when establishing our relationship, we came to an understanding that as a Health Center we would not accept sugary, high fat foods to serve our community where nutrition related chronic diseases are prevalent. They have been incredibly supportive in making sure that lots of fresh produce, lean proteins and low sodium food items be delivered to support the close to 5,000 keiki and kupuna we serve weekly.

With the exponential increase in food insecure on our coast as a result of inflation and ending of pandemic relief programs, this funding is vital to ensuring our community still has access to the fresh, healthy food that will help them to thrive. Together we are working on not just filling bellies, but providing food that is nutritious and supports our local food system. We are working on providing NUTRITION SECURITY.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,

Alicia Higa

Alicia Higa
Executive Director, Elepaio Social Services
Chief Health Equity Officer, WCCHC

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 5:22:52 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicole Galase	Testifying for Hawaii Cattlemen's Council	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council supports this measure



HIPHI Board

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University of Hawai'i at Hilo

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Department of Pediatrics

Kathleen Roche, MS, RN, CENP
Kaiser Permanente

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

Garret Sugai
HMSA

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

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &
Evaluation

Community Health
Worker Initiatives

COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free
Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce
Development

Date: January 31, 2024

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

Re: SB 2479 Relating to the Hawai'i Farm to Food Bank Program

Hrg: Friday, February 2, 2024 1:00 PM

Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, convened by the Hawai'i Public Health Instituteⁱ appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **Support of SB 2479**, which would establish and fund a farm to food bank program.

Consistent Demand

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

Help the Local Economy

This program will help local farmers sell more food within the State. The food they will go to those most in need here in Hawai'i that depend on the food bank system. This investment will flow in all sectors of our economy as farmers and food distributors spend their earned money on other goods and services.

Sincerely,

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

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

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



WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

February 2, 2024

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

RE: Senate Bill 2479 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII FARM TO FOOD BANK PROGRAM
Hearing date: February 2, 2024, 1:00 p.m.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Young Brothers, LLC ("YB") offering **SUPPORT** for Senate Bill 2479 – Relating to the Hawaii Farm to Food Bank Program.

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

This measure would establish the Hawaii farm to food bank program and Hawaii food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State and appropriate necessary funds.

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Jay Ana
President



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Friday, February 2, 2024 — 1:00 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports SB 2479, Relating to the Hawai'i Farm to Food Bank Program.

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

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

Ulupono supports SB 2479, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Food Bank Program and Hawai'i Food Assistance Program Special Fund to alleviate food shortages in the state.

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

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i

COUNTY COUNCIL

Mel Rapozo, Chair
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
Bill DeCosta
Ross Kagawa



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk
Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-4188
Facsimile: (808) 241-6349
Email: cokcouncil@kauai.gov

Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766

January 31, 2024

**TESTIMONY OF ADDISON BULOSAN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
SB 2479, RELATING TO THE HAWAII FARM TO FOOD BANK PROGRAM
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Friday, February 2, 2024
1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224
Via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of SB 2479, Relating to the Hawai'i Farm to Food Bank Program. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

I wholeheartedly support the intent of SB 2479, which would greatly affect the Kaua'i community.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2479. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

ADDISON BULOSAN
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AAO:ss

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 1:20:45 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kerestin Walker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB2479, an important initiative for the people of Hawaii that aims to establish the "Farm to Food Bank Hawaii" program. This program is critical for addressing food insecurity and promoting the well-being of marginalized and indigenous community members, especially Hawaiians, across our islands.

Access to fresh, locally grown foods is not only essential for physical health but also holds profound cultural significance for Hawaiians. Our traditional cuisine emphasizes the importance of locally sourced, seasonal ingredients, reflecting a deep connection to the land and the values of sustainability and community. By promoting the distribution of fresh, locally grown foods through food banks, SB2479 honors and preserves these cultural traditions while also addressing the unique nutritional needs of our indigenous communities.

Moreover, the "Farm to Food Bank Hawaii" program recognizes the disproportionate impact of food insecurity on marginalized communities in Hawaii, including low-income households and communities of color. By facilitating the donation of surplus agricultural products to food banks, SB2479 ensures that all residents, regardless of their economic status, have access to nutritious foods. This initiative not only promotes food equity but also strengthens our sense of community and aloha spirit as we come together to support our neighbors in need.

Additionally, SB2479 acknowledges the critical link between fresh foods and mental wellness. Studies have shown that a diet rich in fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains is associated with improved mental health outcomes, including reduced risk of depression and anxiety. By providing access to fresh, healthy foods through the "Farm to Food Bank Hawaii" program, SB2479 promotes mental wellness and supports the overall well-being of our communities.

