



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 11:15 a.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience
And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HCR 104/ HR 100 – URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO
STRENGTHEN FARM-TO-SCHOOL INITIATIVES

Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of HCR 104/ HR 100 urging the Department of Education to strengthen farm-to-school initiatives. We support the intent of this measure and offer the following comments.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) supports the efforts of the Department of Education (DOE) to strengthen local farm-to-school initiatives by offering our expertise in food science, human nutrition and Cooperative Extension technical assistance to DOE and our agricultural producers to meet the mandate of Act 175, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2021, for at least thirty percent of school meal ingredients to be sourced locally by 2030. CTAHR acknowledges that a robust local farm-to-school program would provide increased food and nutritional security for keiki, increased institutional markets for local food and farming entrepreneurs, and more sustainable local food systems.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on the measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI
SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 04/01/2025

Time: 11:15 AM

Location: 325 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Agriculture & Food Systems

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Resolution Title: HCR 0104 URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO STRENGTHEN FARM-TO-SCHOOL INITIATIVES.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) is submitting testimony with comments on HCR 104.

The School Food Services Branch (SFSB) is currently tasked with the goal of sourcing 30% of school meal ingredients locally by 2030.

The Department is responsible for establishing guidelines for procuring locally sourced products in accordance with the United States Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program and state procurement laws, including the necessity of gathering competitive bids.

The Department is working closely with produce vendors to include additional local farmer offerings to be available to SFSB to procure and be distributed to schools.

The Department requests assistance and collaboration with other state agencies to reach the 30% by 2030 goal.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify with comments on this measure.

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
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2025
11:15 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 104 / HOUSE RESOLUTION 100

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO STRENGTHEN FARM-TO-SCHOOL INITIATIVES

Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HCR 104 / HR 100 urging the Department of Education to strengthen Farm-to-School initiatives that would increase local food procurement, reduce Hawaii's reliance of imported goods and strengthen the State's agricultural economy.

The Department of Agriculture supports these resolutions because expanding procurement of locally grown foods to implement farm-to-school initiatives supports Hawaii's farmers and ranchers to increase production and food security for the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



HCR-104

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 4:18:40 PM

Testimony for AGR on 4/1/2025 11:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

Climate Protectors Hawaii **SUPPORTS** more local **fruits and vegetables** in schools, which would benefit keiki, farmers and the environment. The concurrent resolution properly calls for procurement of locally grown Native Hawaiian crops such as Kali, 'ualu, and ulu.

HCR-104

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 11:25:53 PM

Testimony for AGR on 4/1/2025 11:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

It's a win, win, win - support our local farmers, improve our children's dietary health, promote food sovereignty for our State, and reduce our greenhouse gases by reducing the shipping of food to Hawaii. STRONG support for the action



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e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

April 1, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HCR 104 / HR 100
URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO STRENGTHEN FARM-TO-
SCHOOL INITIATIVES

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
11:15 AM

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice-Chair Kusch, 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 HCR 104 / HR 100, which urges the Department of Education to strengthen farm-to-school initiatives.

HFB strongly supports the increased use of locally grown agricultural products, fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy, poultry, and value-added products in our schools and state facilities. We support the State's Farm-to-School goal of 30% by 2030, in accordance with Act 175, SLH 2021 as well as the Farm-to-State goals established in Act 176, SLH 2021.

Increased purchasing by DOE and other state departments will help address food security and food sustainability by creating demand for local farm products, which will result in farmers and ranchers growing more. It will also help provide more of Hawai'i's fresh and nutritious foods to our students and residents.

HFB is committed to working with the Department of Education and the other state entities to implement a procurement program that will allow Hawai'i farmers and ranchers to source more local products for Hawai'i's Farm to School and Farm to State programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.



March 31, 2025

To: Chair Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair Matthias Kusch, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

From: Health Committee

Re: Testimony in Support of HCR 104 / HR 100 - Strengthen Farm-to-School Initiatives

Date: Tuesday, April 1, 2025, **Time:** 11:15 a.m. Place: Via videoconference and Conference Room 325, State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

The Health Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawaii is in strong support of HCR 104 / HR 100, which urges the Department of Education to strengthen farm-to-school initiatives. This resolution is an essential step toward promoting locally sourced food, supporting Hawaii's agricultural economy, and enhancing the health and education of our keiki.

- **Benefits of Farm-to-School Initiatives:**

- Encourages the consumption of fresh, locally grown produce in school meals, benefiting both students' health and the local agricultural community.
- Provides educational opportunities for students to learn about sustainable agriculture, nutrition, and environmental stewardship.
- Strengthens food security by reducing reliance on imported goods and increasing access to locally produced food.

- **Impact on Student Health and Education:**

- Integrating farm-to-school programs improves students' dietary habits, fostering lifelong healthy eating practices.
- Hands-on agricultural education promotes awareness of local farming practices and instills appreciation for Hawaii's unique ecosystems.

- **Support for Local Farmers and Economy:**

- Expanding farm-to-school initiatives creates consistent demand for locally grown products, bolstering the livelihoods of Hawaii's farmers.
- Encouraging partnerships between schools and agricultural producers strengthens community ties and economic resilience.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HCR 104 / HR 100. By passing this resolution, Hawaii reaffirms its commitment to supporting local agriculture, improving student health, and fostering sustainability through farm-to-school initiatives.

Mahalo nui loa,

Alan Burdick, Chair, Health Committee

Melodie Aduja, Vice Chair, Health Committee



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: Representative Kahaloe, Chair
Representative Kusch, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Agriculture (AGR.)
Re: SUPPORT for HCR104 / HR100
Hearing: 04-01-2025, 11:15am

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture,

My name is Vivienne Hill, and I am a high school senior and member of the Hawai'i Youth Food Council. I am writing in strong support of HCR104 / HR100 because farm-to-school programs can make a real difference in the lives of students. Students across Hawai'i are showing that we care about where our food comes from, about the health of our 'āina, and about what's on our cafeteria trays. This resolution represents youth-led policy, crafted by students, for students. It's rooted in the belief that our food systems should reflect our values of resilience and care for our community.

As a student involved with HYFC, and having just hosted *We Grow*, I've witnessed how passionate our young people are about regenerative agriculture. Students from across the islands gathered at our summit in Maui and at the Capitol to learn about the importance of local food systems and the policies that support them. These events are not mandatory—students choose to show up, give up their weekends, and get their hands dirty because we know this work matters.

This is why strengthening farm-to-school programs is so important. These programs can be the bridge between what we're learning in schools and what we're eating. They support local farmers, help schools serve fresh and local meals, and educate students in experiential, hands-on ways.

We need better systems that make it easier for schools to buy local food, more funding to expand access, and meals that celebrate our traditional crops like kalo,

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.



‘uala, and ‘ulu. The legislature has committed to sourcing 30% local food in schools by 2030, but we need to clear the way to making it a reality.

Please support HCR104 / HR100 to support both our farmers and keiki, now and into the future.

Mahalo,

Vivienne Hill

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.



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloe, Chair
Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

HR 100/HCR 104

Tuesday, April 1, 2025, 11:15 AM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council is in **support of HC 100/HCR 104**, which advocates for the expansion and support of farm-to-school programs in Hawaii.

Farm-to-school programs are vital not only for improving the nutrition of our keiki but also for promoting a deeper understanding of agriculture, sustainability, and the importance of supporting local economies. Hawaii has already committed to sourcing 30% of school meal ingredients locally by 2030, and we believe this is a crucial step toward strengthening our food systems. However, to turn this commitment into a tangible reality, farm-to-school programs are essential.

As an organization that represents the interests of Hawaii's cattle ranchers, we recognