

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2023
10:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 308 AND VIDEOCONFERENCE

HOUSE BILL 974 HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill 974. The purpose of this bill is to establish and fund a full-time program specialist position within the department of agriculture to seek and write grants, provide technical assistance, provide grant program administration, perform needs assessments, make recommendations to the chairperson of the board of agriculture and assist farmers, ranchers and other agricultural operators in applying for and obtaining grants offered by the United States Department of Agriculture and other sources, and to assist them with fulfilling and complying with the requirements of the grants. The Department supports this bill. There is an appropriation requested for the purposes of this measure.

The Department comments that testimony submitted by Ulupono for a similar measure, HB974 included the securing of more than \$15 million in federal funding through the efforts of three grant positions at three agriculture focused non-profits funded by Ulupono from 2020 – 2021 and most recently, in 2022, Ulupono funded a grant writer whose work enabled CTAHR to secure a \$40 million USDA Climate Smart Commodities grant that provides direct funding to Hawaii's farmers and ranchers that practice climate smart agriculture.

The position within the Department will prioritize the federal formula grants (block grants) that are available to Hawaii via an allocation of funds that are awarded upon an approved application and not subject to competition.

It has been announced that through the efforts of the Hawaii Congressional delegation, the Infrastructure Improvement and Jobs Act allocated \$2.8 billion to Hawaii. These are the opportunities the position will pursue.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure



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March 1, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 974, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
10:00 AM

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

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 974, HD1, which establishes a program specialist position within the Department of Agriculture and appropriates moneys to fund the position. HB 974, HD1 prioritizes assistance for farmers and ranchers who produce local food that is at least partially consumed within the State.

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

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Wednesday, March 1, 2023 — 10:00 a.m.

Ulupono Initiative strongly supports HB 974 HD1, Relating to Agriculture.

Dear Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

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

Ulupono strongly supports HB 974 HD1, which establishes and appropriates funds for a program specialist position within the Department of Agriculture (DOA) and prioritizes assistance for farmers and ranchers who produce local food that is at least partially consumed within the State.

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

Ulupono currently funds three grant and loan writer programs with The Kohala Center, the O'ahu Agriculture and Conservation Association (OACA), and the Hawai'i Farm Bureau. From 2020 to 2021, these three grant and loan writer programs were able to secure more than \$15 million in federal funds via USDA agricultural programs. In 2022, Ulupono funded a grant writer to enable UH CTAHR's USDA Climate Smart Commodities grant application. UH CTAHR was awarded a massive ~\$40 million USDA Climate Smart Commodities grant that will provide direct funding to Hawai'i farmers and ranchers that practice climate smart agriculture. Similarly, Ulupono believes a dedicated DOA grant writer will be well worth the investment, and result in millions of dollars in federal funding to further support the State's agricultural efforts.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



Food+ Policy Internship 2023

food@purplemaia.org

To: Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Committee on Finance

Subject: HB974

Aloha mai,

Food+ Policy Supports HB974, which would create a grant specialist position in the department of agriculture to support farmers and ranchers that produce local food.

This kind of technical support would help address a top need of Hawai'i farmers: access to capital. A grant specialist would be a small but possibly very effective step government can take to support the local food system.

Mahalo,
Kelsey Amos & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

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

In 2023, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students from throughout the UH System. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.