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Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2025
1:01 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

HOUSE BILL NO. 1450, H.D. 2
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL CLIMATE RESILIENCY

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1450, H.D. 2. 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.

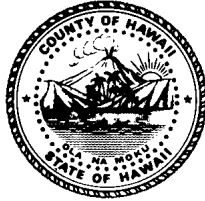
The Department **supports** this bill and agrees with the Legislature's finding that small family farms and ranches urgently need capital to invest in technology and special-purpose equipment to sustain their operations and maintain economic viability.

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
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March 7, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

MONDAY, March 10, 2025
1:01 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

TESTIMONY ON HB 1450 HD2
Relating to Agricultural Climate Resiliency

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards 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 HD2**, to establish a three-year climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program administered by the Department of Agriculture.

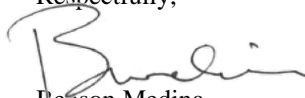
The State of Hawai'i aims to at least double local food production, with a goal of 20-30% of food consumed is grown locally ([Aloha+ Challenge](#)). However, gaps in production, aggregation, and processing of agricultural products limits the productivity and growth of Hawai'i agriculture ([Office of 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 HD2 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 HD2**.

Respectfully,


Benson Medina
Director

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSHIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
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TO: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards III, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor
Rogerene Arce, Director of Agriculture

DATE: March 9, 2025

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB1450 HD2, RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL
CLIMATE RESILIENCY**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure. The act establishes a three-year climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program, to be administered by the Department of Agriculture. Requires reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

We **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

1. Climate-resilient, small scale, and subsistence farming and ranching is vital and foundational to our communities ability to be food and nutrition secure, while also taking care of our environment. Small scale agricultural operations are generally more sustainable and resilient because they can be managed more effieciently, while also deploying climate smart cultivation practices. One of the many challenges to smaller scale operations is the funding needed for infrastructure, equipment, and farm machinery, which this bill aims to address.
2. We need to invest in climate resilient food systems, sustainable food growing methods, and the health of our soils. It takes thousands of years to build, grow, and nurture healthy, living, vibrant soils. Due to industrial plantations and toxic farming practices, historically and currently, our Hawaiian soils have been and continue to be depleted, poisoned, and under constant attack.

3. Generally, climate resilient systems value ‘āina and the health of our lepo, soil. Today a lot of small scale producers who are farming or ranching on previous industrial ag lands are having to invest significantly in soil remediation technologies and inputs, just to assure the food that we consume is safe and not tainted with harmful chemicals. This includes conducting soil test which can be incredibly expensive, in an industry with already slim profit margins. Furthering the need for government investment.

Mahalo for your consideration.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Monday, March 10, 2025 — 1:01 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports HB 1450 HD 2, Relating to Agricultural Climate Resiliency.

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

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

Ulupono supports HB 1450 HD 2, which establishes a three-year climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program, to be administered by the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA).

The climate-resilient food systems grant program directly addresses findings from the HDOA's "Go B.I.G. (Buy, Invest, Grow) for Agriculture" stakeholder survey in 2024. The statewide survey identified equipment costs as a major obstacle for Hawai'i's agricultural producers. By providing grants for specialized equipment and technology, this program will empower small- and mid-sized farms to overcome financial barriers while enhancing local food production and climate resilience. This strategic investment creates a pathway for smaller producers to access the resources needed to modernize their operations. Supporting sustainable agricultural practices will strengthen our state's food systems, reduce import dependence, and build economic resilience in our agricultural industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



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

March 10, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON HB 1450, HD2
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL CLIMATE RESILIENCY

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:01 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 HB 1450, HD2, 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 intent of the program is to 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, HD2 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.



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Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

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

The Hawai'i 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. **HFU supports HB1450.**

By establishing a three-year climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program, this bill directly supports farmers in implementing sustainable and innovative practices designed to enhance both productivity and environmental stewardship. Such a program is crucial for fostering resilience against climate-related disruptions, ensuring food security, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices that will benefit farmers and the wider community alike.

The appropriations made through this bill will facilitate necessary investments in research, technology, and infrastructure that are vital for developing climate-smart agriculture in Hawaii. By empowering the Department of Agriculture to administer this grant program, this bill aims to create a framework for collaborative efforts that include farmers, researchers, and policymakers. This approach not only strengthens the resilience of agricultural systems but also stimulates the local economy, promotes biodiversity, and mitigates the impacts of climate change.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



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Executive Officers

Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale Grocer, *Chair*
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Lauren Zirbel, HFIA, *Executive Director*
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Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Agriculture and Environment
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director
DATE: March 10, 2025
TIME: 1:01pm

RE: HB1450 HD2 Relating to Agricultural Climate Resiliency
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.

