

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
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
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

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

HOUSE BILL NO. 428, HD1, SD1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 428, HD1, SD1. This bill establishes the Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State, requires reports to the Legislature and appropriates funds.

The Department of Agriculture supports this measure, which will strengthen the connection between local food banks and their partners to provide fresh, local grown produce to families in need while also expanding market opportunities for Hawai'i agricultural producers. This measure benefits local farmers by providing a market for excess production and provides food insecure families with fresh highly nutritious locally grown food thereby strengthening food security and Hawaii's agricultural industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB428 HD1 SD1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 28, 2025

10:02 AM

Conference Room 211

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

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) strongly supports **House Bill 428 HD1 SD1**, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program. This measure seeks to alleviate food insecurity by funding food banks to procure, store, and distribute fresh, locally grown food to food-insecure communities. The impact of this initiative will be particularly significant for Native Hawaiian families, who continue to experience disproportionately high rates of food insecurity, and for Native Hawaiian farmers, who will benefit from greater economic stability and market opportunities.

Food insecurity is a persistent issue in Hawai'i, with over 40% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander households experiencing hunger—a rate far exceeding that of other groups in the state (Hawai'i State Department of Health, 2022). The high cost of imported food, which accounts for nearly 90% of the state's supply, exacerbates this problem, making fresh, nutritious, and culturally significant foods like kalo (taro), 'ulu (breadfruit), and 'uala (sweet potato) difficult to access for many Native Hawaiian families. The establishment of a state-funded supply chain that prioritizes fresh, locally sourced produce for food banks may address this disparity, ensuring that those in need have access to healthy, locally grown food. This approach strengthens Hawai'i's food sovereignty and ensures that food assistance programs are aligned with local dietary traditions, providing not just sustenance but also reinforcing cultural identity. This measure acknowledges the importance of increasing reliance on **Hawai'i-grown produce** and explicitly mentions **kalo (taro), 'ulu (breadfruit), and 'uala Okinawan sweet potato** as examples of the types of food that should be prioritized for distribution through food banks.

Beyond addressing food insecurity, this measure provides much-needed economic support for Native Hawaiian farmers, many of whom face structural barriers that limit their ability to compete with large-scale agricultural producers and imported food. The 2017 Census of Agriculture reported that there were 1,121 farms in Hawai'i operated by Native

Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, representing approximately 15% of all farms in the state. These farms collectively manage over 265,000 acres, yet the market value of products sold remains relatively low, averaging \$77,411 per farm. The Taro Security and Purity Task Force Report (2010)¹ highlighted several obstacles preventing Native Hawaiian taro farmers from achieving economic viability, including land access challenges, inadequate distribution infrastructure, and the lack of direct market pathways for their crops. By creating a stable and reliable market for locally grown food through food banks, this measure directly supports these farmers by ensuring consistent demand for their produce and reducing the financial uncertainty they face.

The inclusion of traditional Hawaiian crops in food assistance programs also aligns with long-standing efforts to revitalize Native Hawaiian agriculture. Taro farmers, for instance, continue to struggle with limited land availability due to high lease costs and zoning restrictions that prioritize other forms of development over traditional farming practices. The Taro Security and Purity Task Force specifically recommended state-level action to support access to agricultural lands for Native Hawaiian farmers, incentivizing traditional farming through subsidies and ensuring that local produce remains at the center of Hawai'i's food system. This bill offers an opportunity to address those recommendations by creating direct purchase programs that benefit small-scale traditional farmers and ensure the preservation of Native Hawaiian agricultural practices.

Investing in local agriculture through this program will have far-reaching benefits for the entire state. Keeping food production within Hawai'i strengthens the local economy by ensuring that dollars spent on food stay within the state rather than being used to import goods. The Hawai'i Foodbank reports that for every dollar spent on local produce, there is a multiplier effect that benefits the broader economy, stimulating related industries such as food processing, transportation, and retail. Additionally, prioritizing locally grown food over imported goods reduces the state's vulnerability to supply chain disruptions, such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, when imported food became scarce and expensive. Supporting local farmers also reduces Hawai'i's reliance on long-distance food shipments, decreasing carbon emissions associated with transportation and promoting environmental sustainability.

While OHA fully supports this bill, we encourage legislators to consider key steps to ensure its effectiveness. Ensuring that funding is equitably distributed across all counties, particularly in rural and neighbor island communities where food insecurity is most severe, is critical. Transportation logistics must be carefully planned to guarantee that fresh food reaches all areas of the state efficiently, preventing gaps in food distribution.

¹ **Taro Security and Purity Task Force**, *E Ola Hou Nā Kalo; Ho'i Hou Ka 'Āina Lē'ia: The Taro Lives* (Honolulu, HI: Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2010)

Additionally, the Department of Agriculture should prioritize procurement from Native Hawaiian farmers and small-scale agricultural producers, many of whom lack access to large-scale distribution channels. Supporting these farmers aligns with the recommendations outlined in the Taro Security and Purity Task Force Report², which emphasized the need for state-level investments in small, community-based farming operations. Further, incorporating accountability measures within the program will ensure that funds are effectively allocated and that the procurement of local food remains the program's top priority.

HB428 HD1 SD1 is a transformative measure that will not only combat food insecurity but also revitalize local agriculture, promote food sovereignty, and uplift Native Hawaiian farming communities. By supporting food banks in sourcing local produce, this initiative strengthens Hawai'i's agricultural economy, provides economic security for Native Hawaiian farmers, and ensures that all residents—especially those most vulnerable—have access to nutritious food. This program represents a commitment to a more sustainable, self-sufficient Hawai'i, where the land and its resources are cultivated to feed and support the people who call these islands home.

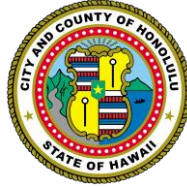
OHA urges the Legislature to **PASS HB428 HD1 SD1** and consider the recommendations outlined above to ensure its success and sustainability. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

² Id.

OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY
KE KE'ENA LOLI ANIAU MĀLAMA 'ĀINA A ME KE OLA LOA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 11th FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
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RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



BENJAMIN SULLIVAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR &
CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
PO'O HO'OKŌ & KAHU OLA LOA

KEALOHA FOX
DEPUTY DIRECTOR &
CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
HOPE PO'O & HOPE KAHU OLA LOA

FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 2025, 10:02 A.M.

STATE OF HAWAII
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 428, HD1, SD1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES**

BY,

KEALOHA FOX, Ph.D.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

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

The City and County of Honolulu ("City") Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency ("Resilience Office") **supports** HB428, HD1, SD1, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the state.

The Farm to Families Program complements ongoing City efforts to strengthen the local food system in the face of climate change impacts, including the development of O'ahu's first Food Systems Plan and implementation of the O'ahu Good Food Program, which supports institutions committed to purchasing locally grown food. Strengthening food banks' ability to procure local products could catalyze broader institutional shifts across schools, hospitals, hospitality groups, and other private and public institutions to amplify the benefits for Hawai'i's farmers, food system, and communities in need.

This measure would foster greater partnerships between local farms and food assistance programs, strengthening both food security and Hawai'i's agricultural economy. Investing in local procurement ensures that families—particularly in Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino communities facing disproportionate food insecurity—have greater access to fresh, nutritious food while providing a stable, reliable market for local farmers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB428, HD1, SD1.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Mel Rapozo, Chair
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
Fern Holland
Arryl Kaneshiro



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk
Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

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Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766

March 27, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF ADDISON BULOSAN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL**

ON

**HB 396, HD 1, SD 1, RELATING TO COMPENSATION FOR COURT-
APPOINTED COUNSEL**

**HB 398, HD 1, SD 1, RELATING TO COMPENSATION FOR COURT-
APPOINTED REPRESENTATION**

HB 428, HD 1, SD 1, RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Friday, March 28, 2025

10:02 a.m.

Conference Room 211

Via Videoconference

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 396, HD 1, SD 1, Relating to Compensation for Court-Appointed Counsel, HB 398, HD 1, SD 1, Relating to Compensation for Court-Appointed Representation, and HB 428, HD 1, SD 1, Relating to Farm to Families. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

I wholeheartedly support the intent of HB 396, HD 1, SD 1, HB 398, HD 1, SD 1, and HB 428, HD 1, SD 1, which would greatly affect the Kaua'i community.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 396, HD 1, SD 1, HB 398, HD 1, SD 1, HB 428, and HD 1, SD 1. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

ADDISON BULOSAN
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

JY:dmc

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

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

DATE: March 27, 2025

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB428 HD1 SD1, RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure. The act establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State. Requires reports to the Legislature prior to the Regular Sessions of 2026 and 2027. Appropriates funds.

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

1. For far too long our communities have been living in a crisis related to food security. Over 30% of Hawai'i is food insecure. That number significantly increases to over 40% when we focus on our most vulnerable and underserved community, kānaka 'ōiwi.
2. Our local government needs to invest more in our food systems for the sake of food security and providing this basic human right to our community. There are well known and researched negative impacts to our food insecure communities, especially our keiki; ranging from anxiety to depression, to even thoughts of suicide.
3. Furthermore, there is research that clearly shows the significant economic returns on government's investment into our food systems at all levels. Socioeconomically this positions our community to have more robust and consistent markets, creates financial incentives for the next generation of farmers, and overall leads to a more resilient and sustainable Hawai'i.

4. This bill supports farmers, ranchers, and fishermen by expanding their access to new markets. During COVID and following the 2023 Maui fires, some farmers lost over 70% of their market overnight. Farm to Families will help build more consistent markets for farmers. The bill will also help build resilience by developing sourcing channels that can be scaled up in times of emergency. This bill will help increase fresh food access for our community during this critical time as we face rising grocery costs.

Mahalo for your consideration.



MAKAKILO/KAPOLEI/HONOKAI HALE NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 34

c/o NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION • 925 DILLINGHAM BLVD SUITE 160 • HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96817
PHONE (808) 768-3710 • FAX (808) 768-3711 • INTERNET: <http://www.honolulu.gov>

RESOLUTION

**SUPPORTING THE STRENGTHENING OF FOOD BANKS TO PROVIDE HAWAII-GROWN FOOD TO
FOOD-INSECURE COMMUNITIES**

Whereas, the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board No. 34 ("Board") is a citizens' advisory board whose purpose is to "increase and assure effective citizen participation in the decisions of government" per the City and County of Honolulu's Neighborhood Plan of 2008; and

Whereas, the Board finds that about one in three households in Hawaii is struggling to secure consistent access to food, highlighting the urgent need to restore basic nourishment and dignity to families across the islands (The State of Food Insecurity in Hawaii, Hawaii Food Bank, 2023); and

Whereas, food insecurity in Hawaii disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, particularly children, with nearly thirty percent of keiki growing up in food-insecure homes, some enduring entire days without a meal, which can lead to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional challenges; and

Whereas, the Board also finds that Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are disproportionately affected, with more than forty percent of households facing hunger, reflecting deep-rooted inequities in access to resources, economic opportunity, and essential services; and

Whereas, the Board also finds that its district hosts the highest concentration of Native Hawaiian homesteads across the state; and

Whereas, the Board recognizes that approximately 400 of our district neighbors are unsheltered, and nearly three thousand individuals across the state face similar hardships, making it exceedingly difficult for them to access nutritious food and essential resources (Point In Time Count 2024); and

Whereas, Hawaii's food banks have made significant strides in addressing hunger, partnering with over five hundred agencies, including schools, community-based nonprofits, churches, and food pantries, to distribute more than twenty-seven million meals in 2023, collectively serving two hundred forty thousand individuals each month across the State; and

Whereas, the Board expresses its deep gratitude for the three foodbanks within our district—St. Jude's Catholic Church, the Armed Services YMCA at the Daniel K. Akaka VA Clinic, and Message of Peace Ministry at Kapolei High School—that selflessly serve our neighbors in need; and

Whereas, the support systems that were available during the COVID-19 pandemic have diminished, and it is critical to maintain robust support for food banks to continue addressing the ongoing food insecurity crisis in Hawaii; and

Whereas, the Board expresses its gratitude to the farmers and ranchers in our district, including those at the Pacific Gateway Center, who empower vulnerable populations, provide local produce and goods, and contribute to bolstering Hawaii's food security; and

Whereas, to strengthen the connection between food banks and local agriculture, Hawaii's food banks have partnered with over five hundred seventy-five local farms and food hubs, creating a reliable market for Hawaii-grown produce, which has contributed to the local economy, with an

investment of more than \$11,000,000 in local agriculture over the past five years, generating nearly \$19,000,000 in economic impact (Farm to Families, Hawaii Food Bank, 2020); and

Whereas, with rising costs of imported food, increasing the State's reliance on locally grown food is both a sustainable solution and a necessary approach to ensure Hawaii's families have access to fresh, nutritious food while supporting local farmers and ranchers and reducing dependence on imports; and

Whereas, the Board recognizes that strengthening food banks' ability to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food to food-insecure communities is essential in building a more resilient and equitable food system, supporting local agriculture, and ensuring food security for all residents; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board No. 34 supports the strengthening of food banks to provide Hawaii-grown food to food insecure communities; and be it

Resolved, that the board supports the intent of the bills [HB428 \(2025\)](#) and [SB1250 \(2025\)](#) Relating to Farm to Families; and be it

Ordered, that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, Honolulu Council Members, Area Legislators, Hawaii Foodbank, St. Jude Catholic Church, Armed Services YMCA, Message of Peace Ministry, Pacific Gateway Center, and all Neighborhood Boards.

Adopted by the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board No. 34 at its February 26, 2025 Regular Board Meeting, 8-0-0 (**Aye**: Dudley, Ferreira, Khan, Lidstone, Moon, Singleton, Taala, Paris; **Nay**: None; **Abstain**: None)



Date: 04-27-2025

The Hawai'i Youth Food Council

Gigi Kiyabu - Mid-Pacific

Shania Wilson - Mililani High School

Vivienne Hill - Primsa High School

Kaylie Hirayama - Honoka'a High School

Star Woo - Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Campus

Quingqing Quen - 'Iolani School

Maya Gaudino - Punahou

Jaden Tonyokwe - Maui High School

Leilani Moran Hurtt - Mid-Pacific

Alvis Agader - Maui High School

Alliyanah Polido - Maui High School

Chloe Hannsz - Kapaa High School

Audrey Lin - 'Iolani School

Talia David - Lahainalua High School

Mia Nishiguchi - Kalani High School

Erika Tien - Punahou

To: Senator Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)

From: Hawai'i Youth Food Council

Re: SUPPORT for HB428

Hearing: 04-28-2025, 10:02 am

My name is Vivienne Hill, and I submit this testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Youth Food Council (HYFC) in **strong support** of HB 428, which would establish and fund the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program. This policy is about more than food—it's about ensuring that every keiki in Hawai'i has the nutrition they need to both grow and thrive.

Hunger is not just an abstract issue; it's something we see in our classrooms, in our communities, and sometimes in our own homes. It is not just a statistic—it is a daily reality for one in three households across our islands. For too many families, fresh, local produce is out of reach, leading to poor health outcomes and perpetuating cycles of diet-related illness. The effects are particularly devastating for our keiki, nearly 30% of whom grow up in food-insecure homes.

A child who is hungry cannot focus in school, cannot fully participate in their community, and is at greater risk of experiencing long-term physical and mental health challenges. It's the classmate too embarrassed to admit they skipped breakfast, the friend who eats slowly at lunch to make their meal last, the kid who doesn't know what dinner will look like when they go home. No one, especially not our keiki, should have to carry the weight of food insecurity.

hiphi.org/HYFC • 707 Richards Street, Suite 300 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Hawai'i Youth Food Council is a Hawai'i Farm to School Network program and Hawai'i Public Health Institute program. It includes students from public, charter, and independent high schools across Hawai'i. The council was established in 2020 to engage and empower youth in rewriting the present narrative of Hawai'i's food system. Members identify and address systemic issues throughout various dimensions of the food chain to promote community participation in forming resilient, equitable local food economies.



Through my work volunteering at community events and shelters, I have seen firsthand the overwhelming demand for fresh, healthy food. At food distributions, communities line up around the block and beyond just for the opportunity to take home locally grown produce. It is heartbreaking to know that in a state with such agricultural ability and history, many families cannot afford to put locally grown fruits and vegetables on their table.

At the same time, we know Hawaii's farmers work tirelessly to grow the food that sustains our community, yet many struggle to make a living. This policy offers a common sense solution; connecting local farms with families in need. By strengthening this relationship, we are not only ensuring local produce gets to those who need it most but also supporting the hardworking people who cultivate and steward our land.

This bill embodies our shared values of mālama 'āina, kuleana, and our need for resilience, helping build localized solutions to food insecurity while reinforcing our collective responsibility to care for one another. It is a vision for Hawai'i that we, as young people, want to live in: one where no family has to stress over where their next meal will come from, and where our food system is built on sustainability, resilience, and care for each other.

We urge the committee to pass HB 428 and invest in a future where every person in our community has access to fresh, locally-grown food.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Vivienne Hill
Representative, Hawai'i Youth Food Council

hiphi.org/HYFC • 707 Richards Street, Suite 300 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The **Hawai'i Youth Food Council** is a Hawai'i Farm to School Network program and Hawai'i Public Health Institute program. It includes students from public, charter, and independent high schools across Hawai'i. The council was established in 2020 to engage and empower youth in rewriting the present narrative of Hawaii's food system. Members identify and address systemic issues throughout various dimensions of the food chain to promote community participation in forming resilient, equitable local food economies.



To: Senate Ways and Means Committee

Hearing Date/Time: Friday, March 28, 2025

Re: Testimony in Strong Support of HB148, Relating to Farm to Families

From: Andrew Ogata, Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

The Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) strongly supports SB1250, which supports food banks to purchase from local farmers, with expenditures managed via the Department of Agriculture's request for proposals process.

Food insecurity was already a pressing challenge in Hawai'i prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and has since escalated to a crisis level. Many of the communities we serve—those living with or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and members of the transgender, LGBTQ, and Native Hawaiian communities—are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity and other social determinants of health.

At HHHRC, our mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. During 2020 and 2021, we partnered with the Hawai'i Foodbank to conduct food distributions across O'ahu, helping to disseminate more than 500,000 pounds of food to thousands of families. We continue this partnership today, distributing over 140,000 pounds of food annually. Through this work, we witness firsthand the desperation of families seeking healthy, fresh foods they otherwise could not afford.

To adequately address food insecurity across our islands, food banks need more than just donations, they need sustainable resources to ensure that fresh, nutritious food is consistently available. Investing in local farmers through this bill not only supports food security but also strengthens our local agricultural economy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. We urge your support of SB1250 to help build a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Andrew Ogata

Director of Development

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

March 26, 2025

To: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

From: Kristin Frost Albrecht, Executive Director
The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

Testimony in Strong Support of HB428 HD1, Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Chair


My name is Kristin Frost Albrecht, and I am the Executive Director of The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank. Our mission is to "End hunger in Hawai'i County". We strongly SUPPORT this bill.

