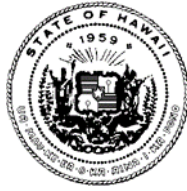


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

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

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

February 20, 2024

TO: The Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

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

Hearing: Thursday, February 22, 2024, 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308, State Capitol & Video Conference

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the measure and defers to the Department of Agriculture. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

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

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

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

The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive dollar-for-dollar matching program helps SNAP participants double their purchasing power. Especially during this time of elevated food costs, continuing the program doubles the value of SNAP participants' benefits spent on Hawaii-grown fresh fruits and vegetables. This program also supports local farmers and keeps food dollars in the local economy.

February 20, 2024

Page 2

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

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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2024
1:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 308

HOUSE BILL 2771, HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Chairs Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Members of the Committee:

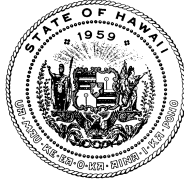
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2771, HD1. This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance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

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

While the department has requested \$1,000,000 in its budget request, we strongly support the legislation for the \$2,000,000 which would significantly leverage federal dollars.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





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

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

REPRESENTATIVE KYLE T. YAMASHITA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date: February 22, 2024

Room Number: Conference Room 308

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

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

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

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

14 Major health authorities including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Centers for
15 Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization recommend increasing fruit
16 and vegetable intake as a means to prevent chronic disease and improve overall health. ^{i,ii,iii}

1 However, access to fresh produce for income-limited individuals can be difficult and contributes
2 to poorer diets and higher rates of chronic disease than middle class and wealthy individuals
3 with more options where they live, learn, work, play and gather.^{iv,v}

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

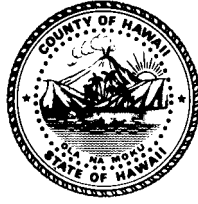
^{viii} Fitzgerald, Katherine. *Double Up in Farmers' Markets: The Consumer Experience*. Fair Food Network, 2015.

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

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

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

Susan L.K. Lee Loy
Council Member
District 3



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

HAWAI‘I COUNTY COUNCIL

25 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai‘i 96720

February 22 , 2024

The Honorable Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

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

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

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee on Finance,

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

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

HB 2771, HD1 reflects our local community’s recognition of the urgency to address the issue of food security and is a positive step towards protecting the public – especially our most vulnerable families in need. We stand ready to support the health of our families and the generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan L.K. Lee Loy".

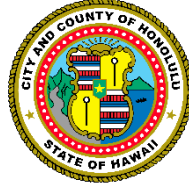
Susan “Sue” L.K. Lee Loy
Council Member, County of Hawai‘i

Hawai‘i County Is an Equal Opportunity Provider And Employer

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

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2024

STATE OF HAWAII
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2771
A BILL RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY**

BY
AMY ASSELBAYE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members:

The Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) **strongly supports** HB2771 to fund Hawai'i's Double Up Food Bucks program, which makes locally-grown produce affordable for Hawai'i's low income consumers.

The federal food stamp program—better known as SNAP—is essential to battling the hunger crisis in low-income Hawai'i households. The data used by the USDA to justify a family's monthly SNAP allotment does not accurately measure the cost of food in Hawai'i. Hawai'i families run out of money by the end of the month when purchasing groceries, making fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables unaffordable. This results in most of these SNAP funds being spent on cheap, imported food. To stimulate the local economy, Hawai'i's DA BUX program can keep these federal funds right here by doubling the amount available for families receiving SNAP to purchase fresh, local produce.

DA BUX offers a 100% return on a very modest investment. The \$2 million proposed in this bill would be matched with another \$2 million in federal dollars, which will allow the program to expand to more retailers and communities across the islands. This matched investment will put more local foods into the hands of our community, and more money into the hands of our local farmers and businesses.

This program is a win for local families, local farmers, and our local economy. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB2771.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 22, 2024; 1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308
Via Videoconference**

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

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

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

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

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

This bill would take effect on July 1, 3000.

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

Testimony on House Bill No. 2771, House Draft 1
Thursday, February 22, 2024; 1:00 p.m.
Page 2

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

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

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

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



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents

Clarence Baber
Kohala, Hawai'i

Odysseus Yacalis
East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Andrea Drayer
Ka'u, Hawai'i

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 Urminska
Kauai

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the House Finance Committee,

The Hawaii Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports HB2771.**

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

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

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 1:24:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Kohn MD	We Are One, Inc. - www.WeAreOne.cc - WAO	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly Support DA BUX Program

Families Eat Healthy

- DA BUX discounts are encouraging low-income SNAP-EBT shoppers to buy more local fruits and vegetables.
- In 2023, SNAP-EBT shoppers participating in DA BUX reported consuming more fruits and vegetables than the average U.S. adult.

Supports Local Farmers and Businesses

- DA BUX supports over 530 farms across the state.
- In 2023, participating food hubs, including farmer’s markets, increased local produce sales to SNAP shoppers by 186% on average.
- Grows the scale of our local food demand.
- Farmers have the opportunity to feed local residents rather than exporting products to out of state markets.

Positively Impacts Hawai‘i’s Economy

- DA BUX program has a positive financial effect. For every SNAP dollar spent, an additional \$1.54 goes into the local economy.
- [A \\$2M investment in DA BUX would result in over \\$12.8M in economic activity.](#)

Opportunity for Federal Match

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

Mahalo for you kōkua,

www.WeAreOne.cc



2024 Network Members

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

Hawaiihungeraction.org

House Committee on Agriculture

February 22, 2024, 1:00PM

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

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the committee,

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

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

DA BUX is an elegant and cost-effective solution. By offering a 50% discount on locally-grown produce to SNAP shoppers, the program channels more of these federal stimulus monies to our local farms and food businesses. In fact,

to date, DA BUX has directly supported over 530 local farms. Local food hubs have reported a 186% increase in local produce sales to SNAP shoppers. And the program is projected to directly result in nearly \$5 million annually (2023) in local produce sales.

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

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



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Thursday, February 22, 2024 — 1:00 p.m.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i

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

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

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

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Attachment

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

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

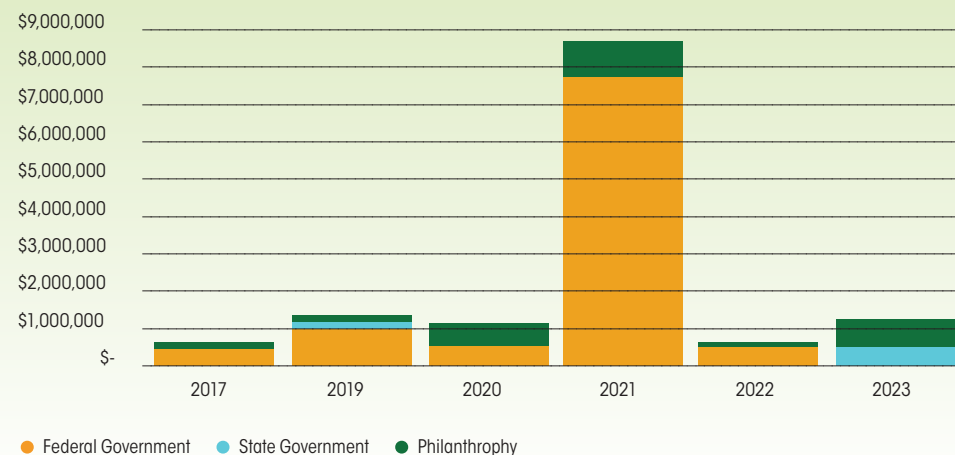
³ 80% of farmers lost their markets and half of them lost between 75% and 100% of their customers, based on a post-fire survey conducted by Hawai'i Farmers Union United.

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

Opportunity to Expand a Proven, Highly Impactful Program

DA BUX FUNDING BY SOURCE (2017 - 2023)

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



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

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

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

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

HAWAII BY THE NUMBERS

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

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

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

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

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



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



HOW 'DA BUX' WORKS

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

THE CHALLENGE

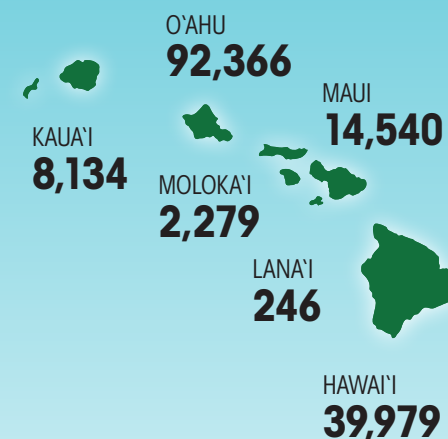
In fall 2023, the program was denied federal funding primarily due to a lack of a sustained State funding. Based on the projected spend down rate, current funding of the DA BUX program will only last through August 2024. Hawai'i SNAP beneficiaries have been hit with both increasing food costs and decreasing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

THE OPPORTUNITY

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



ISLAND BREAKDOWN OF SNAP PARTICIPANTS (as of August 2023)



HAWAII BY THE NUMBERS

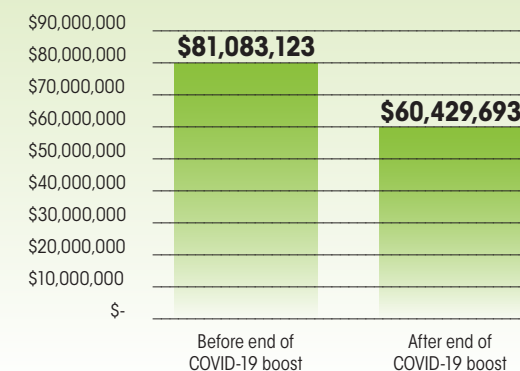
90% IMPORTED FOOD

91% HIGHER FOOD COSTS

26% INCREASE IN FOOD PRICES SINCE JANUARY 2020

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

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



State Support is Key to Federal and Philanthropic Funding



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

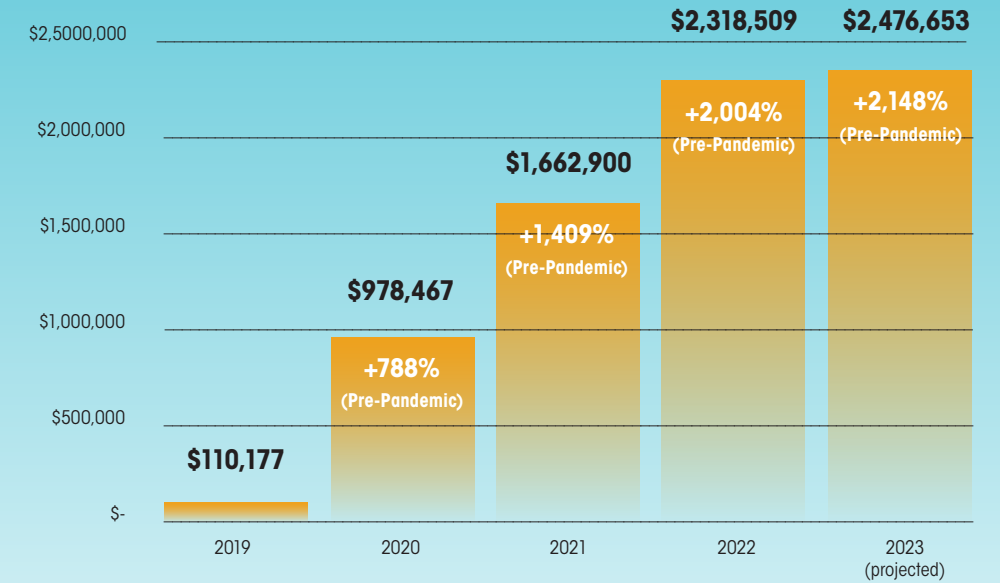
I really love this program because I am diabetic and need fresh veggies and fruits to help keep me healthy.

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

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

ANNUAL DA BUX DISCOUNTS ISSUED TO SNAP SHOPPERS

Participation has steadily increased in Hawai'i



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

LOCAL FOOD SALES DRIVEN BY SNAP DA BUX*

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

THE CHALLENGE

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

THE OPPORTUNITY

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

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

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

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



INCREASE FOOD ACCESS FOR MAUI RESIDENTS

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

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





STIMULATE ECONOMIC RECOVERY FOR MAUI FARMERS

THE CHALLENGE

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

THE OPPORTUNITY

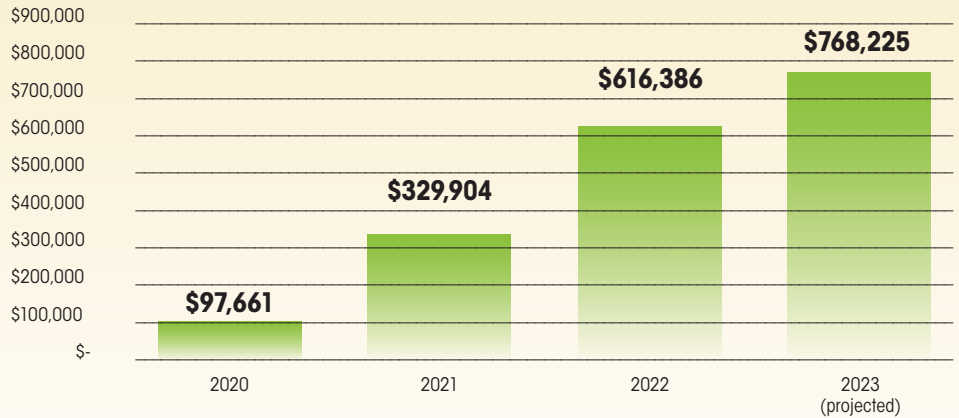
- DA BUX expands the customer base of Maui Island producers. There are currently 72 farmers/producers that are supported by the program.
- DA BUX supports Maui Island farmers and ranchers in continuing to operate by increasing sales and farm profits. Local food sales driven by the program on Maui Island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

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



MAUI ISLAND: LOCAL FOOD SALES DRIVEN BY SNAP DA BUX

(Annual Sales)



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

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



THE FOOD BASKET
HAWAII ISLAND’S FOOD BANK

13 DA BUX RETAIL LOCATIONS ACROSS MAUI ISLAND





To: The House Committee on Finance (FIN)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Thursday, February 22, 2024, 1pm

In strong support of HB2771 HD1

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the FIN 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 HB2771 HD1.**

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

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

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

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

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Director

Before:
House Committee on Finance
The Honorable Kyle Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

February 22, 2024
1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308 & Via Videoconference

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

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

Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i SUPPORTS HB 2771, HD1.

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

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

Kaiser Permanente prioritizes food security as an area of community health focus, meaning that all people, in all communities, have access to sufficient, affordable, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy lifestyle. However, we know that food insecurity has increased due to the effects of inflation and the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, Kaiser Permanente provides grants to Hawai‘i food banks administering The Emergency

Food Assistance Program's (TEFAP) Farm to Food Bank Program, which serves a critical role for many families facing food insecurities.

