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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

**FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 2025  
10:02 A.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 211**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1450, H.D. 2, S.D. 1  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL CLIMATE RESILIENCY**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

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





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**Eddie Asato**, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*  
**Gary Okimoto**, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Ways and Means  
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director  
DATE: March 28, 2025  
TIME: 10:02am

RE: HB1450 HD2 SD1 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.



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Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means 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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March 28, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1450, HD2, SD1**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL CLIMATE RESILIENCY

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference  
10:02 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, 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, SD1**, 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, SD1 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.



To: The Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)  
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org  
Date: Friday, March 28, 2025, 10:02am

**In strong support of HB1450 HD2 SD1**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and WAM 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 HD2 SD1** 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



March 27, 2025

To: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and the Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Subject: **HB1450 HD2 SD1** , Relating to Agricultural Climate Resiliency

Aloha,

I am writing in **support** of **HB1450 HD2 SD1** 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 start date of the program, as well as requests an appropriation amount of \$3,000,000 to the program; 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 become more accessible, and the economic growth surrounding small scale agriculture will increase. In this, there is also viable potential for demand in jobs within agriculture, furthering economic development within this space.

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 SD1.

Mahalo,

Lea iaea & the Food+ Policy Team

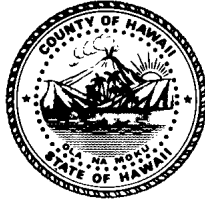
#fixourfoodsystem

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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 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.

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.  
Mayor



Benson Medina  
Director

Dennis Lin  
Deputy Director

# County of Hawai'i

## DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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March 25, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

FRIDAY, March 28, 2025  
10:02 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 211

TESTIMONY ON HB 1450 HD2 SD1  
Relating to Agricultural Climate Resiliency

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki 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 SD1**, to establish a three-year climate-resilient food systems grant pilot program administered by the Department of Agriculture.

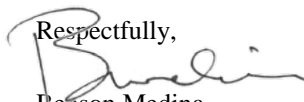
The State of Hawai'i aims to at least double local food production, with a goal of 20-30% of food consumed is grown locally ([Aloha+ Challenge](#)). However, gaps in production, aggregation, and processing of agricultural products limits the productivity and growth of Hawai'i agriculture ([Office of 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 SD1**.

Respectfully,

  
Benson Medina  
Director



**HB-1450-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 3:39:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2025 10:02:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill. Mahalo.