On Hawai'i Island we are experiencing an alarming 40% food insecurity rate with the number of residents in need of food assistance, rapidly surpassing the numbers served during the pandemic. Statewide, food insecurity affects nearly one in three individuals in Hawai'i – a critical level that is increasing due to escalating living costs. As a food bank that has served our island residents through four federally declared disasters, we have relied heavily on our local producers to provide enough food to respond during times of extreme need, due to a tenuous supply chain of food that is imported from 2500 miles across the ocean. The Farm to Families program would provide essential funding for food banks to purchase from local farmers and producers, improving emergency food access, boosting local agriculture, and strengthening Hawai'i's food system during the ongoing economic crisis that is affecting families across the state. **The situation has become even more critical for food banks with the federal funding cuts that are already cancelling shipments of commodity food that we count on to serve our state's most vulnerable families. At The Food Basket, over 50% of our annual budget is comprised of federal grant funds. Should these funds be stopped, we will be facing an unprecedented economic challenge at a time when our services are reaching an all time high.**

The Food Basket has a strong history and commitment to supporting local farmers and producers with our upstream approach to ending hunger through innovative programs, including the administration of our statewide DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks program and Ho'olaha Ka Hua DA BOX community supported agriculture program. Each of these programs supports local farmers and producers with the purchase of Hawai'i grown food at a fair and equitable price which in turn helps to feed our struggling families, from keiki to kūpuna, with healthy nutritious food while strengthening and uplifting our local economy.

We respectfully ask your committee to pass this bill to support our most vulnerable residents and improve food security for all in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.


Kristin Frost Albrecht
Executive Director, The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST
ALBRECHT

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CASEY HALPERN

LAUREN ZIRBEL

WWW.HAWAIIFOODBASKET.ORG
Administration and East Hawai'i Warehouse West Hawai'i Warehouse
40 Holomua Street, Hilo, HI 96720 73-4161 Ulu Wini Place, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740
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HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 9:39:09 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Larry Smith	Testifying for Kupuna Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

THE Kupuna Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii strongly supports this Bill which will support our farmers and provide Hawaii grown fresh food to Seniors.

Larry Smith

Chair,

Kupuna Caucus

DPH

Friday, March 28, 2025 at 10:02 AM
Conference Room 211; Via Video Conference

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

To: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

Re: **Testimony in Support of HB 428, HD1, SD1
Relating To Farm To Families**

My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

HPH writes in SUPPORT of HB 428, HD1, SD1 which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to fund food banks and alleviate food shortages in the State.

HPH has long recognized the relationship between healthy outcomes and food security, as well as the strong connection between access to healthy foods with health and wellness. HPH screens our in-patients across our facilities for indications of food insecurity and is acutely aware of the challenge it is for our patients. The link between a healthy diet and healthy living is well established where lower food insecurity is linked to lower risk of obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers. Healthy eating can help people with chronic diseases manage these conditions and avoid complications. The crisis in food security among the most vulnerable population has been reported and has come to light more recently in the Aloha United Way's 2024 ALICE Report. The Report indicated that 28% of households statewide face food insecurity; nearly half (46%) of households below the ALICE Threshold do not have consistent access to food.

Programs that encourage partnerships between farmers and food assistance programs can make a profound impact. By investing in Hawaii-grown agriculture producers, the State can support not only local farmers but also the communities they feed. This approach aligns with the values of mālama 'āina, caring for the land, and ensures that the State honors the deep connection between the land and the people of Hawaii. Uplifting local farmers will also uplift the entire community, fostering a more resilient food system that can withstand future challenges. The Hawai'i Farm to Families Program would support not only families and their food needs, but would also provide Hawaii's agriculture

producers with a market to support their operations, and keep moneys circulating within the State to boost the local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



March 25, 2025

Subject: **HB428** Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee,

The Hawaii Food+ Policy strongly **supports HB428**, which will establish the Farm to Families Program to address food insecurity while strengthening our local food system. This bill is a strategic investment in both Hawaii's families and farmers, ensuring that nutritious, locally grown food reaches those who need it most.

With estimates of 90% of our food being imported, Hawaii's food system is highly vulnerable to disruptions in global supply chains. At the same time, 30% of Hawaii's families struggle with food insecurity, unable to consistently access fresh, healthy meals. **HB428 provides a sustainable, long-term solution by directly supporting local farmers while expanding access to nutritious food for communities in need.**

Why HB428 matters:

- **Strengthens local agriculture** – Provides food banks with funding to purchase fresh produce from Hawaii farmers, creating a stable market for locally grown food.
- **Combats food insecurity** – Ensures keiki, kūpuna, and vulnerable families have access to fresh, healthy meals.
- **Reduces reliance on costly imports** – Keeps more of Hawaii's food dollars in the local economy while increasing food security.
- **Invests in community resilience** – Builds upon successful food access programs that have already redirected millions of dollars into Hawaii's farms and food systems.

Food insecurity is not just a humanitarian issue—it's an economic one. The hidden costs of hunger on health, education, workforce productivity, and overall well-being are too great to ignore. We **urge the committee to pass HB428** and take this critical step toward a healthier, more resilient Hawaii.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
The Food+ Policy Team

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: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Re: **HB 428 HD1 SD1 – Relating to Farm to Families**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
March 28, 2025, 10:02 AM

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB 428 HD1 SD1**. This bill establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State, requires reports to the Legislature prior to the Regular Sessions of 2026 and 2027, and appropriates funds.

According the Hawai'i Food Bank, in 29% of households with children, one or more keiki are food insecure.¹ Especially with the highest cost of living and most expensive groceries in the nation,² it is nearly impossible for the low-income families in Hawai'i to afford to buy healthy food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

In addition, it is well established that the stresses of childhood poverty have both immediate and long-term effects on keiki's physical and mental health, behavioral self-control, academic achievement, and earnings as adults.³

That's why it's so important to support Hawai'i's food banks and farmers by providing state funds to Hawai'i food banks to secure consistent supplies of locally produced or grown food for hungry families.

Food banks and their partner agencies help ensure that struggling families with keiki do not go hungry by distributing millions of pounds of food per year to those in need in our state. The recent years of high inflation, especially for groceries, the devastating wildfires, and the lingering effects of the pandemic have led our state's food banks to struggle with continual rising demand.⁴

This program would have the added plus of supporting our local farms. Farm to families is a win-win, by providing local food to those who need it, supporting local farmers, and strengthening local food systems.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony. Please pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ <https://hawaiiifoodbank.org/food-insecurity/>

² <https://meric.mo.gov/data/cost-living-data-series>

³ <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/children-families>

⁴ <https://www.khon2.com/local-news/hawai%CA%BBis-foodbanks-see-uptick-in-food-assistance-needs/>



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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 strongly supports HB428.**

Building closer relationships between food banks and local farmers helps create a flexible, resilient food supply that can handle both sudden increases in demand and disruptions in imported foods. These strong connections allow food banks to quickly adjust to challenges, ensuring that communities continue to receive fresh produce even if imports are interrupted. In other words, deeper ties with local agriculture not only support local farmers but also diversify the food supply, making the system more reliable and robust against unexpected shocks.

The Hawaii Farm to Families Program, as outlined in this bill, holds immense potential to strengthen our local food systems by fostering direct collaboration between food producers and community-based food distribution networks. By establishing this program, Hawaii can significantly alleviate food shortages while simultaneously bolstering the state's agricultural sector. This approach not only ensures a more consistent supply of nutritious, locally grown food to those in need but also provides a stable market for local farmers, encouraging sustainable agricultural practices and reducing the state's dependency on imported foods.

Moreover, the program's structure, which includes required reports to the Legislature, ensures accountability and continuous improvement. By appropriating funds to support this initiative, Hawaii is investing in a solution that not only addresses immediate food security concerns but also contributes to long-term agricultural sustainability and economic resilience. This strategic investment not only nourishes families but also nurtures the islands' agricultural communities, paving the way for a more self-sufficient and food-secure future for Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Friday, March 28, 2025 — 10:02 a.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports HB 428 HD 1 SD 1, Relating to Farm to Families

Dear Chair Dela Cruz 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 428 HD 1 SD 1, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the state.

Over the last few years, one of the most pressing issues for many local families has been food insecurity. With many out of work and surviving on government unemployment support, communities have relied on the efforts of food banks and local food producers to meet their basic need to eat.

In response to the COVID pandemic, federal monies injected into Hawai'i through county initiatives helped grow a local farm-to-food bank effort, in which food banks were able to purchase local products for distribution to needy communities. This effort was a win-win-win, in that local food producers had a market to sell their products when hotels and restaurants shuttered their doors, local families received fresh and nutritious food products made locally island-wide, and food banks that were struggling to purchase shelf-stable food due to nationwide shortages were rescued by Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers who provided local food to their communities.

The Farm to Food Bank efforts across the state led to many important foundational relationships between local farmers, ranchers, and community feeding organizations that helped struggling communities cope with the social and economic consequences of the COVID pandemic. Unfortunately, natural disasters, food supply chain disruptions, and state emergencies have become a harsh, consistent reality for our local communities. Food banks across the state are constantly having to hold food drives to maintain these community lifelines, which have increasingly relied on their assistance and local producers to maintain consistent supply. They will need support to meet these food security challenges, and continuing to strengthen the bonds between farms and food banks is a worthy investment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |
Honolulu, HI 96813
P: 808-533-1292 | e:
info@hawaiiifood.com

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TO: Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 28, 2025
TIME: 10:02am

RE: HB428 HD1 SD1 Relating to Farm to Families
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. Injecting state funding into our local food systems has a range of benefits. First and foremost this measure helps address the growing issue of food insecurity in our state. Far too many Hawaii families are facing food insecurity and they need your support. This measure will help provide healthy fresh food to families who utilize foodbanks in our state.

This measure also provides a consistent buyer to support our local agricultural producers. Having consistent buyers encourages growth in our local agricultural sector and helps make locally grown food more accessible and competitive for us all. This helps diversify our economy, creates agricultural jobs, and ensures that there is more local food for everyone to enjoy. This measure is good for families who will utilize it, it's good for our local farmers, it's good for our food systems, and good for Hawaii.

We believe that in order to improve food security, local food production, and resiliency in Hawaii it's vital for the State to support programs like this which support our food industry. 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; www.hfbf.org

March 28, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON HB 428, HD1, SD1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

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 428, HD1, SD1, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State while supporting local farmers and ranchers.

Hawai'i faces persistent food security challenges, with many families experiencing limited access to fresh, locally grown food. At the same time, local farmers and ranchers struggle with unpredictable markets and barriers to expanding food distribution. This measure presents a win-win solution by linking local food production with communities in need, ensuring that Hawai'i's agricultural products are used to feed Hawai'i's people.

HB 428, HD1, SD1 will provide funds to Hawai'i's food banks, which support non-profit and community feeding programs by providing locally grown or produced foods to communities in need. This will help Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers while providing local nutritional food to those who need it most.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



Date: March 28, 2025

Subject: Hawai'i Foodbank in Strong Support of HB 428 HD1 SD1, Relating to Farm to Families

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

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our **STRONG** support for HB428 HD1 SD1, Relating to Farm to Families. This bill establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to address food shortages across the state, requires reports to the Legislature before the Regular Sessions of 2026 and 2027, and appropriates funds to support its implementation.

As the state's largest hunger-relief organization, Hawai'i Foodbank has been committed to ensuring no one in Hawai'i goes hungry since 1983. We work with over 225 agency partners on O'ahu and Kaua'i to distribute food, and programs like Food 4 Keiki and 'Ohana Produce Plus provide nutritious meals to children and families. In addition to addressing daily needs, our organization mobilizes during emergencies to provide immediate relief and aid long-term recovery efforts.

In addition, Hawai'i Foodbank's Farm to Families program, launched in 2020, has already demonstrated its impact by investing \$11 million into more than 40 local farms and food hubs, distributing over 9 million pounds of Hawai'i-grown produce and proteins. HB 428 HD1 SD1 will expand this initiative by strengthening the supply chain, ensuring fresh, Hawai'i-grown food reaches food-insecure households while supporting local agriculture.

This bill is critically needed. The "State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i" report revealed that in 2023, 30% of households in our state experience food insecurity, including 29% of children. In 10% of these households, at least one member went without food for an entire day some or most months of the year. These figures highlight the urgent need for a sustainable solution to hunger in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this vital measure and for your dedication to supporting our communities through initiatives like HB428 HD1 SD1.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank



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 HB428 HD1SD1

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 **strongly supports HB428 HD1 SD1** that establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

One in three households in Hawaii faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. This critical measure will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii farm to families program to fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food. By doing so, this program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger.

Many families in Hawaii struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB428 HD1 SD1 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Moreover, efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawaii's resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB428 HD1 SD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

Please pass **HB428 HD1 SD1** so that we all may reap these benefits.

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

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



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Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Network

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: March 25, 2025

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: Support for HB 428 SD1, Relating to Farm to Families

Hrg: Friday, March 28, 2025, at 10:02 AM, Conference Room 211

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating, Active Living² (HEAL) Coalition is in **support of HB 428 SD1**, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to increase locally grown or produced food in our food bank system.

One in three families are food insecure in Hawai'i. This results in over 150,000 people relying on the food bank system for assistance each month. The food bank system provides a very important social service to our community and it's essential that we help fund their efforts.

Increased Demand Requires Increased Investment

The Hawai'i Food Bank's dramatic rise in food distribution – from 12.5 million pounds in 2018 to 21.2 million pounds in 2024 – reflects a growing crisis of food insecurity in our islands.³ This 70% increase represents thousands more local families struggling to put food on their tables. Given our state's high cost of living and dependence on imported food, we must invest in strengthening the food bank system's operations to ensure this essential service can continue supporting our island 'ohana.

A \$2 million state investment through HB 428 SD1 would represent less than 5% of the food bank network's annual operating expenses, yet could significantly

¹ Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships, and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.

² The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, formerly known as the Obesity Prevention Task Force, was created by the legislature in 2012 and is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations. The HEAL Coalition works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

³ Hawai'i Food Bank Annual Report - 2018.

https://hawaiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/HawaiiFoodbank_AnnualReport_2018_web.pdf

⁴ Hawai'i Food Bank Annual Report - 2024.

https://hawaiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HawaiiFoodbank_AnnualReport_2024.pdf



strengthen its ability to serve our communities. This modest initial investment would demonstrate Hawai'i's commitment to addressing food insecurity while helping ensure the sustainability of this vital emergency food network.

Fresh Produce in High Demand

Hawai'i's food banks and pantries face a high demand for fresh produce, but supply falls short due to limited funding and distribution challenges.⁵ Given the limited availability, there are hours-long lines at food distribution sites that offer fresh produce. Investing in farm-to-families programs would help to create a steady local supply of nutritious produce, improving food security and public health across the islands.

Local Investments Help our Economy

A \$2 million investment in Hawai'i's food bank system creates ripple effects throughout our local economy. When we purchase from local farmers and producers, those dollars circulate within our communities rather than flowing to continental suppliers. This strengthens our agricultural sector, creates local jobs, and helps build a more resilient food system for our islands.

When families receive adequate nutrition through the food bank, they can better focus on work, education, and other activities that contribute to our economy, reducing the long-term costs associated with food insecurity.

We urge you to support HB 428 SD1 to strengthen Hawai'i's emergency food network and help more families access the nutritious food they need. This investment in our food banks is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nate Hix".

Nate Hix
Director of Policy and Advocacy

⁵KHON. 12-2-24. "A guide to what Hawai'i's food banks need this season."
<https://www.khon2.com/local-news/a-guide-to-what-hawai%CA%BBis-food-banks-need-this-season/>

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 9:34:19 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
laurel brier	Testifying for Kauai Climate Action Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB428 will provide important funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Supporting local farmers, those using regenerative practices in particular is good for the environment, good for our local economy and good for the people. Strong support for HB428



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

LATE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for HB 428 – Relating to Farm to Families
Senate Committee on Ways and means
Monday, March 28, 2025, at 10:02am

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **HB 428**, which would support a Farm to Families program. This bill would appropriate funds to alleviate food shortages in the State by ensuring fresh produce is directed to families in need.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of food equity and resiliency, which is why we support instituting a Farm to Families program at the state level. This legislation would strengthen local food supply chains, from supporting the local agricultural economy to guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, to reducing farm food waste.

Fresh, local produce is essential for improving community health, yet is often out of reach for many families struggling to afford life in Hawai'i. This program would help make healthy, whole foods available to more people, thereby alleviating hunger and preventing long-term health issues like diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and depression.¹

Farm to families not only strengthens Hawai'i's food supply chain but also provides a backup, or "safety net" market for local farmers during times of economic crisis or natural disaster. When these events strike, the emergency food system becomes a lifeline both for families seeking food, and for farmers seeking markets when tourism plummets. Most recently, the Maui wildfires contributed to a spike in food insecurity—as many as 49% of Maui's population.² It was the food banks and distribution partners who stepped in—institutions that historically have relied almost entirely on charitable contributions.

By strengthening the partnerships between local farmers and our food banks, we are setting up a food system that is not as reliant on imports and puts back money in our local economy. Our state has set goals to double our local food production by 2030; passing this bill is one step to getting us there.³

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 428. We are pleased that the Hawai'i legislature is paying attention to improving food security. By investing in this initiative, we can create a stronger, healthier, and more equitable Hawai'i for generations to come.

¹ Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), "Hunger & Health: The Impact of Poverty, Food Insecurity, and Poor Nutrition on Health and Well-Being," FRAC, December 2017, p. 1-2.

² Hawai'i Foodbank, "The State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i," Hawai'i Foodbank, May 2024, p. 6.

³ <https://alohachallenge.hawaii.gov/pages/local-food-production-and-consumption>



March 28, 2025

RE: Support for HB 428 HD1 SD1, Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Maui Food Bank, I express our strong support for HB 428 HD1 Relating to Farm to Families which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

For 30 years, Maui Food Bank has provided daily and emergency assistance to those facing food insecurity in Maui County. Maui Food Bank distributes food to families and individuals on Maui, Molokai and Lanai through direct service programs and through our network of 170 agency partners. Last year, we served on average 45,000 people each month, distributing a total of 8.7 million pounds of nutritious food, including 2.3 million pounds of fresh produce. Of those served, 40% are children and youth.

HB 428 HD1 SD1 empowers food distribution organizations to forge stronger partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families experiencing food insecurity. These collaborations between local farms and food organizations deliver benefits to both our communities and the economy.

Last month, a neighbor reached out to us in a desperate situation, in need of fresh produce. She suffers from acute kidney disease and relies solely on fresh fruits and vegetables for her diet. With no funds to buy groceries and unable to consume the canned goods provided by her local pantry, we stepped in to help. We assembled a box filled with locally grown, fresh produce, ensuring she had the nourishment she needed. This is a powerful example of how this Bill can enhance the health and well-being of our community.

As an example, the Maui Food Bank currently purchases from over 30 farmers in Maui County to provide healthy, locally grown produce. Two programs highlighting our purchasing from Maui County farms are listed below:

- **Fresh 4 All program:** Maui Food Bank purchases and picks up donated fresh produce from local Maui farmers, produce wholesalers, and farmers' markets for distribution to those in need, reducing physical and transportation obstacles.