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

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

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

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



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 Finance

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 22, 2024
TIME: 1pm
PLACE: Room 308

RE: HB2771 HD1 Relating to Food Security

Position: Support

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

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

HFIA is in strong support of this measure. The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program, also known as Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX, is a way to combat food insecurity, support healthy eating, and support Hawaii's agricultural sector.

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

Fruits, vegetables, and healthy proteins tend to be more expensive per calorie than less healthy foods, which makes eating healthy a challenge for those with limited food budgets. Doubling the purchasing power for SNAP users makes it easier to choose fruits, vegetables, and healthy proteins when shopping. Data has shown that families use the Double Up Food Bucks Program eat more fruits and vegetables, a greater variety of fruits and vegetables, and fewer unhealthy foods. Getting more fruits and vegetables for each SNAP dollar also means that low-income families will have more in their budget to spend on things like housing and healthcare.

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

This Double Up Food Bucks program also brings vital funds into our state. The program is supported by GusNIP grants and other funding sources. By investing in this program the state is encouraging continued support and funding from other sources and pulling resources into Hawaii's food systems. Each dollar spent in this program goes into Hawaii's agricultural sector and circulates from there into the larger local economy. This is a win for SNAP users, a win for Hawaii farmers, a win for Hawaii retailers, and a win for Hawaii's economy.

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



COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

BILL HB2771 HD1
POSITION: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: February 22, 2024

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way supports HB277 HD1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In addition, this bill declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded, and makes locally-grown produce affordable to Hawaii's low-income residents.

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

Aloha United Way's 211 Information & Referral call center has been the primary entity conducting SNAP prescreening in our community since FY2018. Food as a category remains the second highest requested need from 211 callers after affordable housing. Access to healthful food that is also affordable is a rare commodity for SNAP beneficiaries. This measure not only benefits the SNAP consumers, but also serves to support our local farmers.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kayla Keehu-Alexander".

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Suzanne Skjold".

Suzanne Skjold
Chief Operating Officer
Aloha United Way

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 4:48:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Save Medicaid Hawaii supports HB2771 HD1



February 22, 2024

House Committee on Finance

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

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members,

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

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

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

Hawai'i Foodbank is Hawai'i's largest hunger relief organization, fiercely dedicated to our mission of nourishing our 'ohana today while working to end hunger tomorrow. We work with a network of 200 partner agencies across O'ahu and Kaua'i to provide food assistance to an average of more than 150,000 people each month. Last year, we distributed food for more than 16.2 million meals across the islands we directly serve, including 5 million pounds of fresh produce. Together with the Maui Food Bank, serving Maui County, and The Food Basket, serving Hawai'i Island, our network of food banks and partner agencies provide food assistance to all those facing hunger across the State.

Mahalo for your consideration.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO
Hawai'i Foodbank



February 20, 2024

To: The Honorable Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

I am in strong support of bill HB2771 and the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

Maui Hub's mission is two-fold: create a reliable farm-to-market pipeline that supports our local farmers in ways that allow them to focus on rapidly increasing production, and ensure equitable access to locally produced food for all Maui residents, even our most vulnerable.

DABUX benefits have been a major reason that many of Maui Hub's EBT customers switched to Maui Hub. There is such a prevalent conception that "locally grown food is too expensive" many folks automatically avoid it and just shop at big box stores. Processed, shelf stable foods are cheaper, and that's what we see folks consuming. **DABUX benefits actually incentivize EBT customers to buy local, and make it as, if not more affordable to eat fresh local produce.** Maui Hub's staff interacts with our regular customers weekly when they come to pick up their groceries and the feedback from folks who have been able to incorporate fresh food and vegetables into their family's diets is nothing short of inspiring.

"I could never afford kalo before. Now we eat it every week."

"My keiki never liked tomatoes until I bought locally grown ones!"

"It's cheaper to make luau stew for my family than it is to grab MacDonalds."

These are just a few things I personally have heard from regular customers who have made the switch to Maui Hub and locally grown food, almost entirely motivated by DABUX benefits. These are habits that will stick, that will change the pallets of the kids in the family, and will give them a healthy relationship with food and set them up for better health outcomes in the future.

The incentive DABUX creates for EBT/SNAP users to buy local products also greatly benefits our local farmers. In 2022, Maui Hub's EBT sales were \$137,882. In 2023, that increased to \$200,035. In 2023, \$91,665 of EBT sales were DABUX reimbursed, which means that went straight into the pockets of our local farmers.

DABUX is a program that ensures our most vulnerable are able to make healthy food choices, while also directing funds to our local farmers, who are the backbone of our local food economy. If Hawai'i is to meet it's goals to increase local food production across the board, we must put resources into strengthening the market for local food, and toward paying farmers fair prices for their goods. DABUX does both of these things.

Please continue to fund and support this program.

Sincerely,

Autumn Ness
Maui Hub
Co-Founder and President, Board of Directors
808 250 4200

To: House Committee on Finance
Re: **HB 2771 HD1 – Relating to Food Security**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
February 22, 2024, 1:00 PM

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members,

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

Investing DA BUX is investing in our keiki, as nearly two-thirds of SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) participants in Hawai'i are in families with children.¹ Especially with highest cost of living and the second-most expensive groceries in the nation,² it is nearly impossible for the low-income families in Hawai'i who qualify for SNAP to afford to buy healthy food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

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

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

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

⁴ <https://dabux.org/for-advocates>

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



House Committee on Finance

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

Wednesday, February 22nd, 2024 1:00pm, Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Members of the Committees,

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

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

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

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

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

Please support HB2771 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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

Anne Frederick
Executive Director



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 22, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 2771, HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
1:00 PM

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

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

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

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

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

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 9:32:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isabella	Hana Farmers Market	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Bill HB2771 as it is a blessing to our community and to the community members that are in need of a bit more support during these times of "inflation".

PUKALANI SUPERETTE

February 21, 2024

To: Representative Kyle Yamashita, Committee Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Committee Vice Chair
Finance Committee

Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of HB2771

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

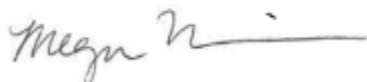
DA BUX benefits many aspects of the state's food system. By offering a 50% discount on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables for low-income SNAP-EBT shoppers, DA BUX helps farmers increase their customer base and compete with imported produce, while also supporting the local economy, generating increased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

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

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

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

Sincerely,



Megan Nakashima
President

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 4:53:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Crawford	Hawaii Farmers Union United - Hana Chapter	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HFUU Hana Chapter strongly supports Da Bux program, which is available through the Hana Farmers Market (a program of HFUU Hana), and gives our consumers in remote East Maui a great way to make healthy local produce more affordable for SNAP-EBT shoppers, and give them an incentive to spend their EBT dollars supporting our local farmers. HFM has successfully offered the opportunity to accept Da Bux for all our vendors for several years now and we look forward to continuing to offering this service in partnership with Hawaii Foodbasket in the future.



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

February 21, 2024

To: The Honorable, Chair Yamashita
The Honorable, Vice Chair Kitagawa
Committee on Finance

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

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

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST
ALBRECHT

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

ANN EBESUNO
BOARD CHAIR

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Vice Chair Kitagawa,

MARK
KRZYZANOWSKI
VICE-CHAIR

We are in strong support of HB2771 HD1 and the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

DENNIS LIN
TREASURER

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

JULIA ZEE
SECRETARY

STEPHEN UEDA

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA
COLLINS

Philanthropy has largely carried the weight of our GusNIP match needs over the years; however, we cannot expect philanthropy to meet this need over the long term. We are humbly requesting the State to invest \$2M per year in DA BUX to support program sustainability and continuous affordable healthy food access to SNAP recipients. Furthermore, a State commitment will be leveraged in our FY '24 GusNIP application to unlock \$2M in federal funds to meet the grant's requirement of a 100% non-federal match.

