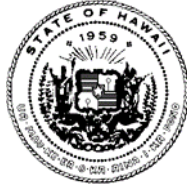


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



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 7, 2024

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

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

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2421 – RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES.**

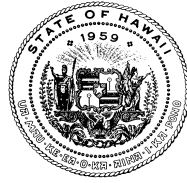
Hearing: Friday, February 9, 2024, 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224, State Capitol & Video Conference

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

PURPOSE: 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. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded.

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.

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



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

**Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 2421
RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
INCENTIVES**

SENATOR MIKE GABBARD, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

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

Hearing Date: February 9, 2024

Room Number: Conference Room 224
and Videoconference

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 implementation of the proposed appropriation.

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

5 **Department Testimony:** The DOH supports Senate Bill 2421 (S.B. 2421) that appropriates funds
6 to DOA for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive program and to
7 provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
8 Program (SNAP).

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

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

7 Hawaii has the highest cost of living in the nation with food costs that are twice the
8 national average.⁶ In Hawaii, less than one in five adults reported eating five or more servings of
9 fruits and vegetable a day (2021 Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System). Data continues
10 to show a decline in meeting these dietary recommendations for an eating routine with a healthy
11 plate of whole fruits, a variety of vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins and dairy. Between
12 2019 and 2021, the percentage of adults who ate five or more servings of fruit and vegetables a
13 day decreased from 17 to 14 percent while the percentage of adults who ate one serving or no
14 servings increased from 7 to 8 percent.⁷

15 Nutrition incentive programs similar to the DA BUX are prevalent around the U.S. and
16 recognized as a “win-win-win” for farmers, families, and local businesses. Data from these
17 interventions have shown improvements in dietary behaviors, reduction in household hunger and
18 food insecurity, and increased sales of local produce by more than their dollar value alone.^{8,9,10,11}

19 The DOH urges the passage of S.B. 2421 which will allow for continued funding and the
20 possible expansion of this extremely important program that provides much needed support to
21 Hawaii’s families, local farmers, and the economy.

22 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *2020 – 2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 9th Edition. December 2020.

² 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.

³ World Health Organization. *Healthy Diet Fact Sheet*. Web. Updated 29 September 2020.

⁴Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2021.

⁵ 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.

⁶ United States Department of Agriculture: Official USDA Food Thrifty Plan Cost Estimates; July 2023.

⁷ Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2021.

⁸ Fitzgerald, Katherine. *Double Up in Farmers' Markets: The Consumer Experience*. Fair Food Network, 2015.

⁹ Mann, J., et al. *Economics of healthy food incentives at Michigan farmers markets: Study highlights*. Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems, 2017.

¹⁰ Fitzgerald, Katherine. *Double Up Food Bucks and Hunger*. Fair Food Network, 2015.

¹¹ *Voices of Double Up in America*. Fair Food Network, June 2017.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEXTER KISHIDA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND THE
ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2024
1:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE BILL 2421
RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
INCENTIVES**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2421. 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.

The department greatly appreciates the \$1,000,000 that has been included in the executive budget. We strongly support the legislation for the \$3,000,000 which would fully leverage federal dollars.

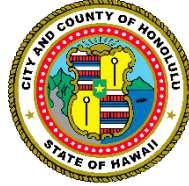
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

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

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



AMY ASSELBAYE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PO'O HO'OKO

KYMBERLY SPARLIN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2024

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

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2421
A BILL RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
INCENTIVES**

BY
AMY ASSELBAYE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

Dear Chair Gabbard, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Richards, Vice Chair Aquino and Committee Members:

The Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) **strongly supports** SB2421 to fund Hawai'i's Double Up Food Bucks program (DA BUX), 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 SB2421.



2024 Network Members

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

Hawaiihungeraction.org

Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Health and Human Services

February 8, 2024, 1:00PM

RE: SUPPORT FOR SB 2421, RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES.

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

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, appreciates the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT OF SB 2421**. 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 SB 2421.



March 31, 2023

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

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

Re: SB 2421 – Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Program Incentives

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

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2421, 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 serves to support our local agricultural sector and farmers as we take steps towards food security in our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2421.

Sincerely,

Dawn Kurisu
Assistant Vice President
Community and Government Relations



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 9, 2024

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

TESTIMONY ON SB 2421
RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:00 PM

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

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 2421, which appropriates funds to DOA 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 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.



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 7, 2024

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

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

Re: Strong Support for SB2421, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition
Assistance Program Incentives

Hrg: Friday, February 9, 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 SB2421**, 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 SB2421**.

Mahalo,



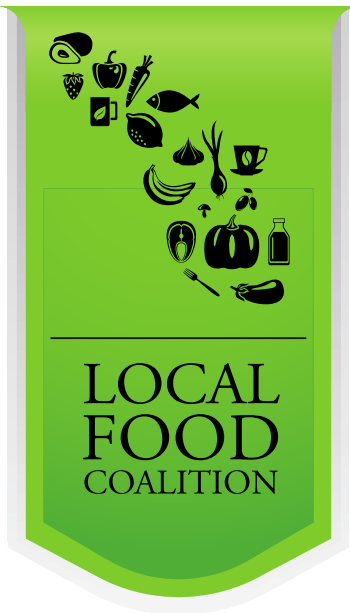
Peggy Mierzwa
Policy & Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

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/>



SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Friday, February 9, 2024 – 1:00 p.m. – Conference Room 224 &
Videoconference

SB 2421 – RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES

SUPPORT

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

The Local Food Coalition **SUPPORTS** SB 2421, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) 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 SB 2421.

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



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

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

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 9, 2024

TIME: 1pm

PLACE: Room 224

RE: SB2421 Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

Position: Support

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

Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

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

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.



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents

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Kohala, Hawai'i

Odysseus Yacalis
East Hawai'i

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Andrea Drayer
Ka'u, Hawai'i

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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 Chairs Gabbard and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Richards and Aquino, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment & Health and Human Services Committees,

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 SB2421.**

The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program has been instrumental in incentivizing SNAP beneficiaries to purchase fresh, locally-grown produce. By providing matching funds to SNAP participants, this program not only increases their buying power but also encourages them to make healthier food choices. This has resulted in the increased consumption of nutrient-rich fruits, vegetables, and other agricultural products produced by 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.