Maui Food Bank
Nourishing Lives, Feeding Futures

- **[‘Ai Holo program](#)**: Works with 15 local farmers and suppliers to deliver fresh, nutritious food to children from low-income families in Maui County, including rural areas like Hana, Molokai, and Lanai. Over 8 weeks, participants receive weekly boxes containing local produce, dairy, and proteins.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony,

Lisa H. Paulson
CEO, Maui Food Bank



LATE

2025 Network Members

Aloha Harvest
Aloha United Way
Chef Hui
City and County of Honolulu
County of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Alliance for
Progressive Action (HAPA)
Hawai'i Appleseed
Hawai'i Children's Action
Network
Hawai'i Dept. of Agriculture
Hawai'i Dept. of Health
Hawai'i Food Bank
Hawai'i Food Bank - Kaua'i
Branch
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
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Agriculture
Maui Food Bank
Parents and Children Together
Supersistence
The Food Basket
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i
Together
Wai'anae Coast
Comprehensive Health Center

hawaiihungeraction.org

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

March 28, 2025 at 10:02am

RE: Support for HB 428, Relating to Farm to Families

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, would like to express strong support for HB428. This bill would appropriate funds for the Farm to Families program.

Our network is intimately familiar with the toll disasters can take on communities, and many of our members are at the frontlines of response efforts. Whether it is in response to wildfires, a pandemic, a government shutdown, a hurricane, flood, volcano eruption—or just the day-to-day emergency of needing to put food on the table in an economy when many families are one paycheck away from financial devastation—our emergency food partners are there to respond to the community's needs. And they often do this on very stretched and limited resources.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of resiliency, not just because of its role in a disaster, but also in its potential to strengthen local food supply chains and our island's agricultural economy. This program would be a powerful step toward achieving this outcome, by guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, supporting local farmers, and even reducing farm food waste.

Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of this important legislation.

With aloha,
Hawai'i Hunger Action Network membership



Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports: HB428 HD1 SD1

Friday, March 28th, 2025 at 10:02am; Conference Room 211

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the committee,

As a member of the Hawaii Hunger Action Network, HAPA strongly supports HB428 HD1 SD1. According to a recent report by the Hawaii Food Bank, **one in three households in Hawaii has reports being food insecure**¹. Additional reporting from the Aloha United Way, just released in January 2025, further highlights the need for systemic changes to address the struggles of Hawaii's A.L.I.C.E. (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) population. **Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households struggle with consistent food access, compared to 28% statewide.**² Yet too often Food Banks are torn between choosing cheaper, less healthy food to feed more recipients and the ability to provide nutritious, locally grown or produced foods.

Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. For local farmers, accessing new markets can be a challenge. Creating opportunities to connect our most vulnerable communities with locally grown or produced food will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of hardship. As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic challenges or crisis. I urge you to please support HB428 HD1 SD1. Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick'.

Anne Frederick,
Executive Director

¹ <https://hawaiifoodbank.org/food-insecurity/>

² <https://www.auw.org/about/alice-initiative/alice-reports/>



MAUI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VOICE OF BUSINESS

LATE

**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 211
Friday, March 28, 2025 AT 10:02 A.M.**

To The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Ways and Means

SUPPORT HB428 HD1 SD1 RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS HB428 HD1 SD1** which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

The Chamber recognizes that Hawai'i faces persistent food security challenges, with many families experiencing limited access to fresh, locally grown food. Concurrently, local farmers and ranchers struggle with unpredictable markets and barriers to expanding food distribution. This measure offers a mutually beneficial solution by connecting local food production with communities in need, ensuring that Hawai'i's agricultural products are utilized to feed Hawai'i's residents.

This bill will allocate funds to Hawai'i's food banks, which support non-profit and community feeding programs by providing locally grown or produced foods to communities in need. This initiative will assist Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers while delivering local, nutritious food to those most vulnerable. We respectfully request that food distribution be expanded to include non-profit organizations that directly provide food to those in need, such as Maui's Feed My Sheep program.

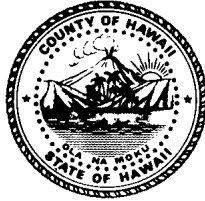
For these reasons we **SUPPORT HB428 HD1 SD1** and respectfully request its passage.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

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

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 428 HD1 SD1
Relating to Farm to Families

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 collaboration, innovation, resource development, and programmatic sustainability throughout the food system to reduce food waste, improve producer viability and resilience, develop workforce development pathways, or increase access to locally produced food among low-income residents."

The County of Hawai'i provides written testimony in **SUPPORT of HB428 HD1 SD1**, to establish the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Hawai'i County faces the highest rates of food insecurity in the State, with forty percent of Hawai'i County households reporting food insecurity in a 2023 study commissioned by Hawai'i Foodbank. The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's food bank, is at the forefront of Farm to Family initiatives, pioneering efforts to connect local farmers with communities in need. Through innovative programs, they ensure that fresh, locally-grown food reaches keiki, kūpuna, and families facing food insecurity. As Hawai'i Island's primary food bank, The Food Basket (TFB) partners with over 100 partner agencies to provide emergency food assistance or other direct services to those in need.

Since the COVID- 19 pandemic, TFB has witnessed an enormous increase in individuals who do not know where their next meal is coming from. During the pandemic, TFB served up to six times more individuals than they did pre- pandemic. Currently they are serving 34% more individuals compared to pre- pandemic numbers, nearly 50,000 people every month. TFB has experienced ongoing cancellations of large quantities of

March 25, 2025

Page 2

commodity food from breaks in the supply chain due to COVID- 19 and prices have skyrocketed, causing them to increasingly rely on our local food supply.

The Farm to Families program would provide essential funding for food banks to purchase from local farmers and producers, improving emergency food access, boosting local agriculture, and strengthening Hawai'i's food system during the ongoing economic crisis that is affecting so many families across the state.

Additionally, by the State investing in fresh, locally grown produce into food banks, we can provide families with healthier, more sustainable food options while bolstering Hawai'i's agricultural economy. The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce, helping farmers plan for future growth.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of HB428 HD1 SD1.**

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Benson Medina', with a stylized, cursive script.

Benson Medina
Director

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 5:15:54 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia M Archibald	Testifying for North Shore Nutrition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a Nutritionist, I have extensively researched and written on the importance of consuming locally-sourced fruits and vegetables for human health/longevity, economic health, and planetary health.

An increasingly large body of scientific evidence shows that improved access to local fruits and vegetables leads to improved health outcomes and reduced markers of long-term chronic illness. Locally-sourced produce is generally more nutrient-dense than imported counterparts. A diet high in locally-sourced plants resembles the food patterns of ancient Hawaiians, who experienced far lower rates of chronic diseases we currently see in our communities (obesity, Diabetes, metabolic syndrome, hypertension, etc...)

This bill will support the health of our communities, our land, and our economy. I strongly support this bill.

WONG HON HIN Inc.

DBA: Huangs Green Leaf Product

Mailing Address: P.O. BOX 1978 Waianae Hawaii 96792
Phone: 808-386-6898
Fax: 808-696-9099
Email: fanny@huangsbasil.com

March 26, 2025

The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz
Committee on Ways and Means, Chair
Hawaii's State Senate
415 South Beretania St, Room 208
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Support for Bill 428 HB Related to Farm To Families

Aloha Senator Dela Cruz

My name is Hong Gan and I am the Vice President of Wong Hon Hin Inc *dba Huangs Green Leaf Products*. We are a local farming operation that stewards over 360 acres in Waianae and Haleiwa. We produce and package a variety of local produce (Choy Sum, Shanghai PakChoy, Green Onion) and we support other local farmers across the island.

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

We first partnered with Hawaii Food Bank under the Farm to Families program during the early stages of the COVID Pandemic. With tourism and other industries coming to a screeching halt, the early funding stages of the Farm to Families program provided us with the necessary demand to continue supporting our operation of seventy employees. We partnered with the Hawaii Food Bank and other local organizations to provide fresh produce for our communities. Our continued partnership has allowed us to expand our operations and continue strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

With Regards;



Hong Gan
Vice President, Wong Hon Hin Inc

WONG HON HIN Inc.

DBA: Huangs Green Leaf Product

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Phone: 808-386-6898
Fax: 808-696-9099
Email: fanny@huangsbasil.com

March 26, 2025

The Honorable Senator Sharon Morikawa
Committee on Ways and Means, Vice Chair
Hawaii's State Senate
415 South Beretania St, Room 223
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Support for Bill 428 HB Related to Farm To Families

Aloha Senator Morikawa

My name is Hong Gan and I am the Vice President of Wong Hon Hin Inc *dba Huangs Green Leaf Products*. We are a local farming operation that stewards over 360 acres in Waianae and Haleiwa. We produce and package a variety of local produce (Choy Sum, Shanghai PakChoy, Green Onion) and we support other local farmers across the island.

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

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Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

With Regards;



Hong Gan
Vice President, Wong Hon Hin Inc

WONG HON HIN Inc.

DBA: Huangs Green Leaf Product

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Phone: 808-386-6898
Fax: 808-696-9099
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March 26, 2025

The Honorable Senator Brandon J. C. Elefante
Committee on Ways and Means
Hawaii's State Senate
415 South Beretania St, Room 217
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Support for Bill 428 HB Related to Farm To Families

Aloha Senator Elefante

My name is Hong Gan and I am the Vice President of Wong Hon Hin Inc *dba Huangs Green Leaf Products*. We are a local farming operation that stewards over 360 acres in Waianae and Haleiwa. We produce and package a variety of local produce (Choy Sum, Shanghai PakChoy, Green Onion) and we support other local farmers across the island.

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
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Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

With Regards;



Hong Gan
Vice President, Wong Hon Hin Inc



Aloha!

My name is Yoshito L'Hote, Chief executive officer for 'Āina Ho'okupu o Kīlauea, a 501c3 non profit entity on the north shore of Kaua'i.

We are developing a 75 acre community ag center where we are exploring and implementing a vertically integrated farm that is increasing food security and resiliency for the island of kaua'i. We are writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local food producers like us, strengthening our community food systems and ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity. We have been distributing food boxes around the island since COVID and feel strongly in finding the mechanisms to continue the program in perpetuity. The 250 boxes a week we produce have helped the farm and retail store reduce waste and provide a healthy alternative to other food bank foods currently available.

One of our biggest challenge is to find long term reliable markets that can support small and medium size farms, and this bill will do just that.

With a growing market share the local production can increase and the reliability and quality can be supported. Our heavy reliance on imports makes us very vulnerable especially in time of crisis and every concrete support will ensure for a more sustainable and resilient for food system. Now we'll diversify the economy allowing more farmers to have ways to bring their product to market and support other added value businesses and restaurants by increasing their production. But this cannot happen without the financial commitment that the state can provide to create a tomorrow where most people eat locally grown produce as we have an incredible ability to grow round the year an incredible variety of fruits and vegetables and protein.

The other added advantages of having a local food system is proper management of our environment is the reduction of carbon footprint and waste generation but most importantly we are what we eat and when we eat fresh vibrant foods our health inevitably gets better we also than to want to be involved at a deeper level when we know where our food come from who the food providers are and how we can help them produce more and better food.

We have been providing and working with the foodbank since covid and we are now providing 65 kupuna boxes every week and the response is fantastic and the kupuna really appreciate that fresh mango or papaya, the salad and the sweet potatoes.

Thank you,

Yoshito L'Hote, CEO for 'Āina Ho'okupu o Kīlauea
PO Box 1023, Kīlauea HI 96754
Phone: (808) 652-0069

Aloha,

My name is Mahealani Contrades-Brun, and I serve as the Parent Community Networking Center (PCNC) Facilitator at 'Ele'ele Elementary School. I am reaching out with an urgent request for your support of the *"Farm to Families"* bill, a critical piece of legislation that could dramatically enhance food security across our state.

This bill has the potential to strengthen the connections between local farmers, food distributors, and families in need, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches households struggling with food insecurity.

The benefits of this bill extend beyond providing fresh food. It will help our communities and economy in several important ways:

- **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By supporting local agriculture, we reduce our reliance on imported goods and build a more resilient, sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
- **Supporting Local Farmers:** This bill creates a steady and reliable market for locally grown produce, giving our farmers the stability they need to plan, grow, and thrive while directly contributing to the well-being of their neighbors.
- **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** By increasing access to fresh, local produce, we ensure that families have the healthy food they need to thrive, promoting long-term health and wellness, and helping to combat food insecurity.

The partnership we have with our local food bank is essential for some of our families who struggle to afford fresh fruits and vegetables. On our distribution days, it is truly heartwarming to see the faces of our keiki light up when they receive fresh produce.

Your leadership on this issue is vital, and I am deeply grateful for your commitment to building a food-secure Hawai'i. I strongly encourage your support for this legislation and stand ready to collaborate in any way that may help advance this important initiative.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.
O wau me ka ha'aha'a,

Mahealani Contrades-Brun
PCNC Facilitator
'Ele'ele Elementary School, Kaua'i, Hawai'i



Aloha!

I am Director of Operations for the Ho`okipa Kauai Food Pantry, which has weekly distributions in four locations on Kauai plus a roving outreach distribution to unsheltered homeless wherever we can find them. We distribute food to nearly 400 families a week.

We strongly support the Farm to Families program, which has completely transformed our ability to serve the undernourished in Kauai. Before this program, there were times each year when we were lucky to provide these families with an apple from Washington. Since the program was implemented, the Hawaii Foodbank has been able to regularly supply us with a selection of nutritious and fresh fruits and vegetables grown by local farmers. This type of support is critical to the health and well-being of many local families who are overwhelmed by the increasing costs of shelter or have been displaced completely.

This program is also critical to our statewide efforts to create a sustainable food supply chain. The Covid-19 pandemic was a wake-up call to the fact that we cannot be totally reliant upon outside sources for food. There will be other disruptions. Government assistance for small local farmers is essential to the continued transformation of Hawaiian land use from plantation-based exporting to self-sustainability.

We are wholly appreciative of your leadership in this effort and strongly urge you to continue this important program.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Best Regards
Ron Garrison
Ho`okipa Kauai Director of Operations

Ho`okipa Kauai, P.O. Box 223154, Princeville, HI 96722

Aloha!

My name is Laurie Yoshida, and I am the chair of the Kauai Advisory Board for the Hawai'i Foodbank.

I am writing to urgently ask for your support of the Farm to Families bill, a critical piece of legislation that can potentially transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity. So many members of our community are food insecure or one paycheck away and these critical services will help them with much needed healthy food.

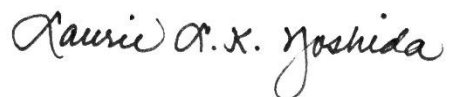
The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
2. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.
3. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand how a bag of food can help a family bridge the gap and help them feed their children. Through my community service opportunities, I have seen children living on the beach, sometimes going an entire day without any food, and how that affects their ability to learn in the classroom. The food they are provided not only nourishes their bodies, but also provides them with an opportunity to learn and grow and develop into productive citizens. I know that there are costs to this program, but without it, we will spend much more in the future.

Thank you for your commitment to a food secure Hawai'i. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to working with you to help end hunger in Hawai'i.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie A.K. Yoshida".

Laurie Yoshida
Lihu'e, HI

Aloha!

As a resident of Kaua'i and a member of the Advisory Board for the Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i Branch, I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

By fostering a partnership between local farms and food organizations, families and businesses benefit in a number of ways:

- Reducing our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
- Supporting agriculture by providing a steady and fair market for local produce.
- Getting healthy food into the hands of our families who might not otherwise have access to healthy food options.

I have seen first-hand the incredible work of the Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i Branch and know that the needs are far greater than the available resources. Current uncertainty in the federal funding for assistance programs of all kinds makes the need to create new resource streams even more urgent.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Mahalo,



Beth Amaro
Puhi, Kaua'i, Hawai'i

Aloha!

I'm Josephine Brown, the PCNC (Parent Community Networking Coordinator) at Kalāheo Elementary School. I'm reaching out to urgently request your support for the "Farm to Families" bill. I believe that this vital legislation has the potential to transform Hawai'i's food security and strengthen our local agricultural community.

I have observed firsthand the transformative impact of connecting local farms with our food distribution efforts. The "Farm to Families" bill would allow us to strengthen these vital partnerships, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches our students and their families who face food insecurity.

At Kalāheo Elementary, we've seen impressive benefits from incorporating local produce into our school pantry such as:

- ★ Nourishing our KEIKI, our students now have access to a variety of nutritious, island-grown fruits and vegetables. This not only addresses immediate hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness among our keiki. The excitement on their faces when they receive these fresh goods, is truly heartwarming.
- ★ Supporting our COMMUNITY, it can be seen that by sourcing from local farmers, we're not just feeding our students; we're also supporting our neighbors and strengthening our local economy. This connection has created a sense of pride and community within our school ohana.
- ★ EDUCATIONAL opportunities, the partnership has opened doors for educational initiatives. Our students can learn about agriculture, nutrition, and the importance of supporting local businesses.

I remember just this past week watching the student's relieved faces when they came to the front of the office to collect fresh oranges. Some of them took a whole bunch of oranges, mentioning that they are excited to share these fresh oranges with their families.

The "Farm to Families" bill would allow us to expand these efforts, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i. It would provide a steady market for our local farmers while ensuring that nutritious, fresh produce reaches those who need it most!

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Mahalo nui loa & Fa'afetai tele lava,

Josephine Brown
PCNC, Kalāheo Elementary School
Kalāheo, Kaua'i, Hawai'i



Kapa'a Elementary School
4886 Kawihau Road
Kapa'a, HI 96746

Aloha,

My name is Dayson Souza-Yim and I am the Family Engagement Coordinator at Kapa'a Elementary School on Kaua'i.

On behalf of Kapa'a Elementary School and our families, I am writing to express our support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.

2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.

3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Dayson Souza-Yim, Family Engagement Coordinator
Kapa'a Elementary School
Kapa'a, Kaua'i, Hawai'i

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays!

My name is Michelle Rapozo, I am the PCNC (Parent Community Network Center) Coordinator and FRC (Family Resource Center) Director at Kapaa Middle School.

I am writing this letter in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. Food distribution organizations building and strengthening partnerships with local farmers and food producers with the ability to distribute fresh vegetables and fruits would greatly benefit our many families and community members who face daily food insecurities.

Benefits of having a partnership with local farmers and producers for our families:

1. Supporting our local farmers by providing them with steady income and fair market prices for their produce. They can plan for the future and further growth in feeding our community.
2. Investing in our local farming community helps to create and build sustainability for our island.
3. Having healthy food options by providing fresh vegetables and fruits to our students and families that do not have access to them is such a needed resource.

Being the Director of our Family Resource Center here at Kapaa Middle School. I see firsthand the heartbreak and hardships that our families struggle with. It saddens me to hear that for some of our students, the food that they get from our school pantry is the only food security they have. I also get to see the smiles, the excitement, the relief on the faces of our students parents, and grandparents. When we can get apples, oranges, sweet potatoes, or whatever produce is available, they are so very appreciative.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to having that vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawaii. I am grateful for your consideration of this important legislation. Please feel free to collaborate in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,
Michelle Rapozo
PCNC/FRC Director
Kapaa Middle School



Aloha, my name is Zongping Huang, the owner of Kauai Glory Farm. I'm writing to support "Farm to families Bill", a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local food producers, strengthening our community food systems and ensuring that fresh locally grown produce reaches families food insecurity.

