



### **SCR69/SR57**

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A SUSTAINABLE  
FOOD SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

March 27, 2024

1:00 p.m.

Conference Room 224

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) will recommend to the Board of Trustees (BOT) that it **SUPPORT SCR69/SR57**, which requests that the Department of Agriculture to establish a sustainable food systems working group, and **request an amendment**.

It is no coincidence that the Hawaiian words for land and food are so intertwined. The word for land, ‘āina, is understood to mean that which feeds. Native Hawaiians have long understood and practiced both land stewardship and the cultivation of food systems here in our island home. Additionally, Hawaiians recognize that food is not just what fills our ‘ōpū. It contributes to the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

It's this foundation that helped inform OHA's 15-year strategic plan, Mana i Maui Ola. This strategic plan incorporates four directions: educational pathways, health outcomes, quality housing and economic stability. These directions are rooted in three foundations: ‘ohana (family), mo‘omeheu (culture) and ‘āina. Based on these directions and foundations, our strategic plan recognizes that the economic stability, educational success, health and well-being of Native Hawaiians requires a vibrant food system, particularly one that is culturally grounded.

Hawai‘i currently imports more than 85% of its food, leaving the state vulnerable to supply chain disruptions and external market forces. By bringing together invested partners from various sectors, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions, the Sustainable Food Systems Working Group will serve as a catalyst for collaboration and innovation in advancing Hawai‘i's food economy toward sustainability and vibrancy.

One key benefit of this resolution for the Native Hawaiian community is its potential to enhance food sovereignty and self-sufficiency. The inclusion of indigenous perspectives



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and practices within the Sustainable Food Systems Working Group is essential for respecting the practices and traditions of the Native Hawaiian people. Traditional farming methods and crop varieties play a vital role in preserving biodiversity and promoting ecological sustainability. By engaging Indigenous experts and practitioners in the development of the interagency food systems plan, SCR69/SR57 ensures that the unique needs and values of the Native Hawaiian community are adequately represented and respected.

OHA stands ready to participate in this working group. We believe it aligns with our strategic plan and the work we're doing to carry it out. Thus, we respectfully request the following amendment to add our agency to the working group:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Sustainable Food Systems Working Group is requested to consist of the following members;

(1) The Deputy to the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture, who is also requested to serve as chairperson of the Sustainable Food Systems Working Group;

(2) A representative of the Department of Health, to be designated by the Director of Health;

(3) A representative of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, to be designated by the Director of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism;

(4) A representative of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, to be designated by the Chief Executive Officer;

(45) A representative of the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development, to be designated by the Acting Director of the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development;

(56) The Coordinator of the Hawaii Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission, or the Coordinator's designee;



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(67) A member of the House of Representatives, to be designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(78) A member of the Senate, to be designated by the President of the Senate;

(89) The Interim Dean and Director of the University of Hawaii at Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, or the Interim Dean and Director's designee;

(910) An associate professor of indigenous crops and cropping systems at the University of Hawaii at Manoa;

(1011) An assistant professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Hawaii at Manoa;

(1112) A representative of the Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice, to be invited by the chairperson of the Working Group;

(1213) A representative of the Hawaii Foodbank, to be invited by the chairperson of the Working Group;

(1314) A representative of the Hawaii Farm to School Hui, to be invited by the chairperson of the Working Group;

(1415) A representative of the Hawaii Foodservice Alliance, to be invited by the chairperson of the Working Group; and

(1516) A representative of Hawaii Investment Ready, to be invited by the chairperson of the Working Group; and

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify in support of a sustainable food systems working group. OHA respectfully urges the Committee to **amend and PASS SCR69**.



**SCR-69**

Submitted on: 3/23/2024 12:20:46 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/27/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

Yes to; REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO  
ESTABLISH A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS WORKING  
GROUP.

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024  
1:00 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 69 AND SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 57  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A  
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP.**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 69 and Senate Resolution No. 57 that request the Department of Agriculture (Department) to establish a Sustainable Food Systems Working Group (Working Group). The Department offers comments and has strong concerns.

The Working Group is requested to have 15 members, seven from the executive and legislative branches of State government, three from the University of Hawaii, and five representatives from private organizations.

The Working Group is requested to develop an "Interagency Food Systems Plan" (Plan) tied to "sustainable development goals" (not sourced) that address the following seven food system planning themes (Page 3, lines 19-32):

- (1) Food as a human right and healthy food for all;
- (2) Social equity and food justice;
- (3) Food system resilience;
- (4) Agriculture and food system sustainability;



- (5) Food at the center of a circular economy;
- (6) Sustainability education, workforce development, and fair labor; and
- (7) Good food governance.