In conclusion, we urge you to support SB2421 and continue the administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program. 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. We appreciate your dedication to promoting our local agriculture sector and ensuring the well-being of our community.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Friday, February 9, 2024 — 1:00 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative strongly supports SB 2421, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives.

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

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

Ulupono strongly supports SB 2421, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) 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).

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

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

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

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

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

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Attachment

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

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

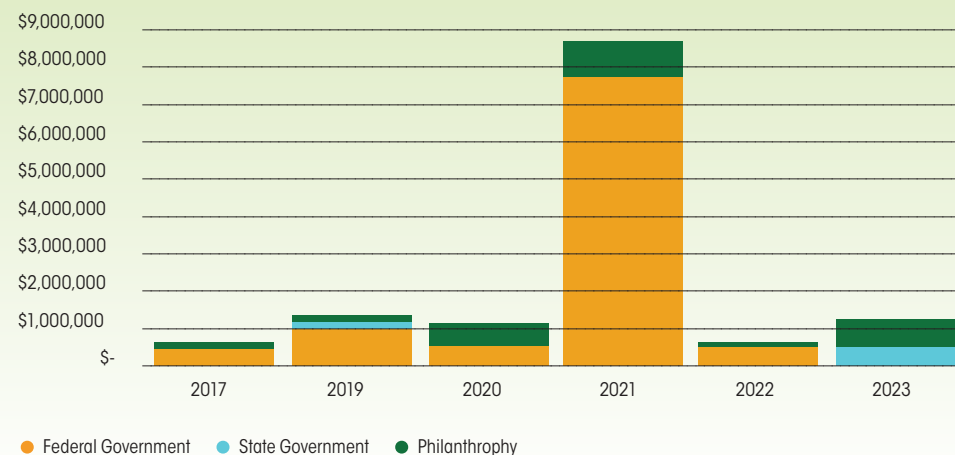
³ 80% of farmers lost their markets and half of them lost between 75% and 100% of their customers, based on a post-fire survey conducted by Hawai'i Farmers Union United.

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

Opportunity to Expand a Proven, Highly Impactful Program

DA BUX FUNDING BY SOURCE (2017 - 2023)

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



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

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

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

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

HAWAII BY THE NUMBERS

- 16TH** HIGHEST POVERTY RATE (10.0% OF THE POPULATION LIVING AT OR BELOW THE POVERTY LINE)
- 22X** INCREASE IN THE ANNUAL TOTAL OF DA BUX DISCOUNTS ISSUED TO SNAP SHOPPERS

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

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

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



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



HOW 'DA BUX' WORKS

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

THE CHALLENGE

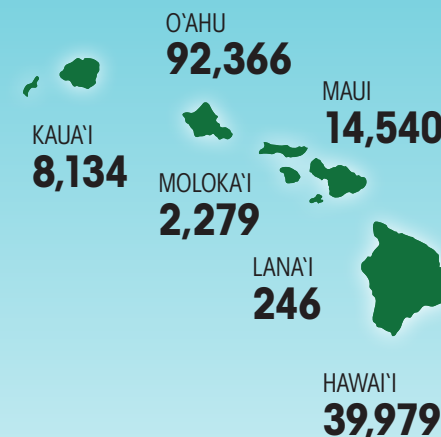
In fall 2023, the program was denied federal funding primarily due to a lack of a sustained State funding. Based on the projected spend down rate, current funding of the DA BUX program will only last through August 2024. Hawai'i SNAP beneficiaries have been hit with both increasing food costs and decreasing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

THE OPPORTUNITY

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



ISLAND BREAKDOWN OF SNAP PARTICIPANTS (as of August 2023)

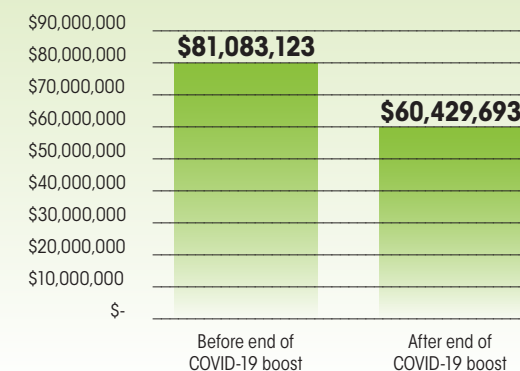


HAWAII BY THE NUMBERS

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

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

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



State Support is Key to Federal and Philanthropic Funding



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

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

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

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



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

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

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



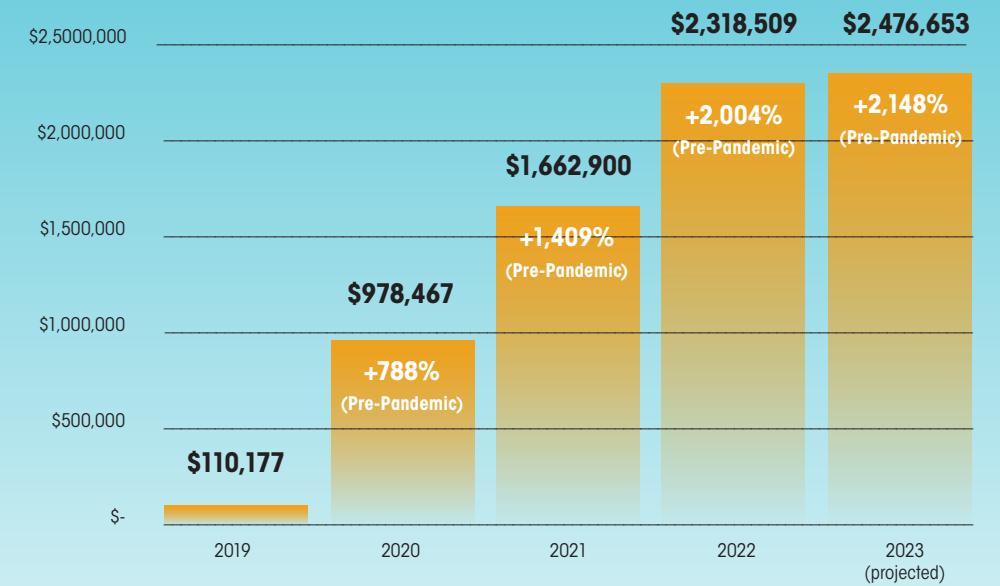
I really love this program because I am diabetic and need fresh veggies and fruits to help keep me healthy.