HFIA is in support of this measure. As the measure notes by, “investing in the agricultural supply chain, the State can increase local food production, enhance climate resilience, improve food security, and support the economic growth of small to mid-sized farms.”

Increasing local food production, improving food security, diversifying our economy, and improving the resiliency of our food systems are goals we all share. Supporting our local food systems at all levels is crucial to accomplishing those goals.

We support this measure to establish a resilient food systems grant pilot program for small family farms. As this program moves forward, we encourage the legislature to look at similar programs for businesses in other segments of our food systems, including agricultural producers of different sizes, food manufacturers and processors, local food distributors, and retailers. Many of the businesses in these sectors are already taking steps to accomplish these goals and produce more local food, improve food security, and help our food systems become more resilient for all Hawaii. With state support they can achieve success more quickly and efficiently. We encourage the Committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

HB1450 HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL CLIMATE RESILIENCY

Monday, March 10, 2025, 1:01PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, 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



HB-1450-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 12:14:36 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Climate Protectors Hawaii **SUPPORTS** HB1450 HD2!



March 9, 2025

To: Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Subject: **HB1450 HD2** , Relating to Agricultural Climate Resiliency

Aloha,

I am writing in **support** of **HB1450 HD2** which encourages the Department of Agriculture's initiative "Go B.I.G. for agriculture" program. This is a three year program meant to offer grants to small to mid scale farms/ ranches in efforts to aid in their efficiency and productivity, namely through expensive machinery. The amendments at hand leave the bill open for discussion on the duration of the program, as well as changing the minimum and maximum grant amounts to unspecified amounts, with which I stay in **support**.

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 to continue to have monetary access to continue to farm.

For the sake of monetary accessibility to both farming and food in the state of Hawai'i please consider passing HB1450 HD2.

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.



To: The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025, 1:01pm

In strong support of HB1450 HD2

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the AEN committee,

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 HD2** 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

HB-1450-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 4:23:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angelica Melone	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I strongly support 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 essential for ensuring we can continue to grow food on our land. Agriculture can be a beneficial contributor to environmental management when the right practices are used, and well-managed rangelands play a significant role in this. Managed, rotational grazing improves soil health by stimulating grass growth, allowing for rest and regrowth of grass cover and deeper roots, encouraging moisture retention, protecting against erosion and runoff, increasing water infiltration, and sequestering carbon underground where it remains stable.

This bill will provide much-needed support to farmers and ranchers who are working to increase soil health. I am proud to be involved in the Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities grant, which, led by the University of Hawaii at Manoa, is offering support to farmers and ranchers implementing climate-smart practices. While this is a five-year grant, state-level support will help expand efforts and encourage broader adoption of these practices across the state.

However, the current federal administration is no longer prioritizing climate-smart practices, despite their potential to improve soil health. As a result, funding for this grant is at risk of being rescinded, even as we're in the middle of its implementation. It is more crucial than ever for the state to support practices that help farmers and ranchers produce food while stewarding the land for future generations.

I currently work as a Project Coordinator for the Hawaii Cattlemen's Council on the Hawaii Partnership for Climate Smart Commodities and appreciate the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

HB-1450-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 6:12:40 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Tomorug	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1450 supports our food system. Supporting local farms encourages greater local production. Greater local production creates opportunity for greater dependence on local farmers instead of imports, for the food supply of Hawaii.

HB 1450 aids in Climate Resilience. Changes in climate like: flashfloods, tropical storms, or extreme heat threaten local farm production.

Technology and equipment meant to aid in productivity will help farmers get back on their feet after such natural phenomena.

Please support HB 1450.

Deborah Tomorug

HB-1450-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 5:09:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marla Tomorug	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1450 supports our food system. Supporting local farms encourages greater local production. Greater local production creates opportunity for greater dependence on local farmers instead of imports, for the food supply of Hawaii.

HB 1450 aids in Climate Resilience. Changes in climate like: flashfloods, tropical storms, or extreme heat threaten local farm production.

Technology and equipment meant to aid in productivity will help farmers get back on their feet after such natural phenomena.

Please support HB 1450.

HB-1450-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 11:48:44 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of HB1450 HD2 because I believe preparing ourselves for climate resiliency is wise and investment in the means to help our food producers remain local is a good step to this objective. Mahalo.