WWW.HAWAIIIFOODBASKET.ORG

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

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

While a wide range of financial support and programs were available during the pandemic, Hawai'i's low-income residents are perhaps now more in dire need of this support as pandemic relief wanes and inflation rates have soared above historical averages. Sustained high participation in SNAP above pre-pandemic levels and climbing food insecurity in Hawai'i are indicative of the widespread economic hardship residents continue to face. The Food Basket remains steadfast in our commitment to ensuring DA BUX savings for local fruits and vegetables will be continuously available for these households.

We respectfully ask your committee to pass this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Kristin Frost Albrecht
Executive Director

WWW.HAWAIIFOODBASKET.ORG

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

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

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 6:31:55 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia M Archibald	North Shore Nutrition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a Nutritionist, I have extensively researched and written on the importance of consuming locally-sourced fruits and vegetables for human health/longevity, economic health, and planetary health.

An increasingly large body of scientific evidence shows that improved access to local fruits and vegetables leads to improved health outcomes and reduced markers of long-term chronic illness. Locally-sourced produce is generally more nutrient-dense than imported counterparts. A diet high in locally-sourced plants resembles the food patterns of ancient Hawaiians, who experienced far lower rates of chronic diseases we currently see in our communities (obesity, Diabetes, metabolic syndrome, hypertension, etc...)

Evidence also shows that local purchases support the local economy. Importantly, it will encourage local food production, which improves the state's food security and food sovereignty.

Finally, increased local food production reduces the state's reliance on imported foods, improving our resilience and reducing carbon emissions from cargo shipments (one of the world's major polluters).

This bill will support the health of our communities, our land, and our economy. I strongly support this bill.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 7:10:57 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angelia Wesch	Hualani Farms	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We humbly request you continue to fund the DaBux program that allows people experiencing food insecurity to stretch their nutritional food dollars further. My farm is in Hana. We are a vendor at the Hana Farmers Market. The DaBux program allows our customers to purchase nutritious, sustaining, locally grown, food to feed their families. Hana is a small community with big ohana. We love and support one another. Please help us continue to affordably feed our community by continuing to fund this critical program. Mahalo!

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 7:29:23 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renée Rachel Baker	Nene's Living Food	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a small agricultural business we rely on the use and patronage of our local community, many of whom rely on these supplemental funds for access to freshly grown organic foods. Additionally as a rural community we rely on our farmer's market to provide us with produce, meat, and fruits as we live without access to most modern conveniences.



February 21, 2024

Chairman of the Board
Brandt Farias

President
Zia Khan, MD

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

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

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

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

Serving Hawaii since 1948

Our Mission:
"To be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives."

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

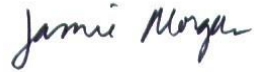
For more information on the AHA's educational or research programs, visit www.heart.org or contact your nearest AHA office.

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

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

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

Sincerely,

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

Jamie Morgan
Sr. Region Lead, State Government Relations



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for H.B. 2771 – Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives
House Committee on Finance
Thursday February 22, 2024, at 1:00PM

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the Finance Committee:

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ [Hunger Cliff 2023: HAWAII](#)

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

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

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



February 21st, 2024

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your attention to this matter.
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Emmons". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Emily Emmons
Executive Director
Ho'ōla Farms



To: The Honorable Kyle Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

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

Hearing: Thursday, February 22, 2024, 1:00 PM, Conference Room 308

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 9:34:06 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This is how we support our local farmers farmers, help our residents have healthier diets, promote food security and social justice and fight the climate crisis. Thank you for supporting the Da Bux program. I mua



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

HB2771 HD1
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Thursday, February 22, 2024, 1:00PM
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director



HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 10:06:57 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Bodien	Hawai'i Cigar	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in **strong support of HB 2771, HD1.**

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Richard Bodien

Hawai'i Cigar



February 22, 2024

The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Re: HB 2771 HD1– RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

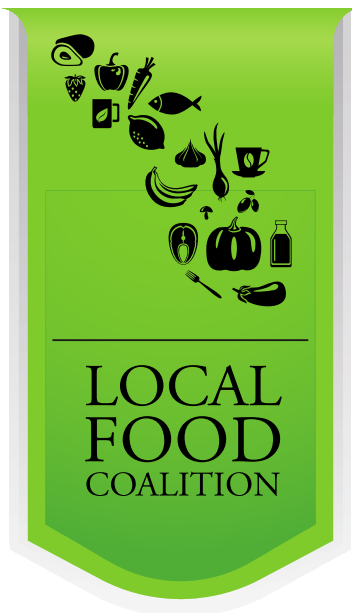
Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2771 HD1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries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

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

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

Sincerely,

Dawn Kurisu
Assistant Vice President
Community and Government Relations



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Thursday, February 22, 2024 – 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

HB 2771 HD1 - RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

SUPPORT

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

Hawai'i Aquaculture & Aquaponics Association
Hawai'i Cattlemen's Council
Hawai'i Farm Bureau Federation
Hawai'i Farmers' Union United
Hawai'i Food Industry Association
Hawai'i Food Manufacturers Association
Kohala Center
Land Use Research Foundation of Hawai'i
Maui Farm to School Network (Maui F2SN)
Ulupono Initiative
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources - University of Hawai'i at Manoa

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

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

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

The Local Food Coalition is an organization comprised of farmers, ranchers, livestock producers, investors and other organizations working to provide Hawaii's food supply.

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



HIPHI Board

Misty Pacheco, DrPH
Chair
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Titiimaea Ta'ase, JD
Secretary
State of Hawai'i, Deputy Public
Defender

Carissa Holley, MEd
Treasurer
Hale Makua Health Services

Keshia Adolpho, LCSW
Na'au Healing Center

Debbie Erskine
ARCH-MEPS Consulting LLC, Owner

Camonia Graham - Tutt, PhD
University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu

Jennifer José Lo, MD
Hawai'i Health Partners

May Okihiro, MD, MS
John A. Burns School of Medicine,
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: February 20, 2024

To: Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice-Chair
Members of the Committee on Finance

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

Hrg: Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 1:00 PM

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

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

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

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

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

DA BUX provides a strong return on investment.

SNAP is proven to stimulate the economy by being an economic multiplier. Every SNAP dollar spent generates an estimated \$1.54 in economic activityⁱⁱⁱ. These dollars ripple out throughout the supply chain, supporting farmers, retailers, and food distributor employees; these people, in turn, spend their dollars to help support economic activity further and so on. With **\$2M from the state**, the program becomes eligible for an additional \$2M in federal matching funds from the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive (GusNIP) Program. State funding helps to ensure sustainable funding for DA BUX.

A positive impact on health and food.

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

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

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

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

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

Mahalo,



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

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

ⁱⁱ <https://dabux.org/for-advocates>

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

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



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

February 21, 2024

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST ALBRECHT

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and FIN Committee Members,

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

ANN EBESUNO BOARD CHAIR

MARK KRZYZANOWSKI VICE-CHAIR

To date over 530 farmers and exactly 59 retailers are benefiting from DA BUX. And 83% of SNAP households in the state live within shopping distance of a participating retailer.