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

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

ANNUAL DA BUX DISCOUNTS ISSUED TO SNAP SHOPPERS

Participation has steadily increased in Hawai'i



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

LOCAL FOOD SALES DRIVEN BY SNAP DA BUX*

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

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

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

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





**Testimony to the Senate Joint Committee on Agriculture and Environment and Health
and Human Services
Friday, February 9, 2024; 1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 224
Via Videoconference**

**RE: SENATE BILL NO. 2421 – RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM INCENTIVES.**

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

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill No. 2421, RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES.

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).

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 Senate Bill No. 2421
Friday, February 9, 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.



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The State Legislature
Committee On Agriculture And Environment
Committee On Health And Human Services
Friday, February 9, 2024
Conference Room 224, 1:00 PM

TO: The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
FROM: Keali'i Lopez, State Director, AARP Hawai'i
RE: Support for S.B. 2421 Relating to SNAP Incentives

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and San Buenaventura and Members of the Committees:

My name is Keali'i Lopez, and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 140,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families. **AARP strongly supports S.B. 2421 which appropriates funds to the Dept .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).**

Older workers and retirees living on a fixed income already know all too well that inflation and rising food prices are stretching household budgets in ways that make it harder to put food on the table. Some of them may face life challenges as they age—such as experiencing a medical crisis, job loss, or death of a spouse or other loved one—that may result in financial instability and make it difficult to afford food. For example, newly widowed older adults experience higher poverty rates, greater housing cost burdens, and challenges to getting the help they need.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are a crucial ingredient in the food budgets for many Hawaii residents especially kūpuna. Food assistance for low-income older adults is essential; food insecurity has significant negative impacts on older adults, particularly on their health. Older adults who are food insecure are more likely than their food-secure counterparts to have limitations on activities of daily living, have conditions like diabetes and depression, and experience heart attacks. Research shows that SNAP enrollment among older adults is associated with fewer hospital and emergency room visits and long-term care admissions. Enrolling in SNAP can also lead to increased well-being, especially among older adults. As inflation continues driving up the costs of groceries and other necessities, programs like SNAP that help eligible older adults are especially important. SNAP benefits increase food security and reduce monthly food costs. Further funding the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and SNAP benefits can help ensure low-income kūpuna have the resources they need. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in strong support of S.B. 2421.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 7:45:42 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kirsten Snook	Testifying for Volcano Precious Plastic	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

I fully support this program -- but ask that you please reconsider the plastic cards used in it. An app, cardstock, or other options will be less expensive and will not end up in our precious ocean. Thousands of these cards are produced at the expense of our tax dollars and our environment.

At the very least, could you please consider having someone in-state produce the cards from recycled plastic?

Mahalo,

Kirsten Snook

Volcano Precious Plastic



February 7, 2024

To: Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and members of the Committees on Agriculture & Environment and Health & Human Services

Regarding: Testimony in Strong Support of SB2421 “Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives”

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony in strong support for SB2421, “Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives,” 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,

Claire Sullivan, CEO

Farm Link Hawai‘i

Phone: (808) 218-0077

Email: claire@farmlinkhawaii.com



February 9, 2024

Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Health and Human Services

RE: Testimony in support of SB 2421, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

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

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, **I support SB 2421**, the 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

Friday, February 9, 2024; 1:00 pm
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

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

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

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

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

**Re: Testimony in Support of SB 2421
Relating To Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**

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

I write in support of SB 2421 which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

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

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 10:04:40 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

The Zonta Club of Hilo supports the continuation of funding for the Da Bux Program. The program has proven that it provides more fresh fruits and vegetables to economically challenged women, keiki and kupuna.

Additionally, the program supports Hawai'i local agricultural sector. Da Bux is a model developed on Hawaii Island through the Blue Zones Project to help the ALICE sector while providing for food security and support of locally grown produce.

Women, who are more likely the caregivers of children and elders, benefit from this Program, can provide more nutritious meals for our vulnerable population. Zohta Club of Hllo Supports the DA Bux Program fundig statewide.



Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment, and

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: SB2421

Friday, February 9, 2024 1:00 p.m. Conference Room 224

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

HAPA strongly supports SB2421 that 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. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded.

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 SB2421.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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



Anne Frederick
Executive Director

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 7:04:26 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew B. Johnson	Testifying for Pacific Gateway Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Pacific Gateway Center Supports this Bill



02/08/2024

Testimony in Support of SB 2421, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

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

The Hawai'i Good Food Alliance is writing to voice our **strong support of SB 2421** 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.

My name is Lucas McKinnon, and I am the Managing Director of the Hawai'i Good Food Alliance (HGFA). The other founding organizations are listed below. HGFA is a 501(c)(3) corporation formed by a statewide collaboration of organizations that are engaged in the production and distribution of food with the goal of rebuilding thriving community food systems. HGFA is a cross-sector network of food producers, food hubs, food banks, farmers markets, and healthcare providers from each major Hawaiian island. Our mission is that we join together—with a sense of urgency—to raise community voice and support one another in the belief that each and every person in Hawai'i can share in healthy, locally produced food.

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

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

Sincerely,

Lucas McKinnon
Managing Director
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
lucas@hawaiigoodfoodalliance.org

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



SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 6:24:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sylvia Dolena	Testifying for Pele Lani Farm LLC	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.



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

BILL SB2421
POSITION: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: February 9, 2024

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

Aloha United Way supports SB2421, 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 measure. We urge you to pass SB2421.

Sincerely,

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

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

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

Suzanne Skjold
Chief Operating Officer
Aloha United Way



Food+ Policy Internship 2024

food@purplemaia.org

February 7, 2024

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

Hawaii Food+ Policy is in strong SUPPORT of SB2421, to fund and grow the DA BUX program. This program is building a more food-secure future in Hawai'i. By enabling families to more easily purchase healthy, nutrient-dense foods produced by 470 local farmers across the state, DA BUX has proven its effectiveness as a solution to multiple food system problems (DA BUX 2020-2021 Impact Report).

Importantly, by allocating \$2M for DA BUX, Hawai'i is eligible for an additional \$2M in federal matching funds. This bill is an opportunity to increase economic growth in Hawai'i as well as reduce negative health outcomes and diet-related chronic illnesses among Hawai'i families.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today, please pass SB2421 favorably out of your committees.

Mahalo,
Hawaii Food+ Policy Team

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

In 2024, the cohort of interns are undergrads and graduate students from throughout the UH System. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Director

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

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

February 9, 2024
1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference

Re: SB 2421, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives.