According to my experience from January to December this year, with a some funding, my farm and Hawaii Food Bank kauai branch partnership, delivered and will be delivered totally 12,800 lbs and 2796 bags fresh farm grown produce to our kauai families in need. As a local farmer , I'm so grateful to have this great opportunity to serve our community with fresh produce. It also empowered me as a local farmer to continue to grow more produce to supply our community. So I feel the partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits for our communities and our economy by:

1. Strengthening Hawaii's food supply chain. With steady market system, will have more and more locally grown produce available form our local food hubs and families
2. Supporting local farmers . The Bill offers a direct benefit to Hawaii agricultural sector , Providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers plan for future growth knowing their products will fit their neighbors in need
3. Enhancing nutritional Access: Fresh , Local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health And wellness in our community

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawaii . I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

Zongping Huang
Owner of Kauai Glory Farm
(808) 258-5037

Aloha,

My name is Kate Veatch, I am the PCNC at Kilauea School on Kaua'i. I help our community outreach and support by providing opportunities out in the real world showing our keiki the fundamentals of giving back and helping people succeed to make us all better as a community. Hawai'i Foodbank, being one of our biggest and most attentive partners, offering amazing local fruits and vegetables with their snack to our families has made such a great impact on our students and community. Showing that there are opportunities within our community to thrive together.

With that being said, I am writing to you with a very important request. Myself and on behalf of students and staff at, Kilauea School, want to show a supporting role for this amazing opportunity; the "**Farm to Families**" bill, which is a pivotal piece of our legislation that has tremendous potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations such as Hawai'i Foodbank to strengthen their community's foundation with local farmers and food processing, these are crucial to ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches every family that may face some kind of food shortages or financial hardship.

The partnership between local farms and food distribution organizations only benefits the families in our communities and our economy by the following advantages:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:**

Staying local and keeping local agriculture, we are working to reduce and can ultimately eliminate our dependence on processed and/or imported goods, this is creating a more sustainable environment and food system for Hawai'i.

2. **Supporting Local Farmers:**

The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their communities in need.

3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:**

Providing fresh, local produce offers better nutrition habits and essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term healthier eating habits and a more balanced lifestyle. I know our local community and visitors can see we are paving the way by willingly being active showing support for this bill.

We can look confidently knowing this "**Farm to Families**" bill, is not a want, but a **need**, so that our keiki and their future 'ohana can thrive when they come to school ready to learn and their parents can get the best product our community can offer. Because there is nothing like aunties fresh cut fruit and vegetables - let's show others that this is the only way to the future and success of every island.

Thank you for committing to our vision and goal, for food-secure on not only Kaua'i, but the hopes of our state, Hawai'i, having the same access and quality building a great way of life worth living.

I'm grateful and excited for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to support and encourage others with you as you take this matter forward.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kate Veatch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning.

Kate Veatch
PCNC
Kilauea School, Kaua'i





MENTAL
HEALTH
KOKUA

Opportunities to Begin Again

To whom it may concern:

I am Wayne P. Law, Kauai County Director of Mental Health Kokua, a Hawaii Foodbank Kauai partner agency. I am writing in support of Hawaii Foodbank's funding request.

Mental Health Kokua has been a partner agency of Foodbank Kauai since 2/14/2020. Hawaii Foodbank Kauai provides the food we distribute to individuals within our 24-hour Transitional Living Program. Mental Health Kokua serves individuals with severe and persistent mental illnesses. Services include transitional housing and case management services. In the 24-hour housing program we have a capacity of 10 individuals at any given time. As they move on to lesser levels of housing care options, new individuals come into the 24-hr. house. As a result, we may serve up to 20 individuals per year. These are some of the most vulnerable individuals in our community, and who need support and skills development to enable them to ultimately live more independently. Many of them come to us from homelessness. Given their very fixed income, the assistance from the Foodbank Kauai helps stretch their food budgets and allows them to have greater access to nutritious choices. We strongly support the Foodbank Kauai's Legislative request, recognizing it to be of great value and assistance to those in our community who otherwise may suffer hunger and less consistent and nutritious meals.

Respectfully,

Wayne P. Law, MSW
Kauai County Director
Mental Health Kokua



A non-profit organization

Main Administrative Office
1221 Kapiolani Boulevard, #345
Honolulu, HI 96814
Phone (808) 737-2523
Fax (808) 734-1208

Kauai Administrative Office
3205 Akahi Street
Lihue, HI 96766
Phone (808) 632-0466



Fax (808) 632-0866

Aloha!

I am writing to submit my support of the Farm to Families bill that will allow food distributing organizations to work alongside local farmers and other food producers to provide fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables for local families.

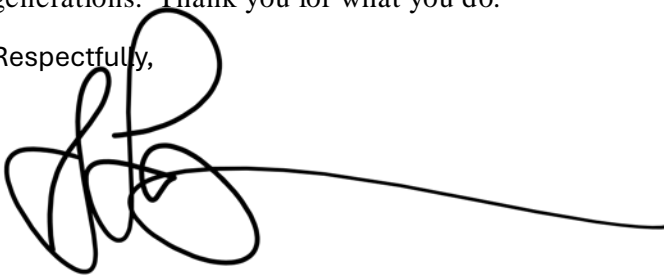
My name is Stephanie Funtanilla. I am the program manager for Nana's House, a family resource center that, among other things, provides a food pantry for families in need on the west side of Kauai. I have watched the needs of families grow despite all the efforts they make to work hard to provide for their families. As prices for food and everything rise, families resort to less nutritious foods just to be able to feed themselves. More time trying to earn a living leaves less time to plan and shop for nutritious foods. Less income means resorting to the least nutritious foods available.

I believe this is a win-win for families and producers.

1. By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

I acknowledge that the jobs that you do are very difficult: balancing the needs of what is right for your constituency and finding a way to be financially responsible in the long run for future generations. Thank you for what you do.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Stephanie Funtanilla
Program Manager
Nana's House, Kauai

St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church

4364 Hardy Street • Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii 96766 • Tel: 808-245-3796 • Fax: 808-245-6173

info@stmichaels-kauai.org • www.stmichaels-kauai.org

Aloha!

My name is Deann Megonnell, I am the Senior Warden for St Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church in Lihue Hawaii. I am also the Co-Chairperson for our Loaves & Fishes food ministry.

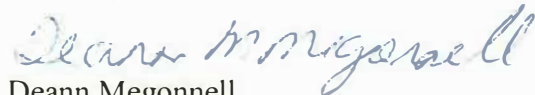
I would like to request your support of the Farm to Families Bill. St Michael & All Angels Episcopal church in Lihue Kauai All Angels Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry relies on the Hawaii Food Bank for our ministry. We have been a source of food for Kauai's Ohana members and our Kupuna for many years. Our pantry has experience firsthand the increase in demand for providing food packages to our community members in need. We currently make 180 bags a month for our two food distributions.

We fill the bags with provisions from the Hawaii Food Bank, Kauai monthly. They are an invaluable asset to our organization and provide us with a variety of canned and fresh items each week to fill our bags.

The Hawaii Food Bank on Kauai is a valuable resource for our program to receive fresh grown produce from local farmers. In addition to the nutrition of these fresh items for our clients, we are also providing support to our local farmers. The more food we can obtain from local sources the less dependent we are on imported food.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,



Deann Megonnell
St. Michael & All Angels Church
Lihue HI





Aloha,

My name is Kurt Rutter and I am a managing partner of Tokabago Farm LLC on Kaua'i. We run an Apiary and a market garden operation supplying fresh produce and honey through Kaua'i Farm Bureau Farmers Markets and local retail outlets and restaurants. I'm writing in support of the Farm to Families legislation that will increase access to fresh local food security for all residents of Kaua'i, and especially those in at greatest risk of food insecurity. Local farmers provide access to food security through supplying local markets and particularly Farm markets where we work with the Kauai Food Bank to provide fresh food in town centers across the island. This has brought us customers who might otherwise be unable to buy locally grown food. We support food security on Kaua'i and the Kaua'i Hawai'i food Bank is a valued partner in that mission.

Sincerely,

Kurt Rutter

Tokabago Farm LLC

464 Molo St.

Kapaa, HI 96746

tokabago@gmail.com

(808) 631-9131

Oscar Harris
Club Director
Boys & Girls Club of Hawaii
91-884 Fort Weaver Road,
Suite A. Ewa Beach, Hawaii 96706
OHarris@bgch.com
808.689.4182

To Whom It May Concern,

Aloha,

On behalf of the Hale Pono Boys and Girls Club, I am writing to express our strong support for the “Farm to Families” bill, set to be introduced during the 2025 state legislative session. This crucial initiative aligns with our commitment to serving the families and keiki of Hawai‘i by addressing food insecurity while simultaneously supporting local farmers and strengthening our agricultural economy.

As an organization dedicated to fostering the well-being of youth and families in our community, we have seen firsthand the impact that nutritious, locally grown food has on the lives of those we serve. Access to fresh produce not only improves physical health but also enhances emotional and mental well-being, paving the way for stronger, more resilient communities. The “Farm to Families” bill promises to bridge the gap between local farmers and food-insecure families by creating a sustainable solution that benefits all of Hawai‘i.

We urge state legislators to prioritize funding for this initiative. By doing so, they will be making a meaningful investment in Hawai‘i’s future—one that uplifts both our agricultural industry and the families who rely on these essential resources.

Thank you for considering our testimony. We stand ready to support the “Farm to Families” bill in any way we can and look forward to seeing this transformative legislation come to fruition in 2025.

Mahalo nui loa,

Sincerely,
Oscar Harris
Club Director Boys & Girls Club of Hawaii



**Hale Pono Ewa Beach
Clubhouse**

91-884 Fort Weaver Rd. Suite A
Ewa Beach Hawaii 96706
Tel: 808.689.4182
Fax: 808.689.0625
www.bgch.com

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Oscar Harris Jr.

President & CEO

Paddy Kauhane

GREAT FUTURES STARTS [HERE.](#)



Aloha!

My name is Anthony Seyko and I manage the Food for Friends Ohana Distribution at the First Assembly of God Central Oahu Church in Wahiawa. Our church is one of the many agencies supported by the Hawaii Food Bank, Inc.

I am writing this letter to urgently ask for your support of the “Farm to Families” bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state’s food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

Families in our communities and our economy can benefit greatly through the partnership between local farms and food organizations as follows:

1. **Strengthening the Food Supply Chain of the State of Hawaii:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawaii.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawaii’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawaii. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,


Anthony Seyko

First Assembly of God Central Oahu
Food Program Manager



91-1440 Farrington Hwy. Kapolei, HI 96707

Phone: (808) 677-9516 Fax: (808) 677-9202

Aloha!

My Name is James DeJesus III, I am the Sales Director for Fresh Aloha Direct.

I'm writing to support the "Farm to Families" Bill. To help strengthen our community food systems, making a more consistent market for local farmers and food producers.

- **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.
- **Strengthening Hawaii's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawaii.
- **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawaii's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawaii. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,
James DeJesus III
Honolulu, Hawaii
Director of Sales



Aloha:

I am testifying on behalf of Giving Hope Hawaii.

I support the Hawaii farm to food bank program and Hawaii food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Without the help and partnership with Hawai'i Foodbank, Giving Hope Hawaii would not be able to feed over 5400 families a month suffering from food insecurity. Since January 2023 we have been able to service families, kupuna's and children with special needs from Waimanalo to Kahuku. Our pantry could not do this without the support from Hawaii Food Bank along with the Hawaii farm to food bank program.

With Hawaii Foodbanks continued support and to get more food we can certainly stomp out food hunger in all our communities.

Our mission is simple: **To give glory to God and to promote human dignity.** Through the tireless efforts of our staff, volunteers, and corporate partners, we provide food and support to the hungry and needy on Oahu's Windward Side especially our Kūpuna and Keiki with special needs.

"For I was hungry and you fed me. For I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. For I was a stranger and you invited me into your home. For I was naked and you clothed me. For I was sick and you cared for me. For I was in prison and you visited me."

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,
Violette Nacapoy
Chief of Operations, Director
Giving Hope Hawaii

Aloha!

My name is Esther Balsamo and I am the lead volunteer for Sunset Beach Christian Church's houseless outreach, Hands of Hope.

I am writing to express my concern for our home. So many are struggling to acquire enough food every day. Even those who have jobs, and homes come by asking for help. Therefore, I am urgently requesting your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to completely transform the lives of the people in my community.

The partnership between farms and food organizations will benefit so many families in our community. It would also strengthen Hawaii's food supply chain, support local farmers, and increase access to nutritional foods. Making our home filled with more healthy and happy individuals.

Ending hunger in Hawai'i is important to me. Because every week for the last four years I have sat and talked with those who do not know when their next meal will be. These people are so kind, and generous even with the little that they have. And I would like nothing more than to see their suffering eased.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

Esther Balsamo

Haleiwa

Hands of Hope Lead Volunteer



REDUCING HARM,
PROMOTING HEALTH,
CREATING WELLNESS,
AND FIGHTING STIGMA
IN HAWAII AND
THE PACIFIC

HAWAII HEALTH
& HARM REDUCTION
CENTER

677 Ala Moana Blvd.
Suite 226
Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 521-2437

www.hhhrc.org

Re: Testimony in Strong Support of Hawai'i Farm to Families Program

To Whom it May concern:

The Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) strongly supports the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program. This initiative is a vital step toward alleviating food insecurity across our islands while also supporting local agricultural producers.

Food insecurity remains one of Hawai'i's most pressing challenges. The economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic amplified this issue, and while the immediate crisis has passed, many families continue to struggle with access to fresh and healthy foods. This program would ensure a consistent supply of culturally relevant, locally grown food to food banks and communities in need, addressing the dual goals of improving food security and boosting the local economy.

HHHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We focus our efforts on communities disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to people living with HIV, hepatitis, and substance use, as well as LGBTQIA+, Native Hawaiian, and houseless populations.

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, HHHRC collaborated with the Hawai'i Food Bank to distribute over 500,000 pounds of food to thousands of families. These experiences underscored the urgent need for food banks to have access to fresh, healthy, and locally sourced foods beyond what is provided through donations. This program will empower food banks to meet these needs sustainably while supporting local farmers and food producers.

Hawai'i Farm to Families Program represents an opportunity to create a win-win scenario for Hawai'i: reducing food insecurity, strengthening our local agricultural economy, and ensuring the well-being of our most vulnerable communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this important measure.

Andrew Ogata
Director of Marketing and Development
Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

Aloha!

My name is Damiana Espiritu and I am the Food Pantry coordinator of Immaculate Conception Church in Ewa Beach.

I'm writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. A pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy. We reduce our dependence on imported goods and create a more sustainable food system for Hawai'i by investing in local agriculture. The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector by providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need. Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Thank you,

Damiana Espiritu
Ewa Beach, Oahu



Aloha Hawai'i policy leaders!

My name is Charla Teves, and I am a lifelong resident of Nu'uano. I am currently attending college in New York, which has only heightened my awareness of the intense need for my home state to address the pervasive and persistent need to end hunger. I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT** of the "Farm-to-Families" bill.

This bill will strengthen the Hawai'i food supply chain, reduce the state's dependency on imported goods and create a much more resilient and sustainable food system. Importantly, it will directly benefit farmers, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.

In 2024, I was named one of five national Stephen J. Brady Scholars by the Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation. I was invited to participate in a national conference where I learned about innovative programs across the country to help end hunger. Supporting the distribution of fresh local produce will help ensure that essential nutrients are available to children and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

One in five Hawaii children struggle with hunger, according to Feeding America. At more than 55,000 children, they would fill the Stan Sheriff Center four times over and still overflow into the parking lot. I have volunteered with many food drives and in other ways to help end hunger. Based on these experiences, I know for sure that your support of food banks in Hawai'i will make a difference.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you my support and please pass the Farm-to-Families bill.

Mahalo,

Charla Teves

Charlene Hosenfeld, Ph.D.

604 N. KALAHEO AVE., UNIT A, KAILUA, HI 96734

TEL 808 261 4305



Aloha,

I am a long-time resident of Kailua, O'ahu, and am writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. As a psychologist I am aware of the importance of good nutrition for both physical and psychological well-being.

This legislation would have a positive impact on multiple crucial areas in Hawai'i by:

- providing fresh and nutritional food to individuals and families who lack financial resources to access healthy food;
- supporting our local farmers; &
- decreasing our State's dependence on imported food.

The is a Win - Win - Win.

Mahalo nui loa for your leadership and efforts to create a more food secure, nutrition equatable, farmer supportive and thriving Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Charlene Hosenfeld PhD".

Charlene Hosenfeld

Aloha!

My name is Curstyn Yoshimoto and I am a Communications Coordinator at Hawai'i Foodbank. I am writing with an urgent request for support of the "Farm to Families" Bill, which will allow more local produce into the hands of families in need, facilitated by organizations like Hawai'i Foodbank.

In a state so heavily reliant on imports, this bill will allow us to be more self-sufficient through supporting local farmers, while also moving us toward a more sustainable local food system. With these fresh fruits and vegetables coming from local farmers, recipients of these items will receive them at their freshest and most nutritious – when they would otherwise lose out on access to healthier options due to their circumstances. With this Farm to Families program available, families in need will be able to break the cycle of depending on unhealthy and processed food, leading to better health and wellness in the long run.

I grew up fortunate to have a roof over my head and food on my plate, but I know that far too many of my neighbors and friends can't say the same. After I started to work at Hawai'i Foodbank, I realized that the need is even greater than I could've imagined, and many of those who are struggling to make ends meet are those you'd least expect.

Hawai'i's geographical isolation makes it impossible to for imported produce to reach us at peak freshness. We must inspect produce in grocery stores carefully – because they often almost go bad by the time they reach our shelves. Nutritious foods should not be a luxury, and I believe we can and should become more self-sustaining in our food system, especially in a place that has historically been a bounty of fresh local food.

I believe that funding Farm to Families will allow us to not only uplift and support our local farms and allow for those in need to be properly fed, but also allow us to become more connected to the food we eat – linking us more to those who cared for and nurtured this land for centuries. In a place that has in many ways been stripped of its culture, I believe that doing our kuleana to feed those in need with food grown in our own backyard is a step in the right direction of reclaiming what has been lost.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Mahalo,

Curstyn Yoshimoto

'Ewa Beach, Hawai'i

Greetings!

My name is Edward Van Houten and I am a retired IT Specialist from Wahiawa.

Living in an economy that is consistently ranked as the most expensive state in the United States due in part to high food costs can be challenging for the vast majority of us here in Hawaii. It is for this reason that I'm reaching out to vehemently urge you to support the "Farm to Families" bill, a crucial piece of legislation with the power to significantly improve food security across our state.

Families in need in our communities, as well as our economy, benefit by an effective partnership between local farms and food organizations in a number of ways:

1. **Enhancing Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** Investing in local agriculture reduces reliance on imported goods, fostering a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** This bill directly benefits Hawai'i's agricultural sector by ensuring a stable and fair market for local produce. It empowers farmers to plan for growth, knowing their harvests will nourish neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Providing fresh, local produce ensures individuals and families have access to essential nutrients, combating hunger while fostering long-term health and wellness in our communities.

My wife and I have known families with children, as well as Kapuna in our community that have been forced out of their homes due to the rising cost of living here in Hawaii. We are volunteers in our community to share out food in anyway we can receive it, from food distribution outreaches to near-expiration/at-expiration food from local grocery stores. The need is always there, as well as the expressed appreciation from those who receive the food.

Mahalo nui loa for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edward Van Houten". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the "Thank you," text.

Aloha!

My name is Gail McElrath. I was born and raised on Oahu and appreciate the Ohana that this Island signifies. It is a beautiful place to call home, but the cost of living has skyrocketed over the last decade making fresh, healthy food harder to obtain for many families. Because of this, I am writing with an “urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill –a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state’s food security landscape.” This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

This partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy. By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.

The bill also offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. The support of Local Farmers allows them to plan for future growth knowing their products are needed and can be available to feed their neighbors in need.

With so many people living on unhealthy, processed fast foods, the availability of fresh, local produce will help to provide essential nutrients to those individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthier food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

I volunteer at the Hawai‘i Foodbank because I believe that this is a fundamental need for the people on this Island. Working side by side with the numerous volunteers, who share in this cause, is a wonderful experience. Seeing the very generous donations of food arriving daily at this facility, and everyone working so diligently to ensure that this food gets to where it is needed most puts a smile on my face every time. No one should go hungry.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

Gail McElrath
Waikele, Hawai‘i

SUBJECT: Support "Farm to Families" Bill

Aloha!

My name is Jody Smith. I am a retiree with 18 years of experience with the sustainable agriculture program at UH Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. I regularly donate to and volunteer with the Hawai'i Food Bank. I help out with the Food 4 Keiki Program, the CSFP Kupuna Food Box Program, and the food distribution program operated by Kings Cathedral in Aina Haina.

As a HFB volunteer, I unpack boxes and boxes of beautiful fruits and produce grown by our local farmers. I help fill and hand out bags of vegetables. I enjoy watching our local clients growing excited by the variety and selection of popular vegetables (like bok choy, daikon, bitter melon) and local tropical fruits (papaya, pineapple) — the flavors of our islands. The partnership between the Hawaii Food Bank and the Hawaii Farm Bureau has allowed us to distribute this delicious and nourishing fresh produce.

Continuation and expansion of this program via the "Farm to Families" bill will bring multiple benefits to our state.

Please provide full support for the the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

As a former agricultural professional in Hawaii, I understand the importance of growing, purchasing and distributing locally grown foods.

Investing in local agriculture reduces the state's dependence on imported food (now estimated at 85% — extraordinarily high).

With a reliable market for their produce, Hawaii's farmers are better able to plan for and supply delicious and nutritious food.

Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options, fighting hunger and promoting long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Please support the "Farm to Families" bill.

Mahalo nui loa

Jody Smith
Honolulu 96825

My name is John Heidel and I am a retired Christian minister and a 50 year resident of Kailua; coming to Hawai'i in 1962 I served as the Minister of Youth at Central Union Church for 5 years and Chaplain at Punahou School for 32 years until retirement in 2001. In addition, I helped John Whitek start the Hawai'i People's Fund in 1968 and Kent Coarsey start Family Promise Hawai'i in 2004. I also helped start The Interfaith Alliance Hawai'i in 2002 (serving as President from 2004-2012) and founded Religious Leaders for Assisted Dying in 2002. I'm closely affiliated with Christ Church, Uniting Disciples of Christ and Presbyterians in Kailua. In retirement I have continued my advocacy for interfaith cooperation and social justice activism.

I am writing this letter because of my support for the Hawai'i Food Bank's proposed bill for the 2025 Legislative session - "Farm to Families". Being raised on an organic farm in Southern Idaho, I know from experience (and healthy eating) exactly what it means to have nutritious food available. This legislation if enacted, will not only strengthen the food supply chain in Hawai'i but will contribute greatly to the improvement of the essential nutritional quality of the food provided to all island residents; plus, it will assist our local farmers immensely,

I'm grateful for all the good work you do as our elected officials but am particularly thankful for the consideration you'll give to this legislation. Please call me if you have any questions. Mahalo nui loa!!

Aloha no,
Rev. Dr. John R. Heidel
1341 Manu Mele Street
Kailua, HI 96734
808-261-4585

Joseph Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula, PhD
Clinical Health Psychologist, Health Equity Scientist, & Academician



555 South Street, Unit 1205
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813
808-221-2481
kaholoku@hawaii.edu

Re: Support for the "Farm to Families" bill

Aloha nui,

I am Dr. Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula, a Hawai‘i licensed clinical psychologist and professor and chair of Native Hawaiian Health at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

As a health disparities researcher, I know firsthand the negative impact food insecurity has on the health and well-being of people in Hawai‘i, especially among Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and other medically underserved populations. This is why I am writing with **an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape.** This bill will allow food-distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy in several ways. First, it **strengthens Hawai‘i's food supply chain** by investing in local agriculture thereby reducing our dependence on imported goods and creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i. Second, by **supporting local farmers** there can be a direct benefit to Hawai‘i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need. Finally, by **enhancing nutritional access**, fresh, local produce will provide essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This bill will help fight hunger and promote long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Mahalo nui for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

Joseph Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula, Ph.D.

Aloha,

I hope you are well! My name is Molly Mamaril and I am a Kaimuki resident and I work for a local nonprofit that supports community-based economic development for Hawaii.

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape.

This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

Collaboration between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy in several ways, including:

- Enhancing Nutritional Access: fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only prevents hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.
- Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain by investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system.
- Supporting Local Farmers: The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.

Over the past few years, I have volunteered with the Hawaii Foodbank several times in order to support food access for those who are in greater need. It is incredibly powerful to see the strong ecosystem of volunteers and staff that the Hawaii Foodbank has grown over time. There are so many kind and enthusiastic people who want to help support other residents in having their basic needs met, allowing everyone to pursue their higher purpose because they're not stuck in the cycle of trying to survive.

Mahalo nui for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

Molly Mamaril

Aloha,

I am writing with an urgent request for the Farm to Families bill to be passed. While I'm in my late 40s and no longer facing an income or food shortage, I grew up on welfare and was reliant upon food banks and other community resources. I never learned the value of eating/cooking fresh fruits and vegetables, because we survived on canned or boxed goods (processed foods). Those in poverty shouldn't be lacking healthy food choices. Food is healing and if they have more healthy options available, it will in turn prevent many chronic diseases which cost the state lots of money.

Because we live in Hawaii, it's even more important that we not only provide healthy food options for lower income families, it's also important to support local farmers. Local farmers make very little money and most of their produce goes to waste. This is really unfortunate. I would love to support local farmers, who work hard at providing healthy food for us. We should be moving toward Hawaii becoming more sustainable and independent. It would be wonderful if: (1) those in poverty were healthy, saving the state costly medical expenses, (2) Hawaii was sustainable and didn't need imported food, and (3) we supported our hard-working local farmers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nicky B.

Mililani

Aloha!

My name is Pamela Clifford and I am a lifelong resident on O'ahu. I also work at a ranch in Waialua and support farmers on the ranch who are struggling to survive. Food security is something that is so critical for our community. We are isolated in the middle of the Pacific ocean and import a tremendous amount of food for our families. I would like this letter to show support of the "Farm to Families" bill. We need to help secure consistent markets for local food producers. We need to ensure that fresh, locally grown produce can reach families across the island. There are too many families that are struggling with food insecurity and we need to do our part. It is critical that we invest in our local agriculture! We need to not be so reliant on importing food when it can be grown here! Our farmers need our support! Our families need our support! Children are unable to think, process, and mature without the nutrients needed. I have seen first hand (as a former elementary teacher) how children who haven't had enough food struggle in school. Also, I have seen how when they are able to grow the food, they are more willing and open to try different types of food. Having school gardens is one way to increase the variety of healthy foods the kids eat as well as teach them about where their food comes from.

It is vital that we take care of our families and communities. Farmers need more support. We need to prioritize our self sustainability by growing our own food and getting it to our communities!

Thank you for considering the piece of legislation that could have a positive impact on our community.

Mahalo
Pam Clifford

Aloha,

My name is Samlynn Moore and I'm a mom of three, a volunteer in my church and worked most of my adult life. I'm writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. One of our ministries is providing both hot meals and canned goods and perishables that we receive through the Hawaii Food Bank. We prepare, through our certified kitchen, meals that we deliver to the homes of families who struggle to put food on their table. The joy and smiles on the keikis facing each time we arrive is heartfelt.

This past Saturday we delivered to a home in Waianae and the mother of the home said, "If it weren't for you folks we wouldn't have a Christmas. "

I worked as a Cadre with the Hawaii Youth Challenge Academy and have seen a male cadet cry because he received 3 square meals a day knowing his family at home was struggling. Many cadets stated they had never eaten so much until attending the academy. I've had three cadets ask me privately if our church could deliver to their families.

Our opio will never show it or talk about how hungry they are or how their families are struggling. This bill will help ensure families are fed and their children won't have to go to school hungry. They won't have to worry how they will eat over the weekend when school is not in session. This bill is vital to Hawaii's food insecurities.

Mahalo
Samlynn Moore

Aloha!

My name is Timothy Blaisdell, and I am an Investment Services professional who works in downtown Honolulu.

In these challenging times I have decided to step forward and request your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. I believe this bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy in many ways:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy Blaisdell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Timothy" and last name "Blaisdell" clearly distinguishable.

Timothy Blaisdell
Aiea, Hawai'i



Aloha,

I am writing to express my strong support for the "Farm to Families" bill, a crucial piece of legislation that will transform our local food ecosystem. As the Executive Director of Alternative Structures International dba Kahumana, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact this bill could have on our community.

This legislation represents a strategic approach to addressing food security and agricultural sustainability in Hawai'i. By creating a direct connection between local farmers and families in need, the bill offers multiple significant benefits:

1. **Local Food System Resilience:** The bill will dramatically reduce Hawai'i's reliance on imported food by investing in our local agricultural infrastructure. This approach creates a more stable and sustainable food supply that can better withstand external disruptions.
2. **Economic Support for Local Agriculture:** By establishing a consistent market for local produce, the bill provides farmers with economic stability and predictability. This support allows agricultural businesses to plan for growth and invest in their operations, knowing they have a reliable outlet for their products.
3. **Nutritional Equity and Community Health:** The legislation ensures that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity. By prioritizing access to high-quality, nutrient-rich foods, we are not just addressing hunger but actively promoting long-term community wellness.

Your leadership in considering this bill demonstrates a commitment to Hawai'i's future. I am deeply appreciative of your efforts to create a more food-secure, economically robust, and healthy community for all residents.

Mahalo,

Avary Maunakea
Executive Director
Alternative Structures International
dba Kahumana

Greetings,

My name is Roy Nakamura and I lead the Food Distribution at Kalihi Union Church.

I am very concerned about the need to provide healthy food options for the families in our community. Nutritious foods are not always available for many of our recipients due to multiple reasons but I basically think it is due to the cost. Many families are not eating healthy which allow them to keep and stay.

We ask for your support for the "Farm to Family's" legislation. This support will to provide produce for these families that will in turn provide support that to the farmers and families allowing them both to thrive.

Local farms and food organizations, can work together to provide a necessary source of produce to those in need.

We need farms. They are essential a resource that assist with the food insecurities and a healthy community.

Whenever we distribute goods to our recipients, they are very grateful to receive produce and tell us about what they plan to make using the produce provided. Please support the legislation and make a difference!

Thank you,
Roy Nakamura
Lead- Kalihi Union Church(Manna Program)



KOBAYASHI SUGITA & GODA, LLP
Attorneys at Law

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Alan M. Goda*

John R. Aube*
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Neal T. Gota
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Robert K. Ichikawa*
Christopher T. Kobayashi*
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Ryan D. Louie
Zachary K. Shikada
Timothy T. Silvester
Reece Y. Tanaka

Aloha!

My name is Craig Shikuma, and I am a partner at the law firm of Kobayashi Sugita & Goda. I am writing today with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill—a crucial piece of legislation that can reshape Hawai‘i’s food security and foster a healthier, more self-reliant future for our state.

This bill is pivotal in creating stronger connections between food distribution organizations and local farmers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families who are struggling with food insecurity. Its impact extends beyond providing nourishment; it strengthens our communities and bolsters our local economy.

The partnerships fostered by this bill have the potential to bring immense benefits to Hawai‘i, including:

1. **Reinforcing Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain:** Investing in local agriculture reduces reliance on imported goods, making our food system more resilient to external disruptions while supporting sustainability.
2. **Empowering Local Farmers:** By establishing a reliable and fair market for their produce, this bill offers farmers the security to plan and grow their operations, directly benefiting our agricultural sector and ensuring their hard work feeds their fellow residents.
3. **Improving Access to Nutritious Food:** Fresh, local fruits and vegetables play a critical role in combating hunger and promoting long-term health. The benefits of a diet that

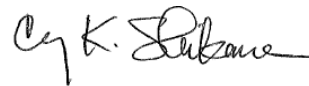
includes fresh food, rather than only processed or canned items, are invaluable to everyone, especially Hawaii's underserved population. Those benefits extend to all facets of a person's well-being, not just combating hunger.

Food insecurity, including not being to afford fresh vegetables and fruits, impacts every aspect of a person's life, from physical health to emotional well-being. Every Hawaii resident should have access to enough healthy food. By addressing hunger, we strengthen the foundation of our communities and ensure that all families have the opportunity to thrive.

I urge you to join me in supporting this transformative initiative. Together, we can help create a Hawai'i where no one has to go hungry, and where our local farmers thrive in a resilient, sustainable food system.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig K. Shikuma". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Craig Shikuma



**KROC
CENTER**

HAWAII

KrocCenterHawaii.org

**THE SALVATION ARMY RAY & JOAN
KROC CORPS COMMUNITY CENTER**

91-3257 Kualakai Parkway

Ewa Beach, HI 96706

Main: (808) 682-5505

Fax: (808) 682-5501

To whom it may concern,

Re: Support for the Farm to Families Bill

My name is Leslie Moody, and I am the Family Services Manager at The Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center in Hawaii. I am writing to express my staunch support for the proposed Farm to Families legislative bill, which seeks to strengthen the connection between local farmers and families in need by providing greater access to fresh, healthy, and locally grown foods. We desperately need to strengthen the food supply chain for our individuals and families facing food insecurity.

As the Family Services Manager, I have witnessed firsthand the critical importance of fostering a sustainable and equitable food system. The Farm to Families initiative would not only support local agriculture by creating reliable markets for small- and mid-sized farms, but it would also ensure that underserved communities have access to nutritious and affordable food options.

The cost of living in Hawaii is above most of the nation and the increase in food prices since the pandemic has created an added financial strain on many households. One out of every three families are struggling to keep food on the table. The children and the elderly are suffering the most.

Hawaii is one of the most isolated places on the planet. Having so many of our food sources imported places us in a very vulnerable position. Should there be a natural disaster or another pandemic this could be catastrophic. In addition to addressing food insecurity, this legislation promotes environmental sustainability and economic development by reducing food miles and supporting local economies. These benefits align with the values of health, community resilience, and environmental stewardship that we all strive to uphold.

I urge you and your colleagues to prioritize the passage of this critical bill. It is imperative to so many and represents an opportunity to invest in the well-being of families and farmers alike while advancing a more equitable food system.

RECREATION | EDUCATION | CELEBRATION | INSPIRATION

General William Booth, Founder • General Brian Peddle, General • Commissioner Douglas Riley, Territorial Commander

Major Troy Trimmer, Divisional Commander • Major Osei Stewart, Corps Officer & Hawaii State Capitol Liaison • Major Lynn A. Stewart, Corps Officer

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. I would be happy to discuss this matter further or provide additional information about the impact of this initiative.

Sincerely,

Leslie Moody

Family Services Manager/Kroc Cares Dept.

The Salvation Army Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center

91-3257 Kualaka'i Parkway

Ewa Beach, Hawaii 96706

Direct Line: 693-8307 | Fax 693-8407

Leslie.Moody@usw.salvationarmy.org

www.KrocCenterHawaii.org

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General William Booth, Founder • General Brian Peddle, General • Commissioner Douglas Riley, Territorial Commander

Major Phil Lum, Divisional Commander • Major Osei Stewart, Corps Officer & Hawaii State Capitol Liaison • Major Lynn A. Stewart, Corps Officer



PO Box 474
Haleiwa HI, 96712
808-228-8865
info@lokoeafarms.com
www.lokoeafarms.com

Aloha! My name is Noe Neumann and I am the owner/operator at Lokoea Farms. We are a second generation family farm in Haleiwa and we grow citrus and tropical fruit for local consumption.

My family and I are writing to support the "Farm to Families" bill, a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local food producers, strengthening our community food systems and ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

As a small family farm, we rely on the Hawaii Food Bank every year during our heaviest harvest season for our Haleiwa Gold Hawaiian Oranges. We sell oranges and other tropical fruit throughout the year through other channels such as Farm Link Hawaii, but during the fall/winter months we have a huge amount of oranges that our normal buyers can't handle. The Hawaii Food Bank has been stepping in every year since 2020 to purchase and distribute these delicious locally grown oranges to local families.

The partnership between our local farm and food organizations such as the Food Bank benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in our small family farm, the Food Bank helps reduce Hawaii's dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, which will help the Food Bank continue providing a steady and fair market for our local oranges. Knowing that we have a market for our larger harvests allows us to plan for future growth knowing our fruit will feed our neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities. You can't get better oranges than our fresh, juicy, sweet Haleiwa Gold Hawaiian Oranges!

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Noe Neumann". The letters are stylized and cursive, with a small dot after the first "N".

G. Noe Neumann
808-228-8865
info@lokoeafarms.com

To: Hawaii State House of Representatives

RE: Farm to Family Bill: (HB2137 from the 2024 session)

For the reestablishment and funding to pass this bill in 2025

Dear Representatives of the State of Hawaii House of Representatives,

My name is Laverne Suster and I am the coordinator and point of contact for the OLPH Church Pantry in Ewa Beach, Hawaii. Our pantry serves about 720 people each month with food collected by the Church community, as well as food from Hawaii Food Bank.

Food security has long been recognized as a major issue in Hawaii because Hawaii relies on shipments of food from the mainland. Anything we can do to become more reliant on our own farms for food will go a long way to establish this self-reliance. As we all know, shipping in food from outside the state drives up the cost of food for the people of Hawaii. As a result, many of our people are experiencing **food insecurity**. With this bill, **food security** becomes a little more of a reality.

Many aspects of the Farm to Families program promise benefits for our economy and our people. Our people will enjoy healthier choices of fresh food grown right here in Hawaii. Local farmers benefit as we put our money into their farms, securing their jobs and livelihood. Full circle farming adds to the benefits and the symbiotic relationship from farmers to food bank, back to farmers; from the growing of food to the composting of food materials the food bank cannot use. All of these benefits make this program a moral choice because excess food is not wasted; it's ethically and morally sound.