DENNIS LIN TREASURER

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

JULIA ZEE SECRETARY

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

STEPHEN UEDA

WARREN LEE

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

SAMANTHA COLLINS

MAURICE MESSINA

CASEY HALPERN

BRANDON LEE

Chelsea Takahashi
Director of Healthy Food Access Initiatives

WWW.HAWAIIFOODBASKET.ORG

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

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



1809 Bachelot Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

February 21, 2024

Testimony in support of HB2771 HD 1, Relating to Food Security

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members:

I am testifying on behalf of Lanakila Pacific.

I support HB2771 HD1, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and matching funds for individuals who participate in SNAP through the Double Up Food Bucks – Da Bux program.

Supporting local agriculture to feed vulnerable populations while leveraging federal funding is a triple win for food security in Hawaii. Lanakila Pacific uses the program to deliver fresh local produce to homebound seniors and people with disabilities. Our The Green Bag program piggy backs on the Lanakila Meals on Wheels service to deliver the produce. These individuals would otherwise have very limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables and in many cases are not able to afford the locally grown produce if not for Da Bux.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,

Rona Yagi Fukumoto
President and CEO

Lanakila Pacific Board
Matt Miller, *Chair*
Savan Patel, *Vice Chair*
Alton Murakami, *Treasurer*
Dawn Hirano, *Secretary*
Maria Borje-Bonkowski
Cleo Brown
Paige Heckathorn Choy

Joy Ishiara
William H. Kern
Sean Mochizuki
Michael Morales
Lacey Shimabukuro
Ryan Yamamoto

Lanakila Pacific
Foundation Board
Emmit Kane, *Chair*
Keith Suzuka, *Vice Chair*
Bryan Kapeckas,
Treasurer/ Secretary
Cecilia Fong
Kira Higa
Scott Kavanaugh

Derek Mizuno
Scott Nahme
Kristi O'Heron
Sharon Paris
Mike Robinson
Ryan Shiroma
Dwayne Takeno

President and CEO
Rona Yagi Fukumoto





February 21, 2024

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

Regarding: Testimony in Strong Support of HB2771 HD1 "Relating to Food Security"

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony in strong support for HB2771 HD1 "Relating to Food Security," on behalf of Farm Link Hawai'i (FLH). We encourage you to support the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program, otherwise known as DA BUX. This program benefits Hawai'i's food system in three vital ways:

1. Offers discounts on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables to low-income SNAP recipients, allowing them to purchase more healthy food.
2. Empowers farmers compete with lower cost imported produce and increase their sales.
3. Supports the local economy, generating increased revenue for participating retailers.

Farm Link's mission is to transform local food production into a thriving industry and make good local food accessible to everyone on O'ahu. We work with over 200 Hawai'i farmers, ranchers, and food makers, to serve more than 1,300 customers per month with direct home delivery of over 500 local products. To ensure equitable access, we automatically apply the DA BUX 50% discount on produce and poi for customers using SNAP and provide free delivery for their orders. In 2024 18% of our revenue was derived from customers using Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-EBT) and DA BUX to purchase their groceries. **Farm Link's SNAP revenue grew by over 583% between 2021 and 2023. DA BUX is clearly motivating and empowering families to purchase and consume more healthy produce, while providing a steady market for Hawai'i farmers.**

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

Mahalo for your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Claire Sullivan".

Claire Sullivan, CEO

Farm Link Hawai'i

Phone: (808) 218-0077

Email: claire@farmlinkhawaii.com



Randy Perreira
President

HAWAII STATE AFL-CIO

888 Mililani Street, Suite 501 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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

The Thirty-Second Legislature
House of Representatives
Committee on Finance

Testimony by
Hawaii State AFL-CIO

February 22, 2024

TESTIMONY ON HB2771 HD1 - RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the committee:

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

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

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

Respectfully submitted,

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

Randy Perreira
President



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 22, 2024, at 1PM
Conference Room 308**

RE: HB 2771 HD1 Relating to Food Security

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

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

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

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

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

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

On behalf of The Chamber, thank you for this opportunity to testify.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 8:52:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mitchell Garrison	Maka’alae Farms LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As the cofounder of Maka’alae Farms in Hana, Maui, I write to express my wholehearted support for HB2771 HD1, a pivotal bill aimed at bolstering food security within Hawaii. HB2771 HD1 resonates profoundly with our community, promising to significantly enhance access to nutritious, locally-grown produce, particularly benefiting those participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The bill’s commitment to providing matching funds for the purchase of Hawaii-grown fruits and vegetables not only supports our local agricultural economy but also addresses crucial health and environmental concerns by encouraging sustainable farming practices and reducing the carbon footprint associated with importing food. This legislation stands as a testament to the power of thoughtful policy to shape a healthier, more sustainable future for our communities.

I urge you to lend your support to HB2771 HD1, recognizing its potential to transform our local food systems and to lay a stronger foundation for food security in Hawaii. Together, we can take a significant step towards a future where every resident has access to fresh, affordable, and sustainably-grown food.

Thank you for considering this vital piece of legislation. Your support can lead to meaningful change for the people of Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Mitchell Garrison

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 7:29:28 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support HB2771 to fund DA BUX Hawai'i's Double Up Food Bucks program.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 8:32:11 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

There is so much discussion in government about the need to expand our on island food production but most are mere pleasantries and platitudes, the Da Bux program is action! The federal food stamp program—better known as SNAP—is vital for alleviating hunger in low-income Hawai‘i households. However, the household monthly benefit is often still not enough to afford fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables. , DA BUX offers a huge return on a very modest investment. The \$2 million proposed in this bill would be matched with another \$2 million in federal dollars, and this will allow the program to expand to even more retailers and communities across the islands. This not only helps with growing the agricultural capacity of our farmers but also makes healthy (locally grown) foods available to our most vulnerable and overlooked communities. This program is truly a win for everyone—families, farmers, and local businesses!

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Mark Krzyzanowski, Vice Chair

The Food Basket

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 12:43:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This bill makes sense and is the Right Thing To Do for So Many Reasons!

Families Eat Healthy

DA BUX discounts are encouraging low-income SNAP-EBT shoppers to buy more local fruits and vegetables.

In 2023, SNAP-EBT shoppers participating in DA BUX reported consuming more fruits and vegetables than the average U.S. adult. And that will result in a longer term return on investment as healthy eating leads to healthier individuals and overall lower health risk and health care costs!

Supports Local Farmers and Businesses

DA BUX supports over 530 farms across the state.

In 2023, participating food hubs, including farmer’s markets, increased local produce sales to SNAP shoppers by 186% on average.

Grows the scale of our local food demand.

Farmers have the opportunity to feed local residents rather than exporting products to out of state markets.

Positively Impacts Hawai‘i’s Economy

DA BUX program has a positive financial effect.

For every SNAP dollar spent, an additional \$1.54 goes into the local economy.

A \$2M investment in DA BUX would result in over \$12.8M in economic activity.

And, as noted above, an additional financial impact is the avoidance of future health care costs by promoting healthy nutrition that contributes to reduced rates of diabetes, heart disease, and obesity in the short and long term.

Opportunity for Federal Match

By allocating \$2M for DA BUX, Hawai'i is eligible for an additional \$2M in federal matching funds from the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP).

State funding supports the program's "sustainable funding plan," a requirement of proposals for federal GusNIP funding.

SUPPORT!!!

Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for DA BUX program (HB2771). This innovative program has demonstrated immense potential in addressing food insecurity, promoting healthy eating habits, and supporting local farmers and communities.

The DA BUX Program is a win-win solution that benefits both low-income families and local agricultural producers. By providing matching funds for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients when they purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers' markets and grocery stores, the program effectively doubles the purchasing power of these families. This means that individuals and families who are struggling to make ends meet can access more nutritious foods, improving their overall health and well-being.