Chair Gabbard, Chair San Buenaventura, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 2421, 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 SB 2421.

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 health care costs and improve patient outcomes.

We support SB 2421 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.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 6:16:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Fox	Testifying for Malama Kaua'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This program is essential for our local food economy, providing a triple win for farmers, families, and our food system.



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

February 7, 2024

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

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

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

Subject: **Testimony in Strong Support of SB2421, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST
ALBRECHT

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

ANN EBESUNO
BOARD CHAIR

MARK
KRZYZANOWSKI
VICE-CHAIR

DENNIS LIN
TREASURER

JULIA ZEE
SECRETARY

STEPHEN UEDA

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA
COLLINS

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, Chair San Buenaventura, and Vice Chair Aquino,

We are in strong support of SB2421 and the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

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

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

WWW.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



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

humbly requesting the State to invest \$2M per year in DA BUX to support program sustainability and continuous affordable healthy food access to SNAP recipients. Furthermore, a State commitment will be leveraged in our FY '24 GusNIP application to unlock \$2M in federal funds to meet the grant's requirement of a 100% non-federal match.

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

We respectfully ask your committee to pass this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kristin Frost Albrecht

Kristin Frost Albrecht
Executive Director

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST
ALBRECHT

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

ANN EBESUNO
BOARD CHAIR

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

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

From: Katherine Park, Owner, Balanced Hawaii Eats, LLC

Re: SB 2421, Hearing on February 9, 2024

Date: February 8, 2024

I respectfully write in support of SB 2421, DOA; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program; Expenditure Ceiling; Appropriation. I am a born and raised resident of the State of Hawaii who has seen many friends and family move away due to the cost of living and shortage of lucrative employment opportunities while wanting to care for their healthy. Balanced Hawaii Eats, LLC, is creating recipes for people to follow that will help Hawaii families and those who have Hawaii ties eat healthier and promote greater mindfulness about what they eat and how food impacts their bodies.

In addition to the position of the legislature in general as stated in Section 1 of the bill, here are other factors that confirm why this bill should pass and continue through the legislative process:

- Eating more fruits and vegetables that are minimally processed indirectly helps to address the long-term issue of medical professional shortages in the islands. Bills were passed in 2022 to assist with medical education training (Act 262) and loan repayment for health care professionals (Act 263). Family and friends must often wait weeks to obtain appointments with their primary care physician that is likely due to this shortage. Healthy diets for Hawaii residents can help with preventing and/or controlling chronic diseases which require regular medical provider monitoring and can help to free-up medical resources over time.
- Easier access to fresh fruits and vegetables will mean fewer sick days for working adults, less sick days for their children, and faster recovery days if they are sick. The economy hurts even more if in this current state of employee shortages across most industries people are not able to work because they are ill or taking care of ill dependents as we witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- People who want to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables when within their budget are hard working and disciplined: they are willing to wash, cut, and prepare these items over convenience foods for their overall health despite their many responsibilities. They are the same type of people that are responsible and will work hard to make ends meet, do what they can to improve their financial situation, and will not purposefully stay within a lower income bracket just to continue to receive SNAP or other government benefits.
- Families that want access to fresh fruits and vegetables and locally produced meats also want to teach their keiki about the long-term benefits of healthy eating and the benefit to the local economy. It takes years to develop this foundation of thinking in our youth. Those who are not financially able to obtain this type of food have an uphill challenge to teach this

to their children. They are not able to model this type of eating at home when housing or other household expenses take priority over healthy food.

- Lastly, kupuna who are struggling to make ends meet may not feel compelled to prioritize healthy eating and focus on medication. The funds intended for the Hawaii healthy food incentive program through SB 2421 will provide not only financial assistance but help to minimize stress and more serious mental health crises to our seniors who may be less familiar with and/or less willing to seek out mental health services.

Any financial stress to the State of Hawaii's budget can be negated by the overall widespread benefit of sending funding to the Hawaii healthy food incentive program and approving SB 2421.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony in support of SB 2421.



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII
SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT and
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

FEBRUARY 9, 2024

SB 2421, RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **supports** SB 2421, relating to supplemental nutrition assistance program incentives. Pursuant to the "Economic Justice and Labor" section of the official Democratic Party of Hawai'i platform, the party "supports government investments of tax revenue in community development, government anti-poverty programs, and the transition to a sustainable, green economy."

Through the national Double Up Food Bucks Program, Hawai'i has the opportunity to expand access to healthy foods for low-income residents who are eligible for supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits. Currently implemented in more than 25 states, the Double Up Food Bucks Program provides matching federal grant moneys to state programs that incentivize the use of supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits for the purchase of fresh produce.

Act 153, Session Laws of Hawaii 2019, created the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program, now commonly known as the DA BUX double up food bucks program. The DA BUX double up food bucks program began first

with a pilot program in 2012 by Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services on the island of O'ahu and The Kohala Center on the island of Hawai'i. The program provides a dollar-for-dollar match to supplemental nutrition assistance program beneficiaries who purchase locally grown fruits, vegetables, and proteins at participating farmers' markets, grocery stores, and community-supported agriculture projects.

By the end of 2021, the pilot program was available at 57 food retailers across 98 market sites and pick-up locations, including grocery stores, farmers' markets, and community-supported agriculture programs. From 2020 to 2021, DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and eight distributors. Each dollar reimbursed to participating DA BUX food retailers for their issued discounts on local produce has an economic multiplier of 2.1, meaning that each program dollar issued for local produce incentives contributes \$2.10 to Hawaii's economy. Thus, a \$3,000,000 investment by the state in this program would allow for a federal funding match that will contribute at least \$12,600,000 to the local economy annually.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kris Coffield

Co-Chair, Legislative Committee

(808) 679-7454

kriscoffield@gmail.com

Abby Simmons

Co-Chair, Legislative Committee

(808) 352-6818

abbyalana808@gmail.com

To: Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment and on Health and Human Services
Re: **SB 2421 – Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
February 9, 2024, 1:00 PM

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

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of SB 2421**. This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program ("DA BUX") and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

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

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

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

⁴ <https://dabux.org/for-advocates>

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



To: The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)
and
The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services (HHS)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Friday, February 9, 2024, 1pm

In strong support of SB2421

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

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **strongly supports SB2421.**

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. SB2421 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 SB2421 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



February 8th, 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 SB2421, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**

I am writing to express my strong support for SB2421, Relating to Supplemental Assistance Program

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.