The resolutions also request the Working Group to tie “sustainable development goals” to the following “food system planning elements”. (Page 4, line 39 to page 4, line 33)

- (1) Public health and nutrition;
- (2) Household food security;
- (3) Food safety;
- (4) Social equity and food justice;
- (5) Secure and affordable land access;
- (6) Food system resilience, disaster preparedness, and response;
- (7) Biocultural restoration;
- (8) Ecological sustainability;
- (9) Land and water resource use;
- (10) Food waste;
- (11) Biosecurity;
- (12) Infrastructure and capital investment;
- (13) Sustainable economic development and local food economies;
- (14) Sustainable fisheries;
- (15) Education and food literacy;
- (16) Workforce development;
- (17) Fair labor; and
- (18) Good food governance

The Department notes the continued lack of operational definitions and existence of multiple redundancies between the “food system planning themes” and the “food system planning elements”.

The Working Group is also requested to incorporate into the Plan “scientific indicators and a metrics system to track progress”. (Page 4, lines 35-37)

The Plan and recommendations to implement the Plan are due to the 2025 Legislature. The Department is requested to provide administrative, and staff support to the Working Group and prepare the Plan.

The Department has strong concerns.

The Working Group has no representatives of production agricultural organizations or agricultural operators. The Interagency Food Systems Plan risks becoming an academic exercise without the full and sustained participation of local farmers who produce food that most, if not all, of the elements of the Plan will be based on.

As in past iterations, the seven “food system planning themes” remain undefined and the Working Group’s task is made more complex with the addition of 18 “food system planning elements”. The Plan is to include “scientific indicators and a metrics system to track progress” which demand unambiguous operational definitions of the “food system planning themes” and “food system planning elements”.

The Department is requested to “provide administrative and staff support to the Sustainable Food Systems Working Group, including the preparation of the interagency food systems plan” (Page 5, lines 12-14). The Department is very concerned about the voluminous duties to the Department in establishing the Working Group, addressing the 7 themes and 18 elements, writing the Plan and recommendations for implementation of the Plan to the 2025 Legislature, providing staff support including any meetings that may have to be in accordance with Chapter 92, and writing and printing the Plan. These duties require the Department to redirect the already severely diminished professional staff resources away from the State’s highest priority of increasing the



economic viability of existing agricultural businesses and assist in the establishment of new ones in direct support of increasing local food self-sufficiency and export.

The Department is very concerned that the Working Group and the Plan not become an academic exercise with no meaningful impact on the State's highest priorities of increasing the economic viability of existing agricultural businesses and assisting in the establishment of new ones in direct support of increasing local food self-sufficiency and exports.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.



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#### **Executive Officers**

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

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TO: Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 27, 2024  
TIME: 1pm  
PLACE: Room 224

RE: SCR69 / SR57 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH  
A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP.

Position: Support

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

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

HFIA is in support of this measure and the intent of the Sustainable Food Systems Working Group. We also understand the need to keep the group at a reasonable size in order to maximize its ability to take action.

We strongly believe that the effectiveness of the working group will be improved with representation from Hawaii's food retailers. We very much appreciate the inclusion on the working group of HFIA Supplier Member, Hawaii Food Service Alliance. We believe the inclusion of a representative from HFIA or a food retailer would provide high level industry knowledge and expertise to the group and we are glad to participate. It's also important to note that by including HFIA, the working group would gain access to a network of local retailers and suppliers, amplifying the impact of any initiatives the group takes.

HFIA's mission aligns with purpose of the working group - a robust, sustainable, and resilient food supply chain. We encourage the Committee to pass this measure and consider adding a food retailer or representative from HFIA to the group, and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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

March 27, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON SCR 69 and SR 57**  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A  
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
1:00 PM

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

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

**The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SCR 69 and SR 57**, which requests the Department of Agriculture to establish a sustainable food systems working group

The impacts of the COVID pandemic have highlighted the need to strengthen Hawai'i's food system to ensure greater resilience, food security, human health, and economic diversity and stability.

As such, HFB respectfully requests the following amendments:

(8) The ~~Interim~~ Dean and Director of the University of Hawaii at Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, or the ~~Interim~~ Dean and Director's designee;

(16) One representative of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau, to be selected by the President ~~executive director~~ of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau;

(17) One representative of the Hawai'i Cattlemen's Council, to be selected by the President of the Hawai'i Cattlemen's Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments, and thank you for your continued support of Hawai'i's agricultural community.

**SCR-69**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 11:41:21 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/27/2024 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!

GOOD IDEA THAT WILL RESULT IN MORE GOOD IDEAS.

MAHALO!