Food security is a huge issue, especially in these uncertain times. This bill will go a long way to helping the people of this state, your constituents, make sure they will always have a "next meal". Please re-establish and vote for this bill.

Laverne Suster

OLPH Food Ministry Pantry



Our Lady of Sorrows Church

1403-A California Ave.
Wahiawa, HI 96786

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is being submitted to support the “Farms to Families” bill for 2025 state legislative session.

At Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Wahiawa, our food pantry relies on the Hawaii Foodbank for well over 90% of the food distributed each month to those in need. We also are a distribution center for the CSFP (Senior Food Box) distribution program.

As an agency partner of Hawaii Foodbank, we are committed to working alongside them to fight food insecurity our community. We appreciate Hawaii Foodbank’s efforts to provide healthy, local foods to those we serve. We strongly support this proposal and look forward to collaborating with them to distribute fresh, locally grown food to those most in need.

If additional information or clarification is needed, please feel free to reach out to us.

Sincerely,

Mark Yen
Our Lady of Sorrows
Social Ministry – Food Distribution

Owen K. Kaneshiro Farms LLC

95-935 Paikauhale St. Mililani, HI 96789

Tel: (808) 625-1275 Fax: (808) 627-9552

Aloha!

My name is Owen K. Kaneshiro, owner and farmer of Owen K. Kaneshiro Farms, LLC. I own a vegetable farm in Waianae. I am writing this letter in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. I feel that all families in Hawaii should have access to fresh produce. The Hawaii Food Bank has been a great partner in helping to bridge that gap between my farm and the community. Before this partnership, I was throwing away a surplus of produce. The Hawaii Food Bank has helped me run a more efficient farm with less waste. It's nice to know that my farm is helping to provide fresh produce to the people who need it the most, thus keeping the community healthy and happy. The "Farm to Families" bill will provide people with consistent access to local produce and foster food sustainability within the Hawaiian Islands.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Owen K. Kaneshiro", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Owen K. Kaneshiro
Waianae, Hawaii



Super Utilizer ■ Ke Ku'una Na'au

1301 Punchbowl Street ■ Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 ■ Phone: (808) 691-1000 ■ Fax: (808) 691-4016

To our Legislators:

I am writing to you in support of: "Farm to Families" bill for 2025. We are a team that works with at-risk homeless and housed persons with medical needs. We see on a daily basis the struggle our people have getting healthy foods and know this bill can make a difference in their long-term health. Most of our people know what is healthy for them and do their best. We understand that it is not just a matter of choice but of access, cost, and convenience that influence their diet.

The Hawai'i Foodbank's programs and methods always put people first and offer solid solutions that can help get food to those who need it. The fact that "Farm to Families" also supports local farmers makes this a win-win for our community.

Please pass and fund the "Farm to Families" bill for 2025 and any other support for the Hawai'i Foodbank.

Sincerely,

Anne Chamness

Anne Chamness
Patient Community Navigator
The Queen's Care Coalition



in Manoa Valley

SAINT PIUS X CHURCH

2821 Lowrey Avenue

Honolulu, Hawaii

Phone (808) 988-3308

96822-1644

December 1, 2024

Aloha,

My name is Willa Papandrew and I am the volunteer coordinator of the Social Justice and Outreach Ministry of St. Pius X Catholic Church in Manoa on the Island of Oahu. I have worked in this ministry for over 20 years while working with the Hawaii Foodbank in feeding the poor of our island.

We have a Food Pantry at our church that has been serving families, who count on us, to provide both perishable and non-perishable food to feed their children. We fully support the Farm to Families legislation that would provide the nutrition these families need in their daily lives.

By working with local farmers and fresh food distributors here in Hawaii, we can best serve the poor in our communities. We need to work with them to build a more sustainable food system in Hawaii and not depend on mainland producers.

Fresh papayas, eggplant, sweet potatoes, breadfruit, corn, avocados, and bananas are some of our foods grown by our local farmers that our people love. They are a source of nutrition that our families need on their tables that will promote wellness in their household and throughout their community.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of the Farm to Families legislation that would support local farmers in supplying the nutrition and well being so needed for our poor families.

Sincerely,

Willa Papandrew
Social Justice and Outreach Ministry
St. Pius X Catholic Church
Honolulu, Hawaii

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Thao Nguyen and I am the coordinator for the Olakino Produce Program at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church. We truly believe that ‘access to healthy food is a basic human right no matter your age’. We are thankful to be in partnership with the Hawaii Food Bank to be able to serve our community.

We fully support the ‘Farm to Families’ bill as most of the people we serve in our community are kupuna. We have been consistently serving more than 400 households each month and over 90% of those we served are retired and in need of fresh fruits, vegetables, and eggs. This bill will help secure our community with fresh locally grown produces.

Being on an island, we should never depend on imported goods or food supplies from the mainland or other countries. It is neither efficient nor affordable, especially when it comes to fresh produces. The health benefits of those produce would decrease and costs will continue to increase. It is proven that fruits and vegetables begin to lose their nutrients within 24 hours after it is picked. We need to create sustainable food systems for Hawai’i.

We, as a community, needs to invest and support our local farmers. Investing in our local farmers will only strengthen our resources and secure Hawaii’s future. Land in Hawaii is a premium but the health of all those who lives in Hawaii is priceless. We need to support and invest in our ‘aina, our ‘ohana, our kupuna, and our keiki because no one else will!

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai’i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

Thao Nguyen



Aloha!

My name is Chelsea Tamanaha, and I am the sales and marketing director of Sugarland Growers.

I am writing to fully support the "Farm to Families" bill, an essential piece of legislation designed to create a stable market for local food producers. This initiative will enhance our community food systems and guarantee that fresh, locally sourced produce is made available to all residents of the 'āina.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy in several ways.

Firstly, the bill directly supports Hawai'i's agricultural sector by ensuring a stable and equitable market for local produce, enabling farmers to confidently plan for future growth while providing nourishment to their communities.

Secondly, as an island, we must all unite for the future generations. The Foodbank continues to support all local communities, and we must all continue to support and rally together for them.

As the Foodbank continues to prioritize nourishing the bodies of our island residents, they lay the foundation for thriving communities, cultivating connections, sustainability and resilience.

Mahalo,

Chelsea Tamanaha

Honolulu, Hawai'i

Sales and Marketing Director

Aloha!

As a dedicated school librarian at Wahiawa Elementary School, I have had the privilege of serving Hawai'i's keiki for over 30 years in the Hawaii Department of Education.

By supporting the ***Farm to Families*** bill, we can strengthen our local food system, boost our economy, and improve the health of our local community. This legislation will help to connect our farmers with families in need, creating a more sustainable and equitable future for Hawai'i. Please support the ***Farm to Families*** bill.

The benefits of this partnership are far-reaching and impactful:

- **Nourish Our Community:** By increasing access to fresh, locally grown produce, we can improve the health and well-being of our community members, especially those facing food insecurity.
- **Build a Stronger Food System:** Investing in local agriculture strengthens our food supply chain, reduces our reliance on imported goods, and creates a more sustainable and resilient food system for Hawai'i.
- **Support Local Farmers and Economy:** This bill provides a stable market for our local farmers, empowering them to continue producing high-quality, nutritious food and contributing to our state's economy.

Studies have shown that access to healthy foods can significantly improve students' academic performance, behavior, and overall well-being. As an educator, I've seen excited kids when provided with fresh, healthy snacks instead of their usual sugary, processed foods, which negatively impact their focus and energy. Every child deserves access to nutritious food. By supporting the ***Farm to Families*** bill, you can ensure that all our keiki have the opportunity to thrive and be healthy!

Thank you for your support of our ***Farm to Families*** bill.

Stephanie Kuniyoshi
School Librarian
Wahiawa Elementary School
1402 Glen Ave.
Wahiawa, HI 96786

Dear Honorable Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Hawai'i Foodbank's Farm to Families program. This vital initiative has made a significant impact on our community, providing healthy, fresh, locally-sourced food to families and children in need while simultaneously supporting our local farmers.

Through the Farm to Families program, we have invested over \$11 million in local food purchases and distributed more than 9 million pounds of nutritious produce. Last year alone, 88% of the \$1.3 million spent on produce directly supported our local agricultural sector.

We believe that this program is essential to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i for all of our 'ohana. By providing consistent access to fresh, nutritious food, we can improve the health and well-being of our community members, especially our keiki.

We urge you to support our efforts to secure long-term state funding for the Farm to Families program during the 2025 state legislative session. By investing in this program, we can continue to:

- **Support local farmers and agriculture:** Strengthen our local food economy and reduce our reliance on imported food.
- **Combat food insecurity:** Provide nutritious food to families and children in need.
- **Improve public health:** Promote healthy eating habits and reduce diet-related diseases.

We thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working with you to ensure a brighter future for Hawai'i.

Sincerely,
Jade Santos
Wahiawa Elementary School
Student Services Coordinator
808-307-6020

"Do everything you can, with all that you have, wherever you are!" ~ Theodore Roosevelt

To whom it may concern,

Aloha!

My name is Fuli Soa and I am the Family Resource Center Director at Waimānalo Elementary & Intermediate school on the island of Oahu in the state of Hawai'i. I am writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. Our school is a Title 1 school and all of our students qualify for free school meals. Many of our families are disadvantaged and fall in the lower socio income range. Through our Family Resource Center we distribute food weekly to our school families and wider community. It is essential that the food that we are serving our students and the food that we are distributing to our families every week is fresh and nutritional. The passing of the "Farms to Families" bill is a crucial step forward for our state to support the health and well being of our students and their families. At the same time we will continue to support our local farmers and food producers through strengthening our partnerships with them.

This can only be a win/win situation for our local farms, all the community food partners and especially our families in our communities. There will be less dependence on imported goods and there will be a more sustainable food system for our state as a whole. Our local farmers will be supported too and will be able to be part of a steady and fair market for their produce. At the same time they will be feeding the most needy in our community.

The more fresh and organic the produce, the better health-wise for our whole community. Our weekly food distribution provides our school families and wider community with an essential resource. Many of the families that we serve are houseless and struggle immensely with providing basic needs for themselves.

I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

Fuli Soa
Waimānalo Elementary & Intermediate
FRC Director

Subject: Support for the "Farm to Families" Bill

To Whom It May Concern,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Tiffani Pacapac, and I am a special education teacher at Waipahu Elementary School. I am reaching out with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, which has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape.

This legislation will empower the Hawai'i Food Bank and other distributing organizations to collaborate more effectively with local farmers and food producers. By supporting this bill, we can ensure that our community members facing food insecurity receive fresh, locally grown produce. It will also strengthen our food supply chain, reduce our dependence on imported goods, and create a more resilient and sustainable food system in Hawaii. Additionally, it provides local farmers with a steady and fair market, allowing them to plan for future growth while nourishing our immediate community.

In December 2019, my students engaged in a Project Based Learning (PBL) initiative focused on the question, "How can we impact hunger in Waipahu?" Since partnering with the Hawai'i Food Bank 5 years ago, we have made significant strides in providing food to families experiencing food insecurity. In November 2024, we began distributing fresh fruits, and in just two distributions, we provided over 1,000 lbs of fresh produce. This initiative has led to increased participation in our weekly food pantry, providing essential nutrients our students need to thrive, and it alleviates the burden on teachers who previously used their own funds to supply food for students in need.

Your support of the "Farm to Families" bill is crucial in promoting long-term health and wellness for our community. Thank you for considering this important issue.

Best regards,
Tiffani Pacapac

WONG HON HIN Inc.

Address: 85-1330 Waianae Valley Road #C Waianae, HI 96792

Mailing Address: P.O. BOX 1978 Waianae Hawaii 96792

Phone: 808-386-6898

Fax: 808-696-9099

Email: huangsbasil@gmail.com

Aloha, my name is Hong Fang Gan, my husband and I are co-owners of Wong Hon Hin Inc *dba* *Huang's Green Leaf Products*. We have been local farmers in the State of Hawaii for the last 25 years and manage over 60 acres of land in West Oahu.

I am writing **in support of the** "Farm to Families Bill" a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local food producers, strengthening our community food systems and ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:


1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Our partnership with the Hawaii Food Bank and the Farm to Families program was critical to our survival during the Covid pandemic. With tourism coming to a halt during the pandemic we were left with a severe surplus of products that could not sell in the marketplace due to severely low demand. We got connected to the Hawaii Food Bank and they were able to keep us farming our fields and producing local agriculture with funding from the Farm to Families program. We are grateful for this program because we did not need to furlough any of our forty employees and continued our operation.

Since then, this partnership has grown and the support we have gotten from the Hawaii Foodbank has helped us increase our production of local produce and increase the amount of products we can harvest for our local food supply chain.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,


Hong Fang Gan
Waianae, Hawaii
Vice President, Wong Hon Hin, Inc



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

RE: Support for “Farm to Family” legislation

Dear legislators,

Hawai‘i Appleseed is a local policy institute committed to advancing social and economic justice, ensuring the people of Hawai‘i have access to the resources they need to thrive. An equitable food system—one in which all residents have the opportunity to grow and eat healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant food—is core to our vision.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of food equity and resiliency, which is why we support instituting a “Farm to Family” program at the state level. This legislation would strengthen local food supply chains, from guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, to supporting the local agricultural economy, to reducing farm food waste.

Fresh, local produce is essential for improving community health, yet is often out of reach for many families struggling to afford life in Hawai‘i. This program would help make healthy, whole foods available to more people, thereby alleviating hunger and preventing long-term health issues like diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and depression.¹

“Farm to family” not only strengthens Hawai‘i’s food supply chain but also provides a backup, or “safety net” market for local farmers during times of economic crisis or natural disaster. When these events strike, the emergency food system becomes a lifeline not just for families seeking food, but also for farmers seeking markets when tourism plummets. Most recently, the Maui wildfires contributed to a spike in food insecurity—as many as 49% of Maui’s population.² It was the food banks and distribution partners who stepped in—institutions that historically have relied almost entirely on charitable contributions.

Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of this important legislation. We stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

Daniela Spoto
Director of Food Equity
Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

¹ Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), “Hunger & Health: The Impact of Poverty, Food Insecurity, and Poor Nutrition on Health and Well-Being,” FRAC, December 2017, p. 1-2.

² Hawai‘i Foodbank, “The State of Food Insecurity in Hawai‘i,” Hawai‘i Foodbank, May 2024, p. 6.



Aloha,

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 approximately 25% of the State's total land mass.

HCC supports the "Farm to Families" bill, which will help to create a consistent market for local food producers and benefit community health and local agricultural production while addressing the growing issue of food security in Hawaii.

Securing a consistent, reliable market for local produce and proteins will benefit both the consumer and the producer. We need to reduce our reliance on imports and focus on building up our agricultural producers. Our farmers and ranchers want to provide local products for our community, and the Farm to Families program will strengthen our food supply chain to be better able to service everyone in times of crisis, support local farmers and ranchers to give them the confidence to continue to increase and improve production, and increase the access to nutritional food products that feed growing minds and bodies. Long-term funding for this program will result in beneficial outcomes for everyone.

The Hawaii Foodbank is a trusted, competent organization to carry out this mission. Ensuring our community gets basic nutritional needs should be a root issue that we all need to address as a cohesive team. Our farmers and ranchers are ready to step up to produce the food that is needed, and the Hawaii Foodbank is well equipped to facilitate this.

Thank you for your commitment to fighting food insecurity and supporting Hawaii's farmers and ranchers. Please support this important legislation.

Aloha,

Nicole Galase
Hilo, Hawaii
Managing Director





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

Aloha:

Since 1948, the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB) has served as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural members who produce food, flowers, energy, and more, for Hawai'i's communities.

As the largest agricultural organization in Hawai'i representing nearly 1,800 farm family members statewide, it is my pleasure to support the "Farm to Families" bill, a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local farmers, strengthening our community food systems and increasing access to fresh, locally sourced food for communities in need while strengthening our local food system and enhancing food security.

The partnership between local farms and food banks benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

Building a Stronger Food Supply Chain for Hawai'i: Investing in local agriculture reduces our reliance on imports and fosters a robust, self-reliant food system. This approach enhances the sustainability and resilience of Hawai'i's food supply.

Empowering Local Farmers: The proposed legislation directly benefits Hawai'i's farmers by ensuring a reliable and equitable market for their produce. This stability enables farmers to confidently grow their operations, knowing their efforts will nourish their communities.

Improving Access to Nutritious Food: Locally grown, fresh produce provides vital nutrients to individuals and families who might otherwise face barriers to healthy eating. This initiative addresses hunger while supporting the overall health and well-being of Hawai'i's residents.

Since 2020, the Hawai'i Farm Bureau has partnered with Hawai'i food banks to source fresh, local foods for community feeding programs. Together, the Hawai'i Foodbank, Maui Food Bank, and The Food Basket work with nearly 500 agency partners to distribute safe and healthy food to food-insecure individuals and families in our communities. They provide an invaluable service to our community, and we are committed to continuing to work closely with them to supply fresh, local food products for their distribution programs.



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

We recognize the importance of ensuring that our local agricultural products reach those most in need, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration with our food banks in support of their shared mission to end hunger in Hawai'i. We are confident this program will positively impact our community by improving food access while supporting Hawai'i's local food systems. We are happy to work with the food banks on this vital work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Miyamoto". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brian Miyamoto
Executive Director, Hawai'i Farm Bureau



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

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Odysseus Yacalis
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Fawn Helekahi-Burns
Hana, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahalawai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Rufina Kaauwai
Molokai

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kauai

Aloha,

On behalf of the Hawaii Farmers Union (HFU), I am writing to express our strong support for Farm to Families legislation. As a statewide organization dedicated to supporting family farmers, ranchers, and fishers, HFU embraces legislation that cultivates resilient local food systems and strengthens the bonds between our farmers and the communities they feed.

The challenges highlighted in this bill—widespread food insecurity and the need for greater access to fresh, nutritious produce—are persistent and pressing. One in three households in Hawaii struggles to secure consistent access to food, and, alarmingly, nearly thirty percent of our keiki face hunger. These sobering statistics point to the urgent need for a solution that is both compassionate and sustainable.

This legislation directly addresses these concerns by investing in the Hawaii Farm to Families Program, which will fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, locally grown and produced foods. This support will not only provide greater food security for our most vulnerable populations but also promote the economic well-being of our local farmers and food producers. By creating reliable demand and fair compensation for their products and services, the program allows Hawaii's growers to focus on quality, diversify crops, and increase production, ensuring that healthy, culturally relevant foods—from kalo and breadfruit to choy sum and long beans—are readily available to families across the state.

Our farmers are prepared to rise to the occasion. They have long partnered with community organizations, food hubs, and food banks, demonstrating that small-scale, regenerative agriculture can be a linchpin in feeding Hawaii's ohana. The Hawaii Farm to Families Program will help scale these efforts to meet the reality of our current hunger crisis, ensuring that local, nutritious, and culturally familiar foods fill the tables of those who need it most.

In short, HFU believes this bill embodies a holistic, community-centered approach to combating food insecurity: it empowers farmers, strengthens local economies, uplifts cultural traditions, and ensures healthy meals for our keiki, kupuna, and neighbors in need. We urge you to pass this bill to help secure Hawaii's food future and nourish the health and well-being of all our residents.