Furthermore, the DA BUX Program supports local farmers and strengthens regional food systems. By incentivizing SNAP recipients to buy fresh produce directly from local farmers, the program creates new markets for small-scale producers and helps to keep food dollars circulating within the local economy. This not only benefits farmers financially but also contributes to the vitality and resilience of rural and urban communities alike.

In addition to its immediate benefits for individuals and communities, the DA BUX Program also aligns with broader public health and economic development goals. By encouraging the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, the program helps to reduce the prevalence of diet-related diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. This, in turn, can lead to lower healthcare costs and improved quality of life for individuals and families.

Moreover, the program has the potential to create jobs and stimulate economic growth in the agricultural sector. By expanding access to fresh, locally grown produce, the DA BUX Program creates demand for agricultural products, supporting farmers and food-related businesses throughout the supply chain. This not only creates employment opportunities but also fosters a more sustainable and resilient food system for future generations.

In conclusion, I urge you to support HB2771. By doing so, we can make significant strides towards addressing food insecurity, promoting healthy eating habits, and strengthening local economies. Together, let us build a future where everyone has access to nutritious food and the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jean Butel".

Jean Butel

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 1:11:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ka`iulani Galon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to whole-heartedly support HB 2771 as a means to eradicate food insecurity for at risk populations. HB 2771 is a clear strategy to support our more vulnerable populations to have access to unprocessed, raw foods that can uplift health and eating for our diverse and marginalized populations. If healthy food is not affordable, then there is no resource for healthy habits to be developed for all of our families and keiki deserve in Hawai`i. Right now vegetables and fruits are a privilege many of our Hawai`i residents can't afford. Therefore, processed and canned foods and starches become the go-to for meal planning. This will cause for so many expensive population health needs later that choosing to invest now and create access is the right choice. Please vote to pass this bill.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 1:12:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Finance committee members,

Mahalo for scheduling this bill for a hearing. I strongly support double bucks for local food purchases and urge the full funding for DA BUX program. This is a win-win policy to support farmers and our local economy, while also providing healthy and fresh produce to SNAP recipients. Mahalo.

Jodi Robinson, Honolulu

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 1:37:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Fund and grow the DA BUX program. We are requesting the state to support the DA BUX program with \$2M in funding to support families, local farmers, and our economy. The following is from dabux.org, where more information is available.

Families Eat Healthy

- DA BUX discounts are encouraging low-income SNAP-EBT shoppers to buy more local fruits and vegetables.
- In 2023, SNAP-EBT shoppers participating in DA BUX reported consuming more fruits and vegetables than the average U.S. adult.

Supports Local Farmers and Businesses

- DA BUX supports over 530 farms across the state.
- In 2023, participating food hubs, including farmer’s markets, increased local produce sales to SNAP shoppers by 186% on average.
- Grows the scale of our local food demand.
- Farmers have the opportunity to feed local residents rather than exporting products to out of state markets.

Positively Impacts Hawai‘i’s Economy

- DA BUX program has a positive financial effect. For every SNAP dollar spent, an additional \$1.54 goes into the local economy.
- [A \\$2M investment in DA BUX would result in over \\$12.8M in economic activity.](#)

Opportunity for Federal Match

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

Date: February 20, 2024

To: The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

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

Hrg: Thursday February 22, 2024 at 1:00 pm via Videoconference Conference Room 308

Aloha House Committee on Finance,

As a parent, community member and healthcare professional I am writing in **strong support of HB 2771 HD1**, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

The DA BUX program enables SNAP participants to buy more local fresh fruits and vegetables because each SNAP dollar is doubled when buying local produce.

The DA BUX program has supported 470 Hawai'i farmers, increased local produce sales at farmer's markets 531%, helped grow the scale of our local food demand and given our farmers the opportunity to feed local residents rather than exporting their products to out of state markets.

For every SNAP dollar spent, DA BUX adds an additional \$1.79 that goes directly into the local economy.

By allocating \$2M for DA BUX, Hawai'i is eligible for an additional \$2M in federal matching funds. The combined \$4M influx into our economy will result in a potential \$25.6M in economic activity.

I **strongly support HB 2771 HD1**, respectfully ask you to pass it out of committee.

Many thanks for your consideration,

Forrest Batz, PharmD
Keaau, HI

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 2:10:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee,

Please pass HB 2771 to fund DA BUX so we can continue to support local families, local farmers & food makers, and the local economy.

High food costs are a significant barrier to food security. The ability to prioritize fresh produce over less expensive food options is a luxury many Hawai'i families cannot afford. DA BUX makes it possible to put enough food on the table without sacrificing nutrition or quality.

Socioeconomic status should not determine whether folks can eat healthy, local and nutritious food. Nourishment is a human right that should be protected.

Mahalo piha,

Anna Camacho

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 2:13:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

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

Again, **I fully support Bill 2771 HB RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY** and urge the committee to pass it. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 2:21:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Romala Radcliffe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support. This will help our seniors.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 2:21:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and committee members,

This Bill is about basic, healthy food security. I strongly support this Bill and I pray that it passes quickly for all the important reasons listed below.

Please fund and grow the DA BUX program. We are requesting the state to support the DA BUX program with \$2M in funding to support families, local farmers, and our economy. The following is from dabux.org, where more information is available.

Families Eat Healthy

- DA BUX discounts are encouraging low-income SNAP-EBT shoppers to buy more local fruits and vegetables.
- In 2023, SNAP-EBT shoppers participating in DA BUX reported consuming more fruits and vegetables than the average U.S. adult.

Supports Local Farmers and Businesses

- DA BUX supports over 530 farms across the state.
- In 2023, participating food hubs, including farmer’s markets, increased local produce sales to SNAP shoppers by 186% on average.
- Grows the scale of our local food demand.
- Farmers have the opportunity to feed local residents rather than exporting products to out of state markets.

Positively Impacts Hawai‘i’s Economy

- DA BUX program has a positive financial effect. For every SNAP dollar spent, an additional \$1.54 goes into the local economy.
- [A \\$2M investment in DA BUX would result in over \\$12.8M in economic activity.](#)

Opportunity for Federal Match

- By allocating \$2M for DA BUX, Hawai‘i is eligible for an additional \$2M in federal matching funds from the [Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program \(GusNIP\).](#)

- State funding supports the program’s “sustainable funding plan,” a requirement of proposals for federal GusNIP funding.

Mahalo for your support and efforts,

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 2:25:17 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

In support of HB 2771. Thank you.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 2:44:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I support HB2771. The Da Bux program needs more funding so low-income people can eat healthier with more fruits and vegetables. The Da Bux program also supports our local farmers and our local economy.

And further down the line, with people eating healthier, we can save money in the long term by saving money in healthcare costs.

Please support HB2771.

Kristin Mills,

Maui resident, parent, and health educator

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 3:00:28 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Extremely effective and important program for Hawaii's farmers and citizens that are currently experiencing some kind of food insecurity. Federal money insures continued support for States who can match the dollars.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 3:13:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lillian Coltin	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Support this winning program. Benefits so many in our community

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 3:25:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Walter Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for letting me submit my support for HB2771 HD1.

This bill is a win-win for the citizens of Hawai‘i, the farms of Hawai‘i and the economy of Hawai‘i which is a remarkable outcome from one piece of legislation. The low income communities benefit from greater access to healthy fruits and vegetable which improves their diets and overall health. The local support for the 530 farms who provide the produce allows for the expansion of the local farming economy and businesses that sell local produce. The fact that an investment of \$2M for DA BUX makes Hawai‘i eligible to apply for federal matching funds from the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) should be motivation to support this bill and it’s economic benefit for the future of Hawai‘i.