SB2421 represents a vital opportunity to continue and expand upon the positive impact of SNAP/DABUX. By making healthy food more accessible to families in need, supporting local agriculture and farmers, and bolstering the local economy, this program embodies a "triple win" for our state.

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

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Emily Emmons
Executive Director
Ho'ōla Farms



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for S.B. 2421 – Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives
Senate Committees on Agricultural & Environment and Health & Human Services
Friday February 9, 2024, at 1:00PM

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **S.B. 2421** which would appropriate 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 (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 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 S.B. 2421 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 S.B. 2421.



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

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

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

Hearing: Friday, February 9, 2024, 1:00 PM, Conference Room 224

RE: **SB2421 Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of **SB2421**. 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

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



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 SB2421**.



KŌKUA KALIHI VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY SERVICES

2239 N. SCHOOL STREET ◆ HONOLULU, HAWAI‘I 96819 ◆ TEL: 808-791-9400 ◆ FAX: 808-848-0979 ___

Kōkua Kalihi Valley, Roots Program

2/8/2024

Testimony in Support of SB 2421, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

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

We are writing to voice our strong support of SB 2421 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.

KKV has learned from the community how important access to fresh, local, healthy, and cultural foods are important to the diets of native, pacific islander and low-income community residents. For the past decade, we have been working to increase access to these foods which support local farmers, ranchers and producers, while improving nutrition and health. Unfortunately, funding to promote improved access is sporadic and there is a great need for programs like DA BUX to be consistently funded so that community-based organizations can support the improvements we need in our local food system

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

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

Sincerely,

Jesse Lipman
Roots Program Director
Kōkua Kalihi Valley
Jlipman@kkv.net - 808.554.7916

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



February 9, 2024

**To: Chair Gabbard, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Richards, Vice Chair Aquino and
Members of the Senate Committees**

From: Hawaii Association of Health Plans Public Policy Committee

Date/Location: February 9, 2024; 1:00 p.m./Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

**Re: Testimony in support of SB 2421– Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Incentives**

The Hawaii Association of Health Plans (HAHP) respectfully supports SB 2421. HAHP is a statewide partnership that unifies Hawaii's health plans to improve the health of Hawaii's communities together. A majority of Hawaii residents receive their health coverage through a plan associated with one of our organizations.

There's no question that consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables is an integral part of a healthy diet and can play a vital role in the prevention of obesity and chronic disease. HAHP strongly supports the efforts of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to make it possible for all Hawaii residents to access healthy foods. We also support these programs because of the positive impact they have on small businesses, local farmers, and Hawaii's agricultural community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2421.

Sincerely,

HAHP Public Policy Committee

cc: HAHP Board Members

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 1:39:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maureen Datta	Testifying for Adaptations Inc	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

We have a rare opportunity to leverage federal funds if our state supports this program, so let's be smart and take advantage of this chance to empower our island community of food producers and consumers.

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.

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.](#)

Mahalo,

Maureen Datta



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

Testimony to the Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Health and Human Services

Friday, February 9, 2024, at 1PM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

RE: SB2421 Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs, and Committee Members:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") is in **support of SB2421**, 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 (SNAP).

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. Many ALICE families in Hawaii experience food insecurity but do not currently qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). They stand to benefit from the passage of this measure.

In the Blueprint plan, careful planning and collaboration among government, businesses, and communities to foster sustainable economic development was identified as a clear way forward to address this problem. Another recommendation identified in the 2030 Blueprint Hawaii initiative was to diversify the economy by expanding access to local food products. This measure, if passed, would support the Department of Agriculture in its continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program, which incentivizes local food production while mitigating our food insecurity dilemma.

This measure would ensure that more Hawaii residents who need food assistance have access to it. The current SNAP benefits "cliff" disincentivizes economic advancement which contributes to our workforce shortage.

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 6:11:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Climate Protectors Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support!

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 5:26:34 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Barreca	Testifying for Big Tree Farm LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We operate a 35-acre certified organic banana farm on Oahu that primarily sells wholesale. Most other banana farms in the state have gone out of business, largely due to the price that most retailers would pay being too low to operate a banana farm.

DA BUX has been a vital part of our farm's continued survival as many of the retailers we sell to (including Farm Link) offer DA BUX to their SNAP customers and therefore can pay us a fair price per pound. We would have sold approximately 30% less volume and gotten 40% less per pound if DA BUX was not around.

Please ensure DA BUX has continued funding to continue to spur more local food production.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 5:35:22 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Save Medicaid Hawaii strongly supports SB 2421 for DA Bux program, a potent anti-poverty bill

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 5:40:12 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Matsunaga	Testifying for Indivisible Hawaii Healthcare Team	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Indivisible Hawaii Healthcare Team supports SB 2421, a potent anti-poverty program that promotes personal and community health and economic revitalization by encouraging local produce purchasing.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 11:25:00 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Da Bux a proven successful program that benefits all. Keep funding success

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 5:05:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kelly anne olayan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2421 and agree that DA BUX program should continue to allow 50% discount on locally grown produce. Supporting our local farmers is how we support hawaii in being sustainable.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 5:07:52 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

In support of SB 2421. Thank you.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 5:33:40 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support SB2421. Da Bux is a triple win for Hawai'i, improving food security for SNAP recipients, putting money into the local economy, and encouraging the consumption and production of locally-grown food. The legislature should invest in this proven program with permanent funding.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 6:42:32 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB 2421 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. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded.

In reading about DA Bux, I've learned that this program is not only popular but important to our community because it makes local produce more affordable for lower-income consumers, it also boosts Hawai'i's economy by keeping federal nutrition dollars circulating locally—directly supporting local farmers and food businesses.

These are the ways that we should be supporting our communities and I am in SUPPORT of this bill.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 7:39:18 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for SB2421, which proposes the funding of Double Up SNAP Bucks (DA BUX) for fresh local produce. This initiative holds great promise in promoting healthier eating habits, increasing affordability, and bolstering the local economy.

Firstly, endorsing this bill means endorsing the pursuit of healthier lifestyles for our communities. By facilitating access to fresh, locally sourced produce, we encourage families to adopt more nutritious diets, contributing to improved overall well-being and reduced healthcare costs.

