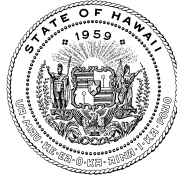


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



KEITH A. REGAN  
COMPTROLLER  
KA LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ  
  
MEOH-LENG SILLIMAN  
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

**STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES | KA 'OIHANA LOIHELU A LAWELAWE LAULĀ**  
P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0119

WRITTEN TESTIMONY  
OF  
KEITH A. REGAN, COMPTROLLER  
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES  
TO THE  
  
**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
AND  
WATER AND LAND**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024, 1:15 P.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 229 AND VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, STATE CAPITOL

S. R. 186 and S. C. R. 210

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO WORK WITH THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY GARDEN ON THE EAST LAWN OF THE STATE CAPITOL.

Chairs McKelvey and Inouye, Vice Chairs Gabbard and Elefante, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on S.R. 186 and S.C.R. 210.

S.R. 186 and S.C.R. 210 requests that the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) and Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) work with the City and County of Honolulu (CCH) to establish a community garden on the east lawn of the State Capitol. DAGS provides comments on this measure and would like to share some concerns regarding this measure that would establish a

community garden in the Capitol District. We would ask that the committee consider the following concerns:

- There is a liability concern should an individual(s) consume contaminated items from the community garden. Unregulated and improperly prepared fruits and vegetables have been linked to serious illnesses. The Risk Management Office has serious concerns about the potential for claims against the State should an individual(s) consume contaminated items linked to the garden, and name the State as the responsible party. Given the lack of 24-hour security and the challenge presented with properly fencing the area to prevent unauthorized entry, there is a high likelihood that an individual may enter the site and urinate and/or defecate in the garden.
- The structural impact to the State Capitol Building's underground parking garage, which occupies most of the east lawn, may be compromised from the garden's increased usage of water to sustain it. It is highly probable that water infiltration issues will arise and that damage to the parking garage's lights and electrical wiring will occur. Repairs to the parking garage electrical wiring are already underway and planned to commence in May of 2024.
- Given the historic nature of the site, the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) would likely need to be consulted and provide approval of the new use before the garden would be allowed to be developed.
- The determination of a responsible group to be tasked to maintain and

caretake the garden would need to be made. Prior agreements with the Korean and Vietnam Veteran's Associations still exist but as members age out, the maintenance of the memorial is becoming an issue.

- Existing security and monitoring funding will be needed to mitigate expected vandalism.
- Our Central Services Division does not have sufficient staff to provide coverage to maintain and manage a community garden in addition to the significant amount of grounds it oversees in this district.
- It is not clear as to the community that would be served by the community garden. Community gardens, in other urban environments, typically have a well-established group that have committed to maintaining and managing the site. We are not aware that this group has been identified.
- There is no parking in close proximity to the area where the community garden is being proposed which may create a hardship for garden caretakers and visitors that may need to bring tools, equipment, and supplies to manage and maintain the community garden.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



# Food+ Policy Internship 2024

[food@purplemaia.org](mailto:food@purplemaia.org)

March 26, 2024

To: The Senate Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Water and Land

Subject: **In Support of SR 186.**

Cultivating land in order to grow food to sustain and maintain our community is a deeply personal and honorable experience. One intern from Food+ Policy shares:

When I was a child growing up in Wai'anae, the nearest affordable grocery store was an hour away. To alleviate this barrier, the neighborhood that I lived in decided to grow diverse tropical fruits and vegetables. This gave my family and our community permission to implement [more] fruits and vegetables into our daily diet. When our food grew in an abundance, we gave it away to our neighbors who didn't have anything. The act of growing food makes you acutely conscious of community needs. The fondest memories I have was receiving squash from a talented gardening neighbor. It was so large that it fed my family for several days. It helped us lower our grocery bill and we felt secure knowing where our food came from and how it was grown.

The east side lawn of the State Capitol is the perfect place to grow food because as proposed by this bill it is not being utilized. A community garden would truly help the surrounding homes since there is limited space such as no yards and balconies. A community garden at the Hawai'i State Capitol will have a positive social impact on The People of Hawai'i because it will help Hawai'i strive towards being less vulnerable to food insecurity and poor nutrition and health.

Additionally, published in the American Journal of Community Psychology, the study called Community engagement, greening, and violent crime: A test of the greening hypothesis and Busy Streets reported that improving vacant lots through Greening (such as cleaning, mowing, maintaining vacant spaces, or more involved applications such as community gardens) result in community members feeling safer and the fear of crime decreases, that living near newly

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**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.



# Food+ Policy Internship 2024

[food@purplemaia.org](mailto:food@purplemaia.org)

greened lots reduces perceptions of crime, nuisances, and safety concerns, and police-reported crime, burglary, and gun violence decreased in areas with newly greened lots.

I urge for the Senate to **Pass SR 186**. Mahalo nui loa for considering my testimony.

Kelsey Amos  
Director, Food+ Policy

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