In conclusion, SB2479 is a necessary and meaningful initiative that addresses the pressing issue of food insecurity while honoring our cultural heritage and promoting the health and wellness of Hawaiians and all residents of our state. I urge you to support this important legislation for the benefit of our communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of SB2479.

Sincerely,
Kerestin Walker

February 1, 2024

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

Testimony in support of SB2479, Relating to the Farm to Food Bank Program

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richard III, and Committee Members:

I am testifying on behalf of Kapaa Missionary Church.

I support SB2479, which will establish the Hawaii farm to food bank program and Hawaii food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Our church appreciates the food banks' help with providing much needed food. Many in our community depends on our church for food that they may not be able to obtain due to these difficult economic times.

This bill is a blessing not only to our local families who may be employed with the farms, the farmers who depend on steady income, but also to those who are hungry. Our state would be more self reliant for local grown food.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,

Valerie Chang
Volunteer at Kapaa Missionary Church

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 6:17:41 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carrie Brennan, N.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Please support SB2479

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

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

Mahalo!

Carrie Brennan

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 6:22:44 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please pass this Bill. I am in support of this Bill. We have the conditions & excellent climate to provide food grown right here in Hawaii

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 6:24:22 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

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

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

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

Mahalo for your consideration!

Lisa Lee

Honolulu

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 6:52:10 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

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

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

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

Mahalo for your consideration!

Keala Fung, Honolulu

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 7:15:04 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lucie Schrage	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

This measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai‘i to local communities for distribution. This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai‘i, benefiting our economy. Additionally, Hawai‘i’s food banks are not currently able to meet the needs of potential natural disasters or halts to food supply chains.

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

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

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

Mahalo for your consideration!

Lucie Schrage, ‘Ewa

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 8:31:50 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mamiko Carroll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Senator Richards, Senator DeCoite, Senator Rhoads, and Senator Awa,

I am writing in SUPPORT of SB2479, establishing the Hawaii farm to food bank program and Hawaii food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State. This is an investment in our communities, especially our most vulnerable populations.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of SB2479.

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 9:06:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

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

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

Mahalo for your consideration!

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 11:29:57 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marlies Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It will creat jobs and we grow our food locally

SB-2479

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 10:47:08 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha mai. This bill establishes the Hawaii farm to food bank program and Hawaii food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State. I lead a "social supermarket" food pantry at my church where every week about 130 people come for free food. Most supplement their SNAP funds which often run out by the end of the month. It would be good for both Hawaii farmers and Hawaii's low income people to have a state-funded program to promote food security and support our farmers. Please give favorable consideration to this bill.

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 3:13:11 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

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

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

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

Mahalo for your consideration!

Sven Sorge

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 7:59:29 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maki Morinoue	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Please support SB2479

As a fourth-generation coffee farmer with an old school agro-food forest, we are diversifying away from mono-cropping for the betterment and more responsible land use as well as addressing sustainability and independence from outside shipments. This measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai'i to local communities for distribution. This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai'i, benefiting our economy.

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

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

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

Mahalo for your consideration!

Maki Morinoue
Hōlualoa

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 6:22:38 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I write in SUPPORT of SB2479. This measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai'i to local communities for distribution. This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai'i, benefiting our economy.

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

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

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

Our local food producers need more avenues to sell the food grown on the islands and this would support them monetarily and production-wise.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 8:22:00 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

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

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

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

Mahalo for your consideration!

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Ezgi Green, Waialua

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 8:28:10 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am writing as a small Family farmer asking that you please support SB2479. This measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai‘i to local communities for distribution. This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai‘i, benefiting our economy.

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

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

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

Mahalo for your consideration!

Susan Stayton, Lawai, Kauai, HI

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 10:11:13 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This bill is crucial for island communities to reduce dependency on imported food.

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 11:21:56 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorraine Newman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I ask that you support this bill.

The measure is a beautiful example of a healthy "win-win" circle benefiting all involved.

We already know that while we want to encourage local farmers and other food producers, it is often difficult for this sector to make ends meet.

A secure and continued source of funding would make a huge difference here.

Schools, hospitals, food banks and other local consumers that both county and state readily support have already stated they prefer locally sourced fresh food, and would choose this first if it is economically viable and the source reliable.

This measure goes a long way to helping make sure funds spent on producers and consumers benefits the other.

Funds spent are thus doubled as they benefit both sides at the same time, with the additional benefit of the funds remaining and re-circling within the local economy.

This is a no brainer.