Secondly, the DA BUX program addresses the issue of affordability. Making fresh local produce more financially accessible to SNAP beneficiaries ensures that low-income households can make healthier food choices without straining their budgets.

Lastly, supporting local farmers through this initiative strengthens our local economy. By incentivizing the purchase of fresh, locally grown produce, SB2421 creates a direct and positive impact on the livelihoods of farmers. This, in turn, fosters a sustainable agricultural ecosystem, promotes job creation, and enhances the resilience of our local communities.

In conclusion, I urge you to consider the manifold benefits that SB2421 can bring to our communities – healthier citizens, increased affordability, and a thriving local economy. Your support for this bill would not only be a step towards a more resilient community but also a testament to your commitment to the well-being of all.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 6:51:29 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

MAHALO to the State Senate for supporting continued funding for Da Bux last session - very disappointed the bill died in Conference Committee. Please do your best to get this bill across the finish line this year - it's a win-win-win - for low/moderate income households dependent on EBT cards to make ends meet, for local farmers and for the retail store partners. And it helps low-moderate income households have healthier diets with local fresh produce. Mahalo for your support. Patti Cook - Waimea, Island of Hawai'i

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 9:04:08 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha e,

I am a resident of House District 28 and Senate District 13. I am also a former beneficiary of SNAP and utilized Da Bux program. Thank you for your work in expanding this program as much as it has been thus far. I would love to see the program continue and be expanded to as many fresh food retailers as possible. The first time I tried to use the program was at Foodland Ala Moana - I was denied. I was disappointed to find out that it wasn't available at all Foodland locations. I wasn't able to meet my dietary needs during that shopping trip as a result. Eventually, I was able to visit Kokua Kalihi Valley and utilize the program which allowed my food budget to stretch a little bit further and gave me more opportunities to cook food at home at a more affordable price.

I no longer qualify for Da Bux program due to making \$102 more than the income limit for SNAP. \$102 is the difference between paying for groceries for up to 1 week or paying my monthly electric bill. I would like to see the Da Bux program extended to fill the gap when low-income earners no longer qualify for SNAP but don't make enough to be financially and food secure.

I support SB2421.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 8:33:39 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT for this bill to get passed so that SNAP participants could afford to purchase produce at half the cost while simultaneously supporting local farms and businesses. Funding the DaBux program is a triple win for local families, farmers, and the economy. On top of that, continued support means the federal government will also match funds thus enabling more people to benefit from this winning program by eating healthy and staying healthy too. Thank you for your kind consideration and together, let's ensure DaBux is well and alive in Hawaii!

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 7:57:53 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support this bill as it is such a good way to help lower income families eat nutritious food, and will decrease the amount of money spent on health care and treating various diseases.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 9:04:51 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

support

Date: February 7, 2024

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

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

Re: **Support for SB 2421**, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

Hrg: Friday February 9, 2024 at 1:00 pm Conference Room 224 & via Videoconference

Aloha Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Health and Human Services,

As a parent, community member and healthcare professional I am writing in **strong support of SB 2421**, 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; and, declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded.

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 SB 2421**, respectfully ask you to pass it out of committee.

Many thanks for your consideration,

Forrest Batz, PharmD
Keaau, HI

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 9:10:01 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This program helps SNAP participants to buy more local fresh fruits and veggies because each SNAP dollar is doubled when buying local produce. It supports local produce, local food demand and local farmers. All in all, it has a significant positive impact on Hawaii's economy.

Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Health and Human Services

February 9, 2024 at 1300hrs

By

Roxann Rowe, APRN-Rx, GNP-BC

SB2421 RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES

Members of the Senate Committees on AEN/HHS, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in very strong support of this bill SB2421. I am an Advance Practice Registered Nurse with a Certification in Gerontology and greatly appreciate this Committee's support of SB2421. The bulk of my patients are elderly and many of them live below the poverty level. In Hawaii, the majority of older adults receive Social Security benefits. This is often not sufficient to meet basic needs and they must rely on other sources of income including SNAP. The cost of living in Hawaii precludes many older adults from being able to purchase a variety of healthy foods. DA BUX program provides an excellent way to improve nutrition, support local vendors, and help Hawaii's economy.

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

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

Supports Local Farmers and Businesses

- DA BUX supported 470 farmers.
- Local produce sales increased 531% at farmer's markets.
- 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 \$1.79 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 the DA BUX, Hawai'i is eligible for an additional \$2M in federal matching funds.
- A \$4M influx into our economy results in a potential \$25.6M in economic activity.

I respectfully request that this Committee pass SB2421 un-amended. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 10:19:01 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This legislation is a win on so many levels - it is in EVERYONE's best interest to support DA BUX.

When children and adults eat healthy, their overall health is improved and the impact to short and long term health care costs are a no brainer!!!

In addition to the positive impact of access to more fruits and vegetables to promote healthy nutrition, additional positive impacts to fund and grow the DA BUX program are many.

I am STRONGLY SUPPORTING that the state 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.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 11:23:13 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Patti Hatzistavrakis, fully support 2421 SB RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES. The Da Bux program is a “triple win” for Hawai‘i. It makes healthy food more accessible for families in need, supports local agriculture and farmers, and keeps money within the local economy. SB2421 also supports the agenda for creating a more sustainable Hawai'i. Continued funding is needed to support this important program. A \$2M investment at the state level would make this program eligible for federal matching funds. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of 2421 SB RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES. I appreciate the committee's consideration.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 10:31:05 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of SB2421, to fund and grow the DA BUX program. This program is building a more food-secure future in Hawai'i. By enabling families to more easily purchase healthy, nutrient-dense foods produced by 470 local farmers across the state, DA BUX has proven its effectiveness as a solution to multiple food system problems (DA BUX 2020-2021 Impact Report).

Importantly, by allocating \$2M for DA BUX, Hawai'i is eligible for an additional \$2M in federal matching funds. This bill is an opportunity to increase economic growth in Hawai'i as well as reduce negative health outcomes and diet-related chronic illnesses among Hawai'i families. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today, please pass SB2421 favorably out of your committees.

Mahalo,

Anna Ezzy

Honorable Members of the Senate Committees on AEN/HHS,

I am writing to express my strong support for DA BUX program (SB2421). 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 SB2421. 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

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 8:06:06 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I stand in support of SB2421.