Thank you for hearing my support.

Walter F Anderson MD

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 4:12:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Smart action to do.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 4:45:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

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

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 6:07:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

I support HB 2771 for it's triple benefit to our community .

Sincerely,

Michelle Kobayashi

Testimony of Kiana Otsuka in Support

Committee on Finance

February 14, 2024 at 9:15AM

Conference Room 308

HB 2771 HD1

Relating to Food Security

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

My name is Kiana Otsuka, and I am passionate about sustainable food systems and improving food equity in Hawai'i. I am writing in **strong support of HB 2771 HD 1**, which appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

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

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

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Mahalo,
Kiana Otsuka

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 6:59:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771, HD1.

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

David Leake, Kaneohe

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 7:12:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Gonce	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong Support!

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 7:18:51 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

Aloha from Kauai. I am testifying in **strong support of HB 2771, HD1.**

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

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

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

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

Please do the right thing. Thank you for your consideration,

Mary Lu Kelley

Koloa, Kauai

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 7:32:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erik Meade	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on HB 2771, HD1, which I support.

Too much of the money that is spent in Hawai'i leaves Hawai'i, programs like DA BUX, helps keep the money here for the benefit of everyone here.

Thank you for your consideration,
Erik Meade, Honolulu

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 7:34:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771, HD1.

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Carol Lee Kamekona

Kahului, Maui

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 7:42:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaylee Sheller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dabux program is essential to food security for Maui residents. Please continue to fund this program.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 7:47:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support HB2771. This legislation will bolster the farmer's economic stability. They need your help.

Hawaii needs its farmers.

Thank you

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 8:08:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this bill. It will help the people of Hawai'i obtain fresh, healthy, locally produced food. Thereby, helping the local farmers as well.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 8:21:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn Morais Webster Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic, DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better. Please pass this bill and help feed Hawaii's hungry families. Mahalo

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 8:31:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg and Pat Farstrup	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote for this Bill.

Kū i ka pono!

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 8:32:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771, HD1.

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Lisa Lee, Honolulu

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 8:42:28 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Sugidono	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please continue to make it possible for local families to access fresh, local produce. Da Bux not only supports our working families but also helps our hardworking farming community. Here in Hawai'i, we are far too dependent on outside sources for food and we would do well to pass legislation that will help our islands become self-sufficient and more secure in this area. Mahalo.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 8:43:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
susan walczak-pol	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Fund and grow the DA BUX program. We are requesting the state to support the DA BUX program with \$2M in funding to support families, local farmers, and our economy. The following is from dabux.org, where more information is available.

Families Eat Healthy

- DA BUX discounts are encouraging low-income SNAP-EBT shoppers to buy more local fruits and vegetables.
- In 2023, SNAP-EBT shoppers participating in DA BUX reported consuming more fruits and vegetables than the average U.S. adult.

Supports Local Farmers and Businesses

- DA BUX supports over 530 farms across the state.
- In 2023, participating food hubs, including farmer’s markets, increased local produce sales to SNAP shoppers by 186% on average.
- Grows the scale of our local food demand.
- Farmers have the opportunity to feed local residents rather than exporting products to out of state markets.

Positively Impacts Hawai‘i’s Economy

- DA BUX program has a positive financial effect. For every SNAP dollar spent, an additional \$1.54 goes into the local economy.
- [A \\$2M investment in DA BUX would result in over \\$12.8M in economic activity.](#)

Opportunity for Federal Match

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

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 8:51:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

Thank you for your consideration, Eliel Starbright, Kapaa

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 8:58:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
natalie forster	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill would help support our local economy by supporting local farmers. Keeping dollars spent on food on island instead of going to producers and distributors elsewhere in the world. It also gives people better access to fresh food and supports our island food security.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 9:08:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this!

yes to local foods and more of it!

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 9:15:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am in support of HB 2771 to support farmers, families, and fresh food accessibility+security on Maui. Access to nutrient rich foods grown on island has the power to greatly support many lives. Keep Da Bux going strong!

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 9:15:17 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771, HD1.

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Keala Fung, Honolulu

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 9:53:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 10:46:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kayla Shaw	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

This is a foundational element to self-sustainability. The ability to feed the local population by supporting local farmers. We need to continue this program. I have witnessed first hand the level of support this program has provided to families who were displaced by the Lahaina Fires and our local community who are just scraping by working multiple jobs to feed their families. This is essential for the survival of our local economy and the health of our community. Please continue to find DA BUX.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 11:49:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This program has allowed me to buy fruits and vegetables from our local farmers that have not only nourished my children and I but also gives us a chance to afford healthy food that we can prepare at home. I also know that it has helped our local farmers to be able to provide healthy sustainable food and jobs for our community. Thank you for the wonderful program that I'm genuinely grateful for.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 12:13:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kawena Haugh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in **STRONG** support of HB2771 and support our hard-working local farmers. We need food security in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 12:20:45 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771, HD1.

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your consideration.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 2:52:13 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
alyssa frost	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Da Buxs Programs helps me keep more local fruits and veggies on my table, and save money . In combination With Maui Hub , and free delivery , it makes it so easy to have access to fresh local produce.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 4:08:59 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771, HD1.

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Sven Sorge

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 4:45:59 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I extend strong support for this bill

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

While the department has requested \$1,000,000 in its budget request, I strongly support the legislation for the additional \$2,000,000 which would significantly leverage federal dollars. We have seen this work in real life. if the government is not open to creating housing vouchers for all residents, creating rent caps or working in the capacity so people who are from here and are running the businesses here can actually stay I would strongly support passing the DABUX bill so at least people can still eat.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 5:38:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Support for local food production and encouragement for local families to eat healthy local food are worthy of government funds. Mahalo

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 6:38:59 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicholle S L Konanui	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha nui Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771, HD1.

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

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

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

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

Please help feed our communities.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Nicholle S. L. Konanui, Pahoia, Hawai'i Island

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 8:15:04 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yuko Shinoda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a vendor at Hana farmers market on Maui.

very isolated area. I sell organic and non gmo vegetables and herb edible starts for community.

since we are so far away from store I am encourage to grow own food .

da bux is helping who are low income , single mothers for great nutrition for the family or individuals.

Hope this program continue to help community. mahalo

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 8:17:00 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natasha Woodward	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The ability to prioritize fresh produce over less expensive food options is a luxury many Hawai'i families cannot afford. DA BUX makes it possible to put enough food on the table without sacrificing nutrition or quality. Please support this bill

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 8:51:33 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Valerie Weiss	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this bill. It will provide fresher, unprocessed, healthy, food for SNAP beneficiaries.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 9:06:31 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771, HD1.

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your consideration, Susan

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 9:29:15 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

DaBucks is an essential program for the Maui Community which is reeling from the devastation of Lahania Town. DaBucks helps Farmers and Consumers...we know that Diabetes and other disease from eating processed foods is a burden on Hawaiians...this program gets locally grown products into the kitchens of people who need to feed their families...the taste of freshly grown food is critical to changing eating habits from convient to healthy.

This is one of the broadest based health programs in Hawaii...for the love of the people, fund this program...Lahania pain will continue for a decade or more...this program is essential for mental health as well...

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 9:37:44 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Motes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This program allows me to choose healthy foods for my family at a discounted rate. I am so thankful as we otherwise would have to make worse food choices due to the unaffordability of quality unprocessed food.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 9:48:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

support

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 9:49:45 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771, HD1.