Mahalo for listening.

Lorraine Newman

Kilauea, Kauai

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 12:19:35 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Morgan Dobbins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I'm writing in very strong support of SB2479. This measure would provide a funding source for the program to fund state food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai'i to local communities for distribution. This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai'i, benefiting our economy.

One of the key issues I have noticed while working alongside the Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i, is that so much of the produce that is donated from big name stores and local farmers goes to waste because of issues with storage as well as being able to process and preserve the food. In conversations I've had, I've learned that many rural communities have cannery facilities or other facilities where local farmers can sell their excess produce and it can be preserved through canning, jams, and other preservation methods and then sold to the community. This is critically needed infrastructure if we are to reduce food waste, feed our communities, and fully resepect the abundance of our 'Āina.

In addition to reducing hunger, food banks help to build communities by providing jobs and purchasing goods and services from local businesses, creating an economic stimulus in the areas they serve. Importantly, food donations also help low-income families free up money to meet other basic needs. Growing, processing, and distributing food locally creates and sustains community-based jobs. Direct marketing channels between farmers and consumers boosts local farmers' incomes.

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

Mahalo for your consideration and for your service to your community and our state!

Morgan Dobbins, Kapa'a, Kaua'i

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 2:39:44 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am writing to respectfully ask that you support SB2479, Farm to Food Bank Program.

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

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

SB-2479

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 11:45:06 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am writing in support of SB2479: Farm To Food Bank Program.

This measure would provide a source of funding for the program to fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport food grown or produced in Hawai'i to local communities for distribution.

This program will serve our food needs, provide local food producers with a supporting market and keep money in Hawai'i, benefiting our economy.

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

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

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

Like the awesome island self-sufficiency demonstrated by the Hawaiian ahupua'a system, let us work to restore island food resilience and self-sufficiency.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration!

Me ke aloha,

Irena Bliss

Ha'ikū, Maui 96708

SB-2479

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 8:53:41 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Jana Bogs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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

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

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

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

Mahalo for your consideration!

Jana Bogs, PhD

Naalehu, Hawaii

SB-2479

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 10:44:27 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristin Mills	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB2479. Hawaii has a high food insecurity level. Yet we have the climate that supports growing food year round. We also have high overweight and obesity levels and our residents need more access to affordable and healthy food, such as fresh grown produce.

This bill can help reduce our food insecurity and improve the diet of Hawaii residents, leading to improved health.

Please support HB2479.

Sincerely,

Kristin Mills

Maui resident, parent, epidemiologist, and health educator

SB-2479

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 11:52:24 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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

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

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

Mahalo for your consideration!

SB-2479

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 12:59:57 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Virginia Tincher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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

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

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

Mahalo for your consideration!

Virginia Tincher

Honolulu

SB-2479

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 1:52:50 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eloise Bradham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support bill 2479.

February 01, 2024

Strong Support of SB2479 Relating to the Farm to Food Bank Program

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Herbert M. "Tim" Richards,
III, Vice Chair

Members of the Senate Committee on
Agriculture and Environment

Hrg: February 2nd, 2024 at 1:00 PM, Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

My name is Lauren Loor and I am submitting testimony in my personal capacity. I live in Kahului, Maui, and I strongly support SB2479, which would establish the Hawai'i farm to food bank program and Hawai'i food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the state. I support this bill because I care about my community and believe that everyone deserves dignity and should have access to healthy food. As a community, we should lead by taking care of one another, especially those who are experiencing financial hardship. This program will help get healthy, nutritious, locally grown food into the hands of our community members who need it the most. The farm to food bank program will help widen the access to healthy food for those who depend on our food system safety nets such as food banks. Everyone deserves access to healthy food across our state. Food insecurity is a major issue our state faces as the cost of living and food prices continue to rise. Food security has a tremendous impact on the health of our community from keiki to kūpuna and everyone in between. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw firsthand the impacts of food insecurity when the lines at distribution sites grew and food banks across the state had to provide food for 5 times the amount of people they would normally serve. In Maui County, the Maui Food Bank was able to work with the County of Maui to purchase produce and products from our local farmers to be distributed at the Maui Food Bank distribution sites. This included rural areas of Maui, Molokai, and Lāna'i. I believe this program will help restore dignity for those who need the support and start tackling hunger in our community. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

I strongly support SB2479 and respectfully ask you to pass this out of committee.

Mahalo,
Lauren Loor
Kahului, Maui, 96732

SB-2479

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 8:30:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TJ Sao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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

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

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

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

Mahalo for your consideration!

TJ Sao, Pearl City, HI 96782