This provides the HDOA funds to provide matching funds for those that participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP serves those with the greatest need, helping them to get the nutritious food they need, while also providing more funding back to our local farmers and ranchers who are able to sell their products with the assistance of SNAP.

This program is needed and gives me hope in humanity.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Keoni Shizuma

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 12:43:33 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
May Ratiu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 11:42:28 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Helping keeping our community fed and supporting locally grown food, what could be better?
Please pass this measure!

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 4:56:23 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen L Worthington	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to urge you to support SB2421 to fund Hawai'i's Double Up Food Bucks program, which makes locally-grown produce affordable for Hawai'i's low income consumers. The household monthly benefit through SNAP is often still not enough to afford fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

DA BUX is a win-win way for families to receive the nutrition they need and for our state to support our local farmers and local businesses. Please keep money for food within our island economy and increase access to healthy, locally grown produce by supporting this bill.

Best regards,

Karen Worthington

karen@karenworthington.com

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 6:26:32 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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.

Please support SB 2421 and give Hawaii's low income families more local fresh fruit and vegetables.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 9:42:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am very much in support of this bill which would benefit local farmers, consumers, and the local economy.

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

Hearing Date/Time: Thursday February 9, 2024, 1:00pm

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, CR 224 & Videoconference

Re: Judith Ann Armstrong supports SB2421 RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM INCENTIVES.

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

I, Judith Ann Armstrong, support SB2421 related to Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
Program Incentives.

DA BUX is incredibly popular because not only does it make local produce more affordable for lower-
income consumers, it also boosts Hawai'i's economy by keeping federal nutrition dollars circulating
locally—directly supporting local farmers and food businesses.

DA BUX is partially funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but the federal government requires
the program to provide a dollar-for-dollar match. The program has been fortunate to find matching
philanthropic funds to support it since 2019 but could see the end of this federal support by August 2024
without a state match.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of S2421.

Sincerely,

Judith Ann Armstrong

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 9:48:32 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee,

Please pass SB 2421 to fund DA BUX so we can continue to support local families, local farmers & food makers, and the local economy.

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

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 11:29:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elexis Kalar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii and its residents deserve healthy food and a chance at food sovereignty. Local grown food is better for the environment, healthier and tastier for the people, and creates an avenue for the Hawaiian culture to live on. It's the government's job to take care of its people, and this is a great opportunity to do so. This would make a difference in the lives of many Hawaiian residents, and enable us to get fresh, locally grown food.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 5:04:54 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Piilani Kilakalua Bernabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha my name is Piilani Kilakalua Bernabe,

I am a mother of 6 and I support SB 2421 which funds the BUX program. This wonderful program helped me to place more locally grown food into our home. With the cost of groceries rising this program does not only help my ohana (family) but it truly does help our local farmers and the local economy. I would love to see the BUX program continue to help provide to our communities by doubling our purchasing power that makes produce more affordable.

Mahalo

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 8:47:20 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support SB2421. 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 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 SB2421.

Kristin Mills, Maui resident.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 9:51:14 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This program should not only be supported but should be institutionalized in our state. It addresses multiple issues in the state, primarily in terms of providing healthy food to our impoverished citizenry and simultaneously promoting and supporting local agriculture and farmers. I strongly support this bill.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 9:56:20 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I use Da Bux all the time.

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

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 Douglas, Kihei

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 9:58:14 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judie Hoepner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB2421 - it's a win-win for all concerned.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 10:05:34 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
L. Osterer	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. DA BUX simultaneously benefits Hawai'i farmers as well as those who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The program helps recipients access nutritious, locally grown food, while bolstering our local economy and sustainability.. This bill also leverages federal funds.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 10:06:36 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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 Sen. Gabbard for introducing this measure and to Sen. San Buenaventura and committee members for your support.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 10:05:41 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya Aynessazian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

Right off the cuff, I know of several family members and friends who rely on DA BUX program to make ends meet. This is such a great program! DA BUX partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders, which is more important than ever today. 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 - this is critical for families with school age children. I know from grandkids and friends' children that many kids come home from schools in our area very hungry because the amount of food served isn't enough or is too high in carbs and lacking in nutrients
- 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,

Tanya Yamanaka Aynessazian

Pahoa, HI

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 10:11:12 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaia Medeiros	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 10:18:03 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

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

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 10:30:58 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

STRONGLY SUPPORT!

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 11:24:14 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Hello Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

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

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 12:15:06 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

In supporting this bill you will be helping those in need to get Hawaii grown fresh produce. It will also help our farmers.

Please pass SB2421

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 10:51:02 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvette Amshoff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom this may concern,

I feel very strongly in support of this bill as it provides health food to our community who needs it the most. It also supports local farmers and our local economy. Please continue supporting Da Bux!!!

mahalo,

Yvette Amshoff

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 10:52:05 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

DA BUX program is something that's important to me because it helps me access and be able to afford good fresh locally grown produce.

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

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 11:19:12 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joan Kutzer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard, Buenaventura, and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Produce and fresh food items tend to be healthier. Having these items locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Joan Kutzer, Kilauea

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 11:15:13 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joan Heartfield PhD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

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, Joan Heartfield, PhD

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 11:42:52 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Breon Michel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

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,

Breon Michel, Kailua Kona, HI

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 11:51:14 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katie Wortman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Katie Wortman, and I reside in Waimea on Hawai‘i Island with my husband and our 1-year-old son. Drawing from my experience as the former manager of Kohala Food Hub, where I worked with over 50 local farmers, coupled with my personal perspective as a farmer’s wife and a previous beneficiary of SNAP and DA BUX, I stand in strong support of SB2421. This bill, aimed at funding Hawai‘i’s Double Up Food Bucks program, is a critical initiative for making fresh, locally-grown produce more accessible to Hawai‘i’s low-income communities.

The SNAP program is essential for reducing hunger among low-income families in Hawai‘i. Nonetheless, the monthly benefits often fall short of covering the costs of fresh, locally-grown fruits and vegetables. This shortfall not only affects nutritional choices but also means that much of this financial assistance benefits corporations on the continent rather than our local farming community.

By proposing a \$2 million investment in SB2421, which will be matched by federal funds, DA BUX can extend its reach to additional retailers and communities across Hawai‘i. The program benefits families, farmers, and local businesses alike, with no discernible drawbacks.