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Marilyn Mick, Honolulu

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 9:53:09 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771, HD1.

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Mahalo,

Jodie Thayer, Wainiha

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 10:20:52 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am writing in support of DaBux food assistance program. As a local farmer, it has allowed us to sell more of our produce locally in the Hana area versus driving to the other side of the island.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 10:42:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

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

Mahalo,
Michelle K.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 12:30:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Honorable Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Members of the Committee,

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

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

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 12:36:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Faun Skyles	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB2771, which addresses food insecurity while strengthening our local agriculture. As a resident of Hawai'i and a professional who works at a local food hub, I believe that this legislation is essential for providing access to local fruits and vegetables, while supporting our hard working farmers and putting money back into our community.

I urge you to give your full support to HB2771 and to work diligently to ensure its passage. Mahalo you for your attention to this matter and for your commitment to serving the people of Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Faun A. Skyles

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 12:47:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heidi Kray	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My ohana is so thankful for and benefits greatly from da bux program. We eat healthier and buy more local produce because of it. We want to support local farmers and eat unlimited fresh local produce and da bux allows us to do both.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 12:59:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and FIN Committee Members,

I'm writing in strong support of HB2771 that will appropriate funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawaii healthy food incentive program, otherwise known as "DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks" or "DA BUX."

This is a program that will help diversify our economy in supporting the growth of local agriculture. This is an important priority for the state given our isolation and vulnerability to economic shocks and natural disasters.

Christine Takahashi

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 1:03:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Hello Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771, HD1.

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

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

Putting more food on the tables of local families in need

Providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food

Strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in Hawai‘i

Improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods

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

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo, Mō‘ili‘ili, O‘ahu

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 1:53:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 2:11:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Nelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Finance Committee Members,

I would like to provide my strong support for HB2771 Relating to Food Security. As a state, we should do everything we can to leverage federal monies to support our local farmers and to make locally-grown food affordable for local people.

DA BUX supports over 530 farms across the state. In 2023, participating food hubs, including farmer’s markets, increased local produce sales to SNAP shoppers by 186% on average. DA BUX is one of the few mechanisms we have to ensure that local producers can sell to local people and receive 100% of the price of their produce, injecting federal money into our local economy.

One hundred percent of the food purchased through the DA BUX program supports our local farmers. DA BUX discounts are encouraging low-income SNAP-EBT shoppers to buy more local fruits and vegetables, helping our families eat healthy and live healthy. In 2023, SNAP-EBT shoppers participating in DA BUX reported consuming more fruits and vegetables than the average U.S. adult.

For every SNAP dollar spent, an additional \$1.54 goes into the local economy. A \$2M investment in DA BUX would result in over \$12.8M in economic activity. As a State, we cannot afford to neglect this federal funding match.

By allocating \$2M for DA BUX, Hawai‘i is eligible for an additional \$2M in federal matching funds from the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). State funding supports the program’s “sustainable funding plan,” a requirement of proposals for federal GusNIP funding. DA BUX is a triple win for Maui farmers, families and our economy.

In order to support our agricultural economy and pull additional federal dollars into Hawai'i as a direct investment in our community's health and the livelihoods of our farmers, I urge you to support for HB2771 Relating to Food Security to support the DA BUX program to continue in Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui,

Lauren Nelson

Makawao, HI

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 2:46:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am highly supportive of HB2771 HD1 in content, but I am, as a lay citizen, confused about the language indicating that the bill will take effect on 7/1/3000 (Section 4). Surely this doesn't actually mean that we will have to wait 976 years to get Da Bux back???

Da Bux is very important to families and farmers here. It's an incredible deal that supports food security, agriculture, and self-sufficiency. It benefits all of us, even if we do not receive SNAP benefits, because it helps our farmers and community members thrive. I support funding Da Bux in 2024.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 4:37:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771, HD1.

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Susan Stayton, Lawai, Kauai, HI

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 6:38:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2771, HD1.

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Kathy Shimata

Honolulu

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 6:57:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannette Kojane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear members of the committee,

I am writing today in support of HB2771. This bill is a win-win-win as it get food to people that need it, supports local farmers and supports our economy. Da Bux program has worked well and this will be money well spent.

Thank you for your consideration.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 8:09:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joy Bitonio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am requesting the state to support the DA BUX program with \$2M in funding to support families, local farmers, and our local economy.

How DA BUX Supports Local Farmers and Businesses

- DA BUX supports over 530 farms across the state.
- In 2023, participating food hubs, including farmer’s markets, increased local produce sales to SNAP shoppers by 186% on average.
- Grows the scale of our local food demand.
- Farmers have the opportunity to feed local residents rather than exporting products to out of state markets.

Mahalo for supporting local agriculture and food security in our state.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 11:00:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melisa D. Haile	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a resident, community health worker, and farmer, I believe that ensuring access to nutritious food for all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic status, is crucial for building a healthier and more equitable society. The Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program has already demonstrated its effectiveness in increasing access to locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables for low-income families and individuals across our state. By providing matching funds to SNAP beneficiaries, this program not only encourages healthier eating habits but also supports local farmers and strengthens our local food system.

It is well-documented that individuals with limited financial resources often face significant barriers to accessing nutritious food, which can have serious implications for their overall health and well-being. HB2771 represents a proactive and compassionate approach to addressing this issue by investing in programs that empower individuals to make healthier food choices while also supporting our local agricultural economy.

Furthermore, by incentivizing the purchase of locally grown and produced foods, this bill has the potential to reduce the prevalence of diet-related diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease, ultimately leading to long-term cost savings for our healthcare system.

In addition to the public health benefits, HB2771 also has the potential to stimulate economic growth by creating new markets for local farmers and producers. By increasing demand for locally grown produce and value added foods, we can create jobs, support small businesses, and increase food security in our communities.

As a farmer, I urge you to support HB2771 and ensure its passage into law. By investing in programs that promote access to healthy food for all Hawai'i residents, we can create a brighter and healthier future for generations to come.

Mahalo for your attention to this important matter.

Melissa D. Haile

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 6:56:06 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this legislation. DA BUX discounts are encouraging low-income SNAP-EBT shoppers to buy more local fruits and vegetables. In 2023, SNAP-EBT shoppers participating in DA BUX reported consuming more fruits and vegetables than the average U.S. adult.

I implore you to support and pass this bill in your committee.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 7:30:03 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

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

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

This program is truly a win for everyone—families, farmers, and local businesses!

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 8:20:07 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

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

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

This program is truly a win for everyone—families, farmers, and local businesses!

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 8:39:24 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelani Delizo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha my name is Noelani Delizo

The Bux program is a big part of my household and how we make it work through the month with food. Please help us to continue to be able to have this needed program. It is such a big help to me, my Ohana and many other people I know. This program is life changing and I ask once again to keep this program going.

Mahalo

HB-2771-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2024 9:53:54 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colleen Veasey	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

My life as a single mom has been changed because of Da Bux program. Instead of buying produce that has been picked prematurely, and are filled with chemicals and GMOs, I am able to buy fresh, local groceries with Da Bux. I am so incredibly grateful for Da Bux program and I fear that it will end soon. Hawai'i has such high food prices that even with the help of EBT SNAP, it is still hard to have enough food for me and my growing keiki. Da Bux is an enormous help with making ends meet.

I value this island and the aina we grow up on, and being able to support local farmers to ensure a more healthy, stable, sustainable Hawai'i is something that I am proud of.

Please continue to fund Da Bux, it helps feed growing families and supports our economy.

Mahalo