Mahalo,

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF



2025 Network Members

Aloha Harvest
Aloha United Way
Chef Hui
City and County of Honolulu
County of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Alliance for
Progressive Action (HAPA)
Hawai'i Appleseed
Hawai'i Children's Action
Network
Hawai'i Dept. of Agriculture
Hawai'i Dept. of Health
Hawai'i Food Bank
Hawai'i Food Bank - Kaua'i
Branch
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Kōkua Kalihi Valley
Lanakila Pacific
Mālama Kaua'i
Maui Department of
Agriculture
Maui Food Bank
Parents and Children Together
Supersistence
The Food Basket
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i
Together
Wai'anae Coast
Comprehensive Health Center

hawaiihungeraction.org

RE: Support for “Farm to Family” legislation

Dear legislators,

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, would like to express strong support for the proposed “Farm to Family” program.

Our network is intimately familiar with the toll disasters can take on communities, and many of our members are at the frontlines of response efforts. Whether it is in response to wildfires, a pandemic, a government shutdown, a hurricane, flood, volcano eruption—or just the day-to-day emergency of needing to put food on the table in an economy when many families are one paycheck away from financial devastation—our emergency food partners are there to respond to the community's needs. And they often do this on very stretched and limited resources.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of resiliency, not just because of its role in a disaster, but also in its potential to strengthen local food supply chains and our island's agricultural economy. This program would be a powerful step toward achieving this outcome, by guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, supporting local farmers, and even reducing farm food waste.

Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of this important legislation.

With aloha,

Hawai'i Hunger Action Network membership



REDUCING HARM,
PROMOTING HEALTH,
CREATING WELLNESS,
AND FIGHTING STIGMA
IN HAWAII AND
THE PACIFIC

HAWAII HEALTH
& HARM REDUCTION
CENTER

677 Ala Moana Blvd.
Suite 226
Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 521-2437
www.hhhrc.org

Re: Testimony in Strong Support of Hawai'i Farm to Families Program

To Whom it May concern:

The Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) strongly supports the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program. This initiative is a vital step toward alleviating food insecurity across our islands while also supporting local agricultural producers.

Food insecurity remains one of Hawai'i's most pressing challenges. The economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic amplified this issue, and while the immediate crisis has passed, many families continue to struggle with access to fresh and healthy foods. This program would ensure a consistent supply of culturally relevant, locally grown food to food banks and communities in need, addressing the dual goals of improving food security and boosting the local economy.

HHHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We focus our efforts on communities disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to people living with HIV, hepatitis, and substance use, as well as LGBTQIA+, Native Hawaiian, and houseless populations.

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, HHHRC collaborated with the Hawai'i Food Bank to distribute over 500,000 pounds of food to thousands of families. These experiences underscored the urgent need for food banks to have access to fresh, healthy, and locally sourced foods beyond what is provided through donations. This program will empower food banks to meet these needs sustainably while supporting local farmers and food producers.

Hawai'i Farm to Families Program represents an opportunity to create a win-win scenario for Hawai'i: reducing food insecurity, strengthening our local agricultural economy, and ensuring the well-being of our most vulnerable communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this important measure.

Andrew Ogata
Director of Marketing and Development
Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

Aloha,

I'm Nate Hix, the Policy and Advocacy Director with the Hawai'i Public Health Institute. I am asking for your support for the "Farm to Families" initiative, which would increase access to local produce for families in need while also supporting Hawai'i's agricultural community.

In 2023, 30% of local households experienced food insecurity—a sobering reminder that far too many in our community worry about where their next meal will come from. Our food banks have been a lifeline, providing over 1.2 million monthly meals to more than 120,000 families. However, these meals often lack the fresh produce necessary for balanced nutrition.

Improving Community Health

Access to fresh produce helps prevent chronic diseases, reduce stress, and promote overall well-being. By purchasing local fruits and vegetables, food banks can offer more nutritious options to families struggling to afford or transport fresh foods.

Economic Support for Local Families

Consistent access to fresh, affordable produce alleviates financial pressure on households. With nutritious foods readily available through food banks, families can redirect limited resources toward other essentials like housing, healthcare, and education. This economic relief contributes to improved overall stability and a more equitable distribution of resources in our community.

Building a Resilient Economy

By increasing demand for local produce, food banks strengthen our agricultural economy and reduce reliance on imports. Reliable food bank purchases provide a stable income source for local farmers, keeping funds circulating within the state. This collaboration among farmers, food banks, and communities fosters self-sufficiency and creates a more sustainable food system for everyone.

Investing in the "Farm to Families" program tackles food insecurity and builds stronger, healthier, and more equitable communities. By addressing immediate needs and fostering long-term solutions, we can make meaningful progress in the fight against poverty and hunger.

Mahalo for your continued commitment to supporting local families. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Mahalo,

Nate Hix

Director of Policy and Advocacy
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
808.469.8740
nate@hiphi.org



Aloha,

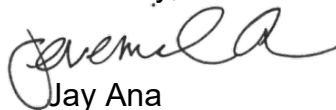
My name is Jay Ana, and I am writing in strong support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

This critical partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits local families in our communities, and our economy, by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,



Jay Ana



Aloha kākou,

My name is Keola Sifuaifu and I'm the vice president of Enterprise Operations Services at Hawaiian Electric. I'm writing today on behalf of Hawaiian Electric to urge you to support the Farm to Families bill, legislation that can help make a difference for the many local families that don't have access to fresh, healthy food.

Hawaiian Electric has been a long-time champion of the important mission carried out by local food distributing organizations, whether it's providing support through charitable donations, organizing food drives at our base yards and offices, or rallying employees to volunteer time in the food warehouses.

As someone with deep roots in Hawai'i, it concerns me that more than 40% of native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are food insecure. We live on an island with rich soil and our local farmers are experts at cultivating the land. Our keiki and kupuna should never go hungry. No one should need to choose between buying food or paying rent. The Farm to Families bill will help ensure that local food producers can strengthen their partnerships with distributors so that fresh fruit and vegetables can reach those who need it the most.

Making healthy food available is especially critical for our native Hawaiian population, which still struggles with proper nutrition. Fresh, local produce can help improve the long-term health of our kama'āina.

The Farm to Families bill will also strengthen the food supply chain in Hawai'i, and make us less dependent on bringing products into the state from the mainland. Anyone who has been to the grocery store in the past year knows how much food prices have increased, especially imported goods. Investing in local agriculture will allow us to create a more sustainable and resilient food system here, reducing our dependence on imports and insulating us from unstable shipping costs.

Mahalo for your consideration of this important legislation, as well as for your commitment to our shared vision of a healthy and sustainable Hawai'i, in which our children and grandchildren can thrive for generations to come.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Keola Sifuaifu', with a stylized, flowing script.

Keola Sifuaifu

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 3:00:32 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Testifying for Ohana Unity Party & Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: H.B. No. 428 – A Sacred Call to Feed Our ‘Ohana, from Farm to Family

Aloha Kākou, Esteemed Lawmakers of the Thirty-Third Legislature,

On behalf of the Ohana Unity Party and the Kingdom of the Hawaiian Islands, I write with fervent support for House Bill No. 428, establishing the Hawaii Farm to Families Program. This bill is a beacon of hope—a sacred pledge to nourish our people, restore dignity, and honor the ‘āina that sustains us. With one in three households food insecure (H.B. 428, Section 1) and 40% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander families bearing this burden, we cannot stand idle. H.B. No. 428 channels mālama ‘āina into action, funding food banks to deliver fresh, Hawaii-grown kalo, ‘ulu, and more to our keiki and kūpuna. We urge you to pass this bill, effective July 1, 2025—not the placeholder 2050—uniting farms and families for a thriving lāhui.

A Crisis of the Heart and Home

Our islands weep as 33% of households—over 150,000 families (Census, 2023, 455K households)—struggle for food. Nearly 30% of our keiki—60,000+ children (DOE, 2024, 200K students)—face hunger’s shadow, risking depression and stunted futures (H.B. 428, Section 1). Native Hawaiians, our kānaka maoli, suffer most—40% of our 120,000 households (OHA, 2023) lack consistent meals, a wound from decades of inequity. In 2023, food banks served 240,000 monthly with 27 million meals (Hawaii Foodbank, 2024), yet the pandemic’s safety nets have frayed. H.B. No. 428 answers this call, linking 575 local farms (Section 1) to our ohana, feeding bodies and spirits alike.

From ‘Āina to Table – A Lifeline for All

- Feeding the Hungry: Funding food banks (Section 141-B) to buy, store, and transport Hawaii-grown produce—Okinawan sweet potato, bok choy, eggs—means 5-10 million pounds of fresh food yearly (est. from \$11M, 5-yr avg.) reaches 50,000+ families at no cost (scaled from 240K served).

- Healing the Keiki: With 60,000 food-insecure kids, local milk and kalo could cut cognitive risks by 20% (Pediatrics, 2022), nurturing 15,000+ futures (est.).
- Economic Aloha: Every \$1 spent on local food yields \$1.70 in our economy (UH CTAHR, 2023). The Foodbank's \$11M over five years sparked \$19M (Section 1)—\$10M yearly could pump \$17M, sustaining 1,000+ farm jobs (HDOA, 2023, 1 job/\$10K).
- Self-Reliance: Hawaii imports 85% of its food (DBEDT, 2023)—\$6B annually. This bill grows our 120,630 ag acres (HDOA, 2020) by 10% (est.), cutting imports by \$50M-\$100M (projected).

The Kingdom's Vision

From the Ohana Unity Party and Kingdom of the Hawaiian Islands, this is kāko'o 'ohana—supporting family through the land. Picture a Waianae kupuna savoring 'ulu from a Kapolei farm, or a Hilo keiki thriving on Puna eggs—free, fresh, ours. The bill's \$10M-\$20M appropriation (est. for 5M lbs, \$2/lb)—split 2025-2027 (Section 4)—partners 500+ food banks and farms (Section 1), echoing our ancestors' wisdom: care for the 'āina, and it cares for us. Reports in 2026-2027 (Section 3) ensure accountability—every pound of kalo tracked, every family fed.

Unity in Action

H.B. No. 428 is pono—righteous and just. Yet, its July 1, 2050, start (Section 5) delays relief—our keiki need meals now. We humbly propose:

1. Fund It Boldly: \$20M total—\$10M for 2025-2026, \$10M for 2026-2027—mirroring the Foodbank's \$11M success (Section 1), feeding 50,000+ yearly.
2. Start Now: Shift to July 1, 2025—25,000 tons of CO2 from imports (UH CTAHR, 2023) won't wait.
3. Pass It Swiftly: Enact this session, seeding resilience by 2026.

This is our kuleana—our duty to unite farms and families, Native Hawaiian and newcomer alike, in a food system rooted in aloha. Mahalo nui loa for hearing our voice—let H.B. No. 428 be our hoku (star), guiding us to abundance for all!

Me ka Ha'aha'a a me ke Aloha,

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM

Ohana Unity Party, Chairman

www.Ohanaunityparty.com

Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 4:25:03 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please support HB428 HD1 SD1. Mahalo.



HAWAII CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

HB428 HD1 SD1 – In Support
Relating to Farm to Families

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Date: Friday, March 28, 2025
Time: 10:02 AM
Place: Conference Room 211

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

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association (HCIA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony **in support of HB428 HD1 SD1**, which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State and requires reports to the Legislature prior to the Regular Sessions of 2026 and 2027.

This bill has the dual benefit of addressing food insecurity and supporting the local agricultural industry. The importance of increasing the availability and access to fresh and nutritious food is clear, especially for the young children who represent our state's most vulnerable populations. To do so, while also creating direct opportunities for local farmers to support their operations during economically challenging times, is a win-win proposition.

With its wide-reaching benefits, we urge you to please pass HB428 HD1 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support.

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association is a Hawaii-based non-profit organization that promotes modern agriculture to help farmers and communities succeed. Through education, collaboration, and advocacy, we work to ensure a safe and sustainable food supply, support responsible farming practices, and build a healthy economy.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 5:22:56 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Dorsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to support HB428 HD1 SD1, which will increase the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food by allowing local farmers access to markets. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Thank you

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 5:40:45 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorna Holmes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in strong support of HB428 HD1 SD1. The level of food insecurity in Hawaii is staggering. One in three households experience food insecurity. Nearly half of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term. Please pass this important measure.

Mahalo for your attention,

Dr. Lorna Holmes

Honolulu 96817

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 9:22:58 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Vice chair,

My name is Jennifer Lum and I am teacher at Pearl City High School,

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

As a teacher, I see the effects of lack of food. Students are better able to do well in school when their most basic needs are met. Having nutritious, locally produced food not only benefits families but also helps support local farms. We need to make our islands more self sufficient and providing food to the families in Hawai'i is a great start.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Mahalo,

Jennifer Lum, 'Ewa Beach

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 5:57:27 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Bodien	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support. We need more food.

Mahalo,

Richard

Hawi

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 10:09:02 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Galloway	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please help us feed ourselves better!

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 7:40:18 AM

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

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

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please support HB428 HD1 SD1.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 1:17:14 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Senator Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Senator Moriwaki and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Please support HB 428 HD 1 SD 1 which, to my understanding, would help food shortages and help get locally grown and produced food to food insecure people.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 9:13:20 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Faccenda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure which will help both local farmers and families.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 12:15:13 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eliel Starbright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. Eliel,Kapaa

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 8:57:56 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support Hawai'i farmers, support Hawai'i ohanas

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 10:31:41 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators:

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please support HB428 HD1 SD1.

Mahalo,
Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 12:34:55 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marc-Anthony Gamboa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please support HB428 HD1 SD1 to build a stronger structure for local food production.

RE: Support for Bill HB428, Farm to Families

To the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

Dear Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair; Senator Sharon Morikawa, Vice-Chair:

My name is Mark Yen, and I am the Social Ministry/Food Distribution Coordinator of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, Wahiawa.

I am submitting my support of the “Farm to Families” Bill. Seeing firsthand at the number of those in need coming to our food distribution, this bill will allow most food distributing organizations to partner with local farmers and food producers. This will ensure that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

We need to be prudent in continuing to improve food supply to those in need. Investing in local agriculture is one important avenue in helping. This helps the local farmer by being able to provide for those in need. Fresh produce is always a preferred source of nutrition and providing a healthy food supply.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to support this bill.

Mark Yen

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 9:04:15 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please support HB428 HD1 SD1.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 5:23:56 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emelia Briscoe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please support HB428 HD1 SD1.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 11:14:54 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 11:01:01 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bianca WEst	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support farm to families for Hawaii's future! We need to support farmers and families who have little access to fresh produce.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 10:40:03 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Priscilla Stuckey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Committee Members,

Please support HB428 to establish the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program so food-insecure households can be connected with locally grown and produced food.

One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. **This is unconscionable.** Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers.

One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1.

Mahalo,

Priscilla Stuckey, Kihei

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 2:39:17 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Marrack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please support HB428 HD1 SD1.

Mahalo for your time,

Julie Marrack, Kamuela

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 3:36:07 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debbie Millikan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Friday, March 28th at 10:02am in Room 211

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair and WAM Committee Members,

I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of HB428 Relating to Farm to Families. This bill can help to strengthen local food production AND ensure that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- Strengthening Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.**
- Supporting Local Farmers: The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.**
- Enhancing Nutritional Access: Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.**

Thank you for your leadership and the opportunity to submit testimony on this important legislation.

Mahalo,

Debbie Millikan

Honolulu, HI

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 4:46:35 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcia Kemble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Committee Chair and Committee Members,

Please support HB 428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 7:06:29 PM

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

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

Comments:

Aloha, I strongly support HB428 HD1 SD1. I believe doing what we can to adequately and nutritionally feed all people here in Hawaii, regardless of financial status and to support our local farmers, ranchers and other food suppliers can only be a winning deal for everyone. I believe the provisions in this bill is a means to this end. Mahalo.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 6:50:56 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Pokipala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Food insecurity in Hawai'i is a real issue. The current system of importing 80 percent of our food is scary. The world continues to become more unstable and our need to have food sovereignty is now. Please look at our children who are not being fed in school cafeteria's, in low-income households, and soon, all our homes with the high cost of food and let's find a better system we can count on. A new system that will provide us some controls, because we have very little right now. Invest in our farms in a way that will help all the residents of Hawai'i.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 8:53:41 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noel Shaw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

This is such an important opportunity for Hawai'i to invest in our local agricultural sector and do so in a way that supports creating healthy and nutrient dense foods to those with the most need. I've seen the power that having poi alone as a product eligible for use of WIC and SNAP benefits sms how having it as part summer feeding programs or food pantries at schools was so welcomed!

Please past this bill and support our farm to family initiatives. We'll be a better place for it and it is what aloha demands.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 10:40:46 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Stuppelbeen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 9:44:08 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Linde	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 28, 2025

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee on Ways & Means,

I am a home visitor working with low-income families to support them as their keiki's first teacher and a master's student in Early Childhood Education. I am compelled to write in support of this bill because it will have a profound impact on these families and the farms in our community.

I strongly support HB 428, Relating To Farm To Families, which establishes the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State. Hawai‘i is facing a food crisis with one in three households struggling to secure consistent access to food. This hardship disproportionately affects our keiki, leading to increased risks of cognitive delays, behavioral challenges, and long-term health disparities. Through my work with families, I have observed the effects of high-quality nutrition and its positive impact on keiki brain development, attachment, and academic and physical growth.

I have gone to the grocery store with families and helped them calculate how far they can stretch their SNAP and WIC benefits. For me, it always hits the hardest when families are deciding whether they can afford to purchase local foods like coconuts or breadfruit that are traditionally important parts of their diet and culture and could so easily be produced in abundance in our islands, yet remain unaffordable for them. It feels especially problematic when we live in Kona and can't drive more than a few miles without passing local farms! When I visit my food bank, I notice that local produce rarely ends up there by accident; it is only through specific initiatives like this one that we see such influxes of fresh, local produce. When I can connect families with these kinds of ingredients, I love to see their excitement and the joy they take in providing their keiki with highly nutritious and culturally supportive meals.

HB 428 provides a sustainable, community-driven solution by connecting food banks with our local farmers to supply fresh, locally grown produce to families in need. This program extends other successful local projects that not only ensure that vulnerable populations receive nutritious food but also foster economic resilience by investing in our local agriculture sector. This bill aligns with our values of mālama ‘āina and kuleana and reinforces the deep connection between food security and community well-being.

Access to fresh, nutritious food is critical for healthy keiki and ‘ohana, and this bill would help ensure that families have consistent access to local, healthy options. By supporting this program, we uplift both our farmers and our most vulnerable residents, creating a healthy, strong, resilient Hawai‘i. I urge the committee to pass HB 428.

Mahalo for this opportunity to share my position,

Carol Linde

Gallegos, D., Eivers, A., Sondergeld, P., & Pattinson, C. (2021). Food Insecurity and Child Development: A State-of-the-Art Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(17), 8990. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18178990>

Hawai‘i Foodbank. (2024). The State of food insecurity in Hawaii 2023. https://hawaiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/HawaiiFoodbank_TheStateOfFoodInsecurityInHawaii_2023.pdf

U.S. Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2025, February 12). Consumer Price Index, Honolulu area — January 2025 [Press release]. https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/consumerpriceindex_honolulu.htm

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 5:07:50 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy Shaver	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The statistics are stark: 1 in 3 households in Hawai‘i experience food insecurity, and nearly half of ALICE households—those who are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed—lack consistent access to food.

