

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



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

SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2025
2:00 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 308

HOUSE BILL NO. 1450, H.D. 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL CLIMATE RESILIENCY

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1450, H.D. 1. This bill aims to establish a three-year climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program, administered by the Department of Agriculture (Department), submission of reports to the Legislature, and appropriates necessary funds.

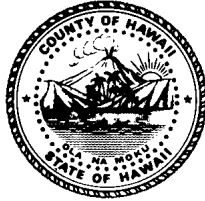
The Department supports this bill and agrees with the Legislature's finding that small family farms and ranches urgently need capital to invest in technology and special-purpose equipment to sustain their operations and maintain economic viability.

Agriculture inherently operates in a high-risk environment, and the anticipated impacts of climate change have introduced additional challenges for our local farmers and ranchers. Many are seeking to adopt new technologies and special-purpose equipment to enhance productivity and sustain their livelihoods. This grant pilot program presents a valuable opportunity to support these efforts..

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



Benson Medina
Director

Dennis Lin
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

25 Aupuni Street, Room 1301 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-4252
(808) 961-8366 • Fax (808) 935-1205
E-mail: chresdev@co.hawaii.hi.us

February 19, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

THURSDAY, February 20, 2025
2:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 308

TESTIMONY ON HB 1450 HD1
Relating to Agricultural Climate Resiliency

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

I am Benson Medina, Director of the Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai'i. One of the agricultural objectives of this department is to "support research, development, control, and education that improves agricultural production, quality, resilience, and producer viability."

The County of Hawai'i provides written testimony in **SUPPORT of HB1450 HD1**, to establish a three-year climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program administered by the Department of Agriculture.

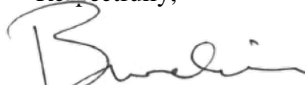
The State of Hawai'i aims to at least double local food production, with a goal of 20-30% of food consumed is grown locally ([Aloha+ Challenge](#)). However, gaps in production, aggregation, and processing of agricultural products limits the productivity and growth of Hawai'i agriculture ([Office of Planning](#), 2012; [Hāmākua Institute](#), 2021).

Producers are motivated to overcome these challenges to meet statewide goals yet require assistance in the form of grants and infrastructure. In fact, 2 out of 3 (66.9%) of producers in Hawai'i with at least \$50,000 in estimated gross production expressed interest in expanding operations within 6-9 months, and more advanced farm equipment was the most needed technology cited by these farms to increase productivity ([Hawaii Commercial Agricultural Expansion Survey](#), NASS 2021).

In 2024, the County of Hawai'i supported Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) in launching a statewide process with stakeholders that identified the industry's top economic barriers and highlighted the urgency to address long-standing challenges within the sector. Through this process, equipment costs were identified as the third highest-ranking issue impacting producer economic viability statewide in 2024. HB1450 HD1 would help to address this need to support producers in expanding operations and building climate resiliency.

Thank you for championing agriculture in Hawai'i and for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB1450 HD1.

Respectfully,


Benson Medina
Director

Hawai'i County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer



To: The House Committee on Finance (FIN)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Thursday, February 20, 2025, 2pm

In strong support of HB1450 HD1

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and FIN Committee members;

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org is in **strong support of HB1450 HD1** that would establish a three-year climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program, to be administered by the Department of Agriculture.

By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawaii. In doing so, we also avoid the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping food in, helping in our fight against climate breakdown. Moreover, investing in local agriculture directly stimulates the economy by creating local jobs. These efforts and more are the type of actions needed to move Hawaii to a decarbonized economy.

Supporting local agriculture is crucial for achieving food sustainability and climate resilience. Please pass this important measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of this important legislation.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



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 20, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 1450, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL CLIMATE RESILIENCY

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
2:00 PM

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

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 1450, HD1, which establishes a three-year climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program to be administered by the Department of Agriculture. This program will provide essential resources to help Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers adapt to the increasing challenges posed by climate change while strengthening local food production and food security.

Hawai'i's agricultural sector faces growing threats from climate-related factors, including extreme weather events, prolonged droughts, rising temperatures, and shifting pest and disease patterns. These challenges threaten both short-term crop yields and long-term farm viability. A climate-resilient food systems grant program will allow farmers and ranchers to implement innovative practices and infrastructure improvements that mitigate these risks and ensure the stability of Hawai'i's local food supply.

The program will provide grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000 to agricultural producers for the acquisition of special-purpose equipment, technology, and ancillary costs. These funds will help farmers invest in tools and infrastructure that directly improve their ability to respond to climate-related challenges. Special-purpose equipment such as advanced irrigation systems, soil monitoring technology, pest and disease management tools, and renewable energy systems can enhance farm efficiency and sustainability.