I urge you to support this bill, which will not only enhance the health and well-being of Hawai‘i’s residents but also bolster our local agriculture and economy. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Mahalo nui,

Katie Wortman

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 1:48:37 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Evern Williams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Baggard and Buenaventura, Honorable Committee Members,

I am in strong support of SB 2421.

Please continue to support this program which has a proven success record. You need to expand successful programs like this wherever and whenever possible.

Mahalo,

Evern Willims for the Rees and Williams Ohana

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 11:50:24 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Wat	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 12:11:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

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,
Stacey Alapai

Pukalani, HI

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 1:11:03 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amanda Allison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

I have witnessed the excitement that families have over being able to get fresh produce, meat, and dairy products directly from the producers at the Makeke at Wai'anae Mall. DA BUX not only helps these families stretch their SNAP benefits further, but it is with fresh, nutritious and delicious food that would otherwise be out of their reach.

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,

Amanda Allison, Wahiawa

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 12:58:32 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support this bill and the local farmers.
Tank you for your consideration.
Roger Walraven, retired Kauai resident

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 3:32:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rahn Magdalena	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The past year and a half were really hard. Thanks to FarmLink, and the Hawaii Department of Human Services' EBT program, I've been able to afford buying healthy food. This is largely part to the Da Bux program. Living here is expensive enough as it is, and making food (specifically, healthy, locally grown food, which also supports our economy and well-being) accessible to people who are not doing so well should be a priority.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 1:00:58 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a former recipient of DA BUX food program during the pandemic, I want to express my strong support of the continuation of this program. DA BUX provides equal access to those who might otherwise be unable to afford healthy foods, supporting local farms and Hawai'i agriculture.

In the wake of struggling supply chains and tenuous reliance on the mainland, DA BUX was a salve, giving me and other underresourced individuals an opportunity to have nutritious, local foods.

It is imperative that we continue to build self-reliance on Hawai'i-sourced produce and agriculture and ensure access for all. I fully support DA BUX program's continuation and hope that the state will help families and individuals receive the federal match to provide nutrition and food across all Hawai'i.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 1:10:49 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and committee members.

I strongly support da bucks program. It supports our food security goals and also supports our farming community.

We have way too many people who are hungry in Hawai'i. We should have no tolerance for anyone being hungry, especially our keiki and kupuna.

Please support this very vital Bill.

Mahalo,

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 2:55:46 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

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

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Kathy Shimata

Honolulu 96822

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 11:54:29 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

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,

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 2:08:36 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaiakahinalii Kaopua-Canonigo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

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,

Kaiakahinalii Ka'opua-Canonigo

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 7:01:10 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcella Alohalani Boido	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in **support** of SB 2421.

Having read the sample testimony from HAPA, I agree. I am submitting this simple statement of support.

Hawai‘i has a wealth of good agricultural lands. We need to support our farmers and make their produce available to our people at a modest cost. Our mid-ocean location makes us very vulnerable. This program is a major step towards reducing our vulnerability and increasing sustainability. It will help support our farmers and feed some of our most food insecure folks.

Please fund this innovative program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Marcella Alohalani Boido, M.A.

Hawai‘i State Judiciary Certified Spanish Court Interpreter (Tier 4)

Moili‘ili, Honolulu 96826

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 12:15:16 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike McCann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our farm and the farmers market have seen increased demand from ebt users during the few years this program has been in effect. I believe it has nothing but positives for the ebt user and the farmers, markets, and grociers in the state.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 3:15:24 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 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 SB 2421.

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

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- 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,

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 3:33:23 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am a resident of Kauai county, mother of 3, land steward and I am writing in to share that I wholeheartedly support SB2421. Da Bux has helped my family to be able to eat healthy nutritious local food and I don't know what we would have done without it. Please continue this vital program.

Mahalo,

Melissa Nash

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 12:17:19 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arminda Hoomanawanui-Sugai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because the DaBux program allows for the local population to be able to afford produce that's grown locally. I feel that the local producers also benefit from this program because it encourages people to purchase locally instead of going to the big box stores that aren't local. The DaBux program provides an incentive for people who otherwise would've never considered the option to purchase local produce I think that the continuation of this program will allow people to begin and/or continue the path to food sovereignty.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 7:56:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

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

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

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- 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, Timothy Eliel Starbright, Kapaa

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 7:06:51 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

No one should have to go to bed hungry and local sustainable food systems is a way to make it so no one has to.

Erik Meade

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 8:07:25 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donna Thelander	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

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

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- 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,

Donna Thelander, Kailua-Kona

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 3:58:21 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

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

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

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- 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,

Julia Marrack, Kamuela

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 5:48:17 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Micki Kauwalu-Key	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Gabbard and Buenaventura and Honorable Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2421.

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

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

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- 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,

Micki K, Waianae

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 3:51:58 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in **STRONG** support of SB2421. The Da Bux program is good for our ‘ohana, for our farmers, and for Hawai‘i's overall ecosystem.

Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 12:14:11 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Timothy Wiley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of senate bill 2421 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.

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,

Timothy Wiley

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 3:07:25 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hideki Kimukai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha committee members

My name is Hideki Kimukai, and I strongly support this Bill 2421.

More than 200,000 people depend on food stamps here, and more and more people have been depending on this service. We can not achieve our resiliency and healthy local economy without healthy communities. Our local community health depends on the health of the soil/water that produces our food, which builds strong immunity. I strongly believe that equal access to our health is a basic human right. Mahalo nui for your continued support in representing and putting the community first.

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 12:31:04 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Friends,

Rather than a long letter I simply wish to state my strong Support for SB2412. Thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo,

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 8:38:25 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
allison vincent	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou, I wanted simply to say please continue to fund the DaBux program in Hawaii. I am a lifelong resident, and in order for me to stay in Hawaii, while raising my young daughter, I have to rely on snap benefits. Life has gotten so expensive lately, rent on Kauai is absolutely outrageous. I used to buy at farmers markets when I could afford it. When I got ebt, I found out at Malama Kauai and how they offer a way to purchase local produce with ebt, and that your dollar goes farther. I love supporting local farmers, I do it as much as I can, and with DaBux, I can buy so much more healthy food for myself and my growing baby. I would really appreciate if this program continued because it just helps me buy a little bit more during times when I am struggling financially. Mahalo nui,

allison Vincent

SB-2421

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 10:00:19 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kencho Gurung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this extremely popular program that benefits both local farmers and those on SNAP!