HB428 HD1 SD1 offers a powerful solution. By increasing food banks’ ability to purchase locally grown food, we can address two major challenges at once: hunger in our communities and lack of market access for small farmers.

This is a win-win for Hawai‘i. It nourishes our communities with fresh, culturally appropriate, and nutritious foods, while strengthening the local food economy and supporting sustainable agriculture.

As federal support for both families and food producers continues to shrink, it’s more important than ever that our state step in. The Farm to Families program would fund local food purchases for food banks—boosting emergency food access *and* giving local farmers a reliable market during times of crisis.

Food banks are often the first line of defense during disasters, yet they rely almost entirely on private donations. It’s time our policies reflect how essential they truly are.

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1 to build a more resilient, just, and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 6:50:43 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Fallbeck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Senators:

Hawaii has an opportunity to increase its sustainability by supporting the food production by our farmers through the Farm to Family approach. With the disruption of the tariffs on the national level our food supplies to the State are apt to be cut short. We need to support our own production to keep our citizens healthy and able to care for our economy. Please support this bill that will give our people hope for the future.

Thank you!

Dr Patricia Fallbeck

1341 Kapiolani Blvd. #18-B

Honolulu, Hawaii, 96814

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 2:37:41 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pamela burrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1

The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo,

Pamela Burrell, Kalihiwai, Kaua'i 96754

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 11:07:47 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ke'alohi Naipo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Ke'alohi Naipo, and I am writing in support of HB428 HD1 SD1

We should all be concerned with the raising rates of food insecurity and imported food to this state.

With one in three households experiencing food insecurity, how can we exist comfortably knowing that our neighbors, especially the most vulnerable like our kupuna and keiki might be struggling with hunger? Access to food is a basic human right.

Also with 85-90% of food imported to Hawai'i, what should happen in the event of a natural disaster? It would be catastrophic. Our state needs to start prioritizing funding to local farmers and producers.

With HB428 HD1 SD1, we could increase the ability for food banks to purchase locally grown foods. This would help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious foods. As a Registered Dietitian this is equity in action! A win-win for communities and farmers!

We live in a climate that could produce sufficient food for our state. With the recent cuts in federal support, it's important that our state step up and ensure that food insecurity rates do not escalate further. When our most vulnerable populations are well, everyone thrives.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 10:28:53 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KEALA FUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

Aloha my name is Keala Fung from Honolulu and I strongly support support HB428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please support HB428 HD1 SD1.

Mahalo for your time,

Keala Fung

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 11:08:24 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
emily gambino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please support HB428 HD1 SD1.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 7:37:33 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Great idea for food security and increase jobs. Mahalo!

March 27, 2025

To: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Chelsea Takahashi

Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of HB 428, HD1, SD1 Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Moriwaki,


I am writing in strong support of **HB 428, HD1, SD1**. I have worked for The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's food bank, for the last 9 years and can attest to the deep commitment of the organization to ending hunger through a holistic approach that strengthens our local food system.

When I returned home in 2016 after completing my education on the mainland, I found few job opportunities within my career interest of food system development. The Food Basket was one of the few organizations leading this critical work and had available job openings. My time at The Food Basket has since been filled with meaningful service to the Hawai'i Island community, including piloting and scaling the statewide *DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks* program in partnership with the Hawai'i Good Food Alliance, and most recently, establishing the *Mālama Da Farmer Grant* program in partnership with the County of Hawai'i.

State funding received through this legislation will further amplify the local food system work that The Food Basket has been leading for over a decade. Specifically, State funding will be used to purchase local food directly from Hawai'i Island food producers, including farmers, ranchers, and value-added producers. The Food Basket is also committed to purchasing these food products at market value to ensure our farmers can support economically viable businesses, grow the island's local food production, and create greater food access for our low-income community members who are most vulnerable to food insecurity.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my testimony. I urge you to support HB428, HD1, SD1 to invest in Hawai'i's food system and the communities it sustains.

Mahalo,


Chelsea Takahashi

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 8:56:31 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann V Saffery	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha All,

Support for HB428

Mahalo for all you do,

Ann V Saffery

Honolulu, HI

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 4:59:16 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Menchetti	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please fund Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State. Connects food insecure households with locally grown and produced food.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 4:34:12 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am a Hawaii resident, constituent, and through my professional work and volunteering see the immense food insecurities in our communities first hand. **I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the HB428 "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape.**

This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity. The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
- **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
- **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. Please pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Jordan

Honolulu, 96816

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 7:10:01 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danelle Guion	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please support HB428 HD1 SD1.

Mahalo!

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 7:38:20 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jody Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

My name is Jody Smith. I am a retiree with 18 years of experience with the sustainable agriculture program at UH Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. I regularly donate to and volunteer with the Hawai'i Food Bank. I help out with the Food 4 Keiki Program, the CSFP Kupuna Food Box Program, and the food distribution program operated by Kings Cathedral in Aina Haina.

As a HFB volunteer, I unpack boxes and boxes of beautiful fruits and produce grown by our local farmers. I help fill and hand out bags of vegetables. I enjoy watching our local clients growing excited by the variety and selection of popular vegetables (like bok choy, daikon, bitter melon) and local tropical fruits (papaya, pineapple) — the flavors of our islands. The partnership between the Hawaii Food Bank and the Hawaii Farm Bureau has allowed us to distribute this delicious and nourishing fresh produce.

Continuation and expansion of this program via the "Farm to Families" bill will bring multiple benefits to our state.

Please provide full support for the the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

As a former agricultural professional in Hawaii, I understand the importance of growing, purchasing and distributing locally grown foods.

Investing in local agriculture reduces the state's dependence on imported food (now estimated at 85% — extraordinarily high).

With a reliable market for their produce, Hawaii's farmers are better able to plan for and supply delicious and nutritious food.

Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options, fighting hunger and promoting long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Please support the "Farm to Families" bill.

Mahalo nui loa

Jody Smith, Honolulu 96825

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 9:52:52 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Antoinette M Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. I support this bill as a person that garden/farms and shares with neighbors and friends currently. We need to shift our food dependency, while also elevating the food's nutritious value.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 9:20:57 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jean Butel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Farm to Families bill, a critical piece of legislation that will provide significant benefits to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, public health, and overall food security. By strengthening the link between local farmers and families in need, this bill will create a more resilient and sustainable food system in our islands.

Hawai'i relies heavily on imported food, making our communities vulnerable to supply chain disruptions. The Farm to Families bill will directly address this issue by strengthening the local food supply chain, supporting Hawai'i's farmers, and ensuring that fresh, locally grown food reaches the tables of families who need it most. By investing in our local agricultural economy, we decrease our dependence on imports and build a more self-sufficient, food-secure Hawai'i.

In addition to economic and supply chain benefits, this bill will enhance access to nutritionally dense, culturally significant food. Many families in Hawai'i face barriers to accessing fresh, healthy produce, leading to adverse health outcomes. This bill ensures that our keiki, kupuna, and all community members can enjoy the nutritional benefits of locally grown kalo, 'uala, ulu, and other staple crops deeply rooted in Hawaiian culture and tradition. Providing access to these foods not only improves public health but also reinforces cultural heritage and food sovereignty.

Furthermore, the Farm to Families bill will directly benefit local farmers by creating a stable and reliable market for their products. Hawai'i's agricultural sector faces numerous challenges, including high operational costs and market access limitations. This bill ensures that more of the food grown in Hawai'i stays in Hawai'i, supporting small farmers, increasing economic opportunities, and preserving agricultural lands for future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support the Farm to Families bill. Investing in our local food systems today will yield long-term benefits for Hawai'i's economy, health, and resilience. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Jean Butel

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 4:57:50 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Stayton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ways and Means Committee Chair and Members,

Please support this important bill: HB428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please support HB428 HD1 SD1.

Thank you for your consideration,

Susan, Lawai, Kauai

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 4:27:45 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hayley Peter-Contesse	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

We must increase the access to nutritious food and the connections between local farmers and the community, especially in the severely disadvantaged and underinvested westside community I am a part of.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please support HB428 HD1 SD1.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2025 4:24:44 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kimdonghyeon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please support HB428 HD1 SD1.

LATE

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 10:20:39 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlotte Frank	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Vice Chair,

My name is Charlotte Frank and I am a writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distribution organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. Supporting Local Farmers: The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. Enhancing Nutritional Access: Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Charlotte Frank

LATE

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

SUPPORT for HB428 HD1 SD1: FARM TO FAMILIES

Providing access to local healthy food and greater food system equity is important to Hawaii. With the high cost of energy and transportation small farmer support enables bring produce to market, that benefits all.

Hawaii must do more to support the growing of healthy foods, and people on our agricultural lands.

Please support this measure.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Keith Neal

March 27, 2025

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice
Chair
Committee on Ways and Means



Re: HB 428 Relating to Farm to Families

Dear Senator Dela Cruz and Senator
Moriwaki:

My name is Craig Shikuma, and I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Foodbank.

I am writing in support of the Farm to Families bill, HB 428. The bill will allow food-distributing organizations, including the Hawaii Foodbank, to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

This bill is a “win-win.” Local farmers and food producers would benefit from a steady and fair market for local produce. I believe a strong and vibrant local agricultural industry is critical for Hawai`i.

Dearest to my heart is the benefit to our neighbors who are food insecure. Those in need should not just have access to food, they should have access to nourishing, healthy food. There is no disputing that a healthy diet promotes better health and performance at work and in the classroom. In my opinion, one of the government’s most important roles is supporting the organizations and businesses that feed the hungry. This bill does just that.

Thank you for supporting a food-secure, healthy, and thriving Hawai`i. I am very grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

/s/ *Craig K. Shikuma*

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 11:01:43 AM

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

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Yaris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1 SD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawaii are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food.

As federal cuts to vital lifeline services and support for food producers threaten to even worsen local food insecurity, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please support HB428 HD1 SD1.

LATE

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 11:08:52 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Moriwaki,

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Molly Mamaril

(Kaimukī, O'ahu resident)

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 11:42:20 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support. Thank you.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 11:50:34 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Keawe'aimoku Kaholokula	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: Support for HB428 Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha mai e Chair Sen. Donovan M. Dela Cruz a me Vice Chair Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki

My name is Keawe'aimoku Kaholokula, PhD. Although I submit this letter as a private citizen, I am a Professor and Chair of Native Hawaiian Health at the John A. Burns School of Medicine and a Hawai'i-licensed clinical psychologist.

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food-distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
- Supporting Local Farmers: The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
- Enhancing Nutritional Access: Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

As a health equity scientist and behavioral health provider, I am keenly aware of the adverse impact of hunger and poor nutrition on the risk for chronic physical and mental health conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, and depression, and on academic performance among our youth, as well as the economic and healthcare burden these nutrition-related conditions and consequences pose.

Mahalo nui you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 12:31:12 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Phillip Humphrey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee.

I strongly support HB 428 and urge you all to do the same. As someone who works closely with low-income families, I see firsthand the impact of food insecurity on our community. This bill will provide crucial support to those who need it most. By passing HB 428, we take a step toward ensuring that no one in our community goes hungry.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 3:28:02 PM

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

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Toby Tamaye	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need to strengthen emergency food system by funding a **farm to families program**. Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please continue to support this very important measure.

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 3:34:53 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Leake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

One in three households in Hawai‘i faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. This bill highlights the House Majority's commitment to supporting Hawai‘i-grown food and providing nutritious options for local families, while empowering Hawai‘i's farmers. When we invest in local agriculture, we boost our economy, create sustainable opportunities, and mālama ‘āina—steward our land to preserve it for future generations. By nourishing our keiki and families, we strengthen and uplift our entire community.

LATE

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 6:24:46 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Bernstein	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the WAM Committee:

I'm writing in support of HB428 HD1 SD1. Please pass this bill out of your committee.

Mahalo,

Paul Bernstein

Testimony of Katrina Bellaver
Before the House Committee of Agriculture
March 27, 2025
House Bill No. 428
Relating to Farm to Families

LATE

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 428, which establishes the Farm to Families Program to address the growing food shortages in Hawaii.

Food insecurity is a pressing issue affecting our communities, with one in three households struggling to access sufficient, nutritious food. This crisis disproportionately impacts our keiki, one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Nearly 30% of children in Hawaii are growing up in food-insecure households. The consequences of this go beyond hunger — inadequate nutrition can lead to cognitive impairments, behavioral issues, and emotional distress, including anxiety and depression.

While resources like food banks, pantries, churches, and community centers play an important role in providing immediate relief, they are not sufficient to meet the ongoing needs of our families. Furthermore, the food provided is often limited to processed, packaged goods, which, though helpful in the short term, do not offer the essential fruits and vegetables necessary for a balanced diet.

The Farm to Families program offers a solution by directly addressing these gaps. This program will not only alleviate food shortages, but also provide families with access to fresh, locally

grown produce, including Okinawan sweet potatoes, choy sum, bok choy, long beans, breadfruit, and kalo. By investing in local agriculture, we can reduce Hawaii's dependence on imported food, enhance the sustainability of our food systems, and strengthen ties between local farmers and the communities they serve.

This program represents a win-win: supporting local farmers, bolstering food security for families, and fostering a healthier, more resilient Hawaii. I urge you to support House Bill 428 and help us build a stronger, more food-secure future for all.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this issue.

Sincerely,

Katrina Bellaver

Honolulu, HI

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 6:03:24 PM

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

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Jakubowski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Please support HB428 HD1 SD1.

Mahalo for your time and consideration

Mark Jakubowski

808.371.4382

LATE

HB-428-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 4:00:38 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keilani Milling	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: Support for HB428, RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES.

Dear Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keilani and I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, an important and necessary piece of legislation that has the potential to transform the lives of our 'ohana and farmers.

The impact of this bill will be felt in the bellies of the people here in Hawai'i and will support and strengthen our local farmers. HB428 is a necessary step toward food equality and independence.

Access to food is a basic human right. Without it we cannot survive. Food instability has disastrous affects on individuals especially young developing bodies and minds. Who are we if we cannot feed (and cloth and house) ourselves? The shame and stigma that comes from scarcity of food for keiki at school and home hangs like an anchor round the necks of our youth. We must alleviate that burden.

The statics show that when money is tight food is one of the first thing that gets cut from daily household needs. When a child is hungry she/he cannot focus and has a difficult time at school and home. Adults with food insecurity endure extreme hunger, shame and mental fog which exacerbates underlying mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

Bridging the gap by working with local farmers strengthens the bond of the agricultural sector and 'ohana. This farm-to-family bill supports local farmers and increases sustainability. Local, fresh produce and products are needed now. An investment into our farmers is an investment in the future and our people because both land and the people are intertwined.

Thank you for introducing this important piece of legislation. This is a huge step in the right direction in dreadful time such as these. I am grateful for your consideration of my testimony.

Respectfully,

Keilani Milling

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Director

LATE

Before:
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

March 28, 2025
10:02 a.m.
Conference Room 211
Via Videoconference

Re: HB 428, HD1, SD1, Relating to Farm to Families

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 428, HD1, SD1, which appropriates general funds to establish the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i SUPPORTS HB 428, HD1, SD1.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i is one of the nation's largest not-for-profit health plans, serving 12.6 million members nationwide, and more than 271,000 members in Hawai'i. In Hawai'i, more than 4,200 dedicated employees and more than 650 Hawai'i Permanente Medical Group physicians and advance practice providers work in our integrated health system to provide our members coordinated care and coverage. Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i has more than 20+ medical facilities, including our award-winning Moanalua Medical Center. We continue to provide high-quality coordinated care for our members and deliver on our commitment to improve the health of our members and the people living in the communities we serve.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i supports policies that ensure all Hawaii residents have access to affordable, high-quality health care. Further, Kaiser Permanente supports "whole-person care," including the provision of access to services and resources that address beneficiaries' physical health, mental health and social needs. Food security means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy lifestyle.

Nutrition-related chronic diseases disproportionately impact historically underserved populations and communities with high food insecurity. Kaiser Permanente's initiatives are focused on improving health equity in vulnerable communities and populations, including kupuna.

Food is Medicine (FIM) is an emerging movement focused on how we can increase access to fresh, healthy foods that heal, including access to social service programs providing nutrition assistance:

- Support for Food Hubs and Food Banks: Kaiser Permanente grants helped Local Food Banks purchase 125,599 pounds of fresh produce from local farms, to benefit nearly 1,600 low-income seniors with healthy, medically tailored meals and provided fresh produce for the equivalent of nearly 105,000 meals.
- Produce Rx and Medically Tailored Meals: Partnered with organizations to provide 11,250 medically tailored meals and produce prescriptions to pregnant mothers and kupuna in underserved areas.
- Food is Medicine: Driven by the link between poor nutrition, food insecurity, and chronic health conditions, Food is Medicine (FIM) is a spectrum of programs, services, and other interventions that recognize and respond to the critical link between nutrition and health, particularly within healthcare systems.

We support HB 428, HD1, SD1, because it will provide necessary funding to enable Hawai'i's food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food to continue to meet the food security needs of the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



LATE

March 27, 2025

RE: Support for [SB1250](#) and [HB428](#); Relating to Hawai'i Farm to Families Program

Dear Senator Dela Cruz,

My name is Patti Chang and I am the CEO of Feed the Hunger Fund; a loan fund focused on food and agriculture.

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food-distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- 1. *Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:*** *By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.*
- 2. *Supporting Local Farmers:*** *The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.*
- 3. *Enhancing Nutritional Access:*** *Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.*

We regularly see the impact these programs have on the ground for the farmers, ranchers, and their food processors, manufacturers, and distributors that we work with.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Respectfully,

Patti Chang



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HB 428

Name: Sabrina Johnson

Email: sabrina.r.johnson.08@gmail.com

March 28, 2025

Aloha!

My name is Sabrina Johnson and I am a current junior at Kaiser High School. I am secretary of the Sustainable Society Club and president of the Leo Club.

I am writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. Growing up in the Kaiser Complex, our access to fresh foods has changed over the years. As I've gotten older, I've had more access to fresh produce with our lunches. As a result of this, I've noticed that I have been able to focus better after lunch, and overall, I've found that it is one of the best ways to keep me regularly eating produce when I don't always eat it at home. I recognize the importance of the "Farm to Families" bill because everyone, no matter their age, deserves adequate access to produce and foods that will help them thrive and not just survive. Children need to have access to fresh foods.

With this, giving support back to local farms is crucial. COVID-19 showed the extent to which our islands have become dependent on imported goods in every way of life. While it will likely never be possible for Hawaii to be fully self-sufficient, the food we eat should be the first thing we bring back to the islands.

Food security is important to all, and children especially should not have to worry alongside their parents about whether they will be able to eat quality, fresh foods daily. I want to thank you for giving the opportunity to testify and I look forward to seeing this bill play out.

Sabrina Johnson,
Kaiser High School
Honolulu, HI