Agriculture, like all businesses, requires capital investment. The cost of operating a farm or ranch in Hawai'i can be significant. Many of Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers are struggling to secure the financial support necessary to build capacity and invest in

climate-resilient infrastructure. A climate-resilient food systems grant program can provide critical assistance, helping agricultural operations remain viable in the face of increasing environmental pressures. By ensuring that farmers and ranchers have access to grants for climate-smart investments, the state can support local agriculture while also addressing the broader goal of increasing food security and self-sufficiency.

We also support the program's focus on tracking outcomes and requiring reports to the Legislature. Data collected through this pilot initiative can help inform future agricultural policies and funding decisions, ensuring that state resources are directed toward the most effective climate adaptation strategies.

To maximize the success of this program, we encourage the Department of Agriculture to work closely with local farmers, ranchers, agricultural researchers, and industry stakeholders in developing the grant criteria. This collaboration will ensure that funding is accessible and targeted toward practical solutions that address the real challenges faced by food producers in Hawai'i.

We urge the committee to pass HB 1450, HD1 to establish this climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program, which will help protect and strengthen Hawai'i's agricultural industry in the face of climate change.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-1450-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 11:03:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Climate Protectors Hawai'i **SUPPORT** this bill!

Hawai'i's food supply is already vulnerable to supply chain disruptions. Climate heating will increase this problem. Investing in local agricultural production through targeted grants will enhance food security by equipping farmers with the necessary tools and technology to adapt to climate change. By supporting farmers with specialized equipment such as precision irrigation systems, drought-resistant crop varieties, and clean energy technologies, this program can empower Hawai'i's local farmers to adapt to climate impacts while maintaining productive and sustainable operations.

Please pass this bill and help Hawaii farmers adapt to climate heating.

HB-1450-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 2:15:53 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This program is a worthwhile investment in our food system and environment for a more food secure future. Please support this effort.



COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

HB1450 HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL CLIMATE RESILIENCY

Thursday, February 20 2025, 2:00PM
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB552 SD1** which establishes a three-year climate resilient food systems grant pilot program to be administered by the Department of Agriculture.

Healthy soils are necessary for ensuring we can continue to grow food on the land. Agriculture can be a beneficial contributor to managing the environment when the appropriate practices are deployed, and well-managed rangelands are a big player in this contribution. Managed, rotational grazing improves soil health through stimulating grass growth, allows rest and regrowth of grass cover and deeper roots, encourages moisture retention in the soil, protects from erosion and runoff, increases water infiltration, and sequesters carbon underground where it is stored stably.

This bill will provide the support to farmers and ranchers to encourage practices that increase soil health. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council is proud to be part of a partnership led by the University of Hawaii at Manoa that will be implementing the Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities grant to provide support for farmers and ranchers who are implementing climate smart practices. While this is a 5-year grant, efforts from the state will help to reach more producers and encourage more practices to be implemented across the state. **However, the current federal administration is no longer prioritizing climate smart practices, even though these practices are targeted at improving soil health. As such, the funds for this grant are currently at risk of being rescinded, even though we are in the middle of implementation. It is important now, more than ever, for the State to support practices for farmers and ranchers that help us to produce food while stewarding the land for future generations.**

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

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director





February 19, 2025

To: Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takanouchi and the House Committee on Finance

Subject: **HB1450** , Relating to Agricultural Climate Resiliency

Aloha,

I am writing in **support of HB1450 HD1** which encourages the Department of Agriculture's initiative "Go B.I.G. for agriculture" program. This program offers grants to small-mid scale farms/ ranches in an effort to aid in the efforts of their efficiency and productivity, namely through expensive machinery.

Supporting small scale farms is essential in the effort to fix the food system of Hawai'i as these farms are crucial in the local endeavors toward food sovereignty. Investing in the supply chain will naturally expand the scale of agricultural development within the state. In this, local food production will increase, fresh food will be more accessible, and the economic growth surrounding small scale agriculture will increase.

It is important to note that this bill also acts as a preventative measure from the effects of climate change on agriculture. Investing in this bill will allow farmers time and efficiency in adapting to changes in climate. Some climate relevant obstacles farmers face in Hawai'i include: flash floods, extreme heat, and tropical storms -- just to name a few. Often farmers lose many crops when affected by these natural phenomena. Especially on the small-mid size farm scale, climate resilience is essential in encouraging economic fluidity and adaptability for the farmers of Hawai'i continue to have monetary access to continue to farm.

To ensure this bill goes out to small-mid scale farms and is appropriately distributed, this bill gives a list of regulations as to who is eligible for the grant, what the bill can be used for, how to ensure the money is accordingly spent, and when reports are due back to the legislator.

For the sake of monetary accessibility to both farming and food in the state of Hawai'i please consider passing HB1450 HD1.

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 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food 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.



**HAWAI'I
FOOD+
POLICY**

Honolulu, HI 96813
food@purplemaia.org

Mahalo,
Lea iaea & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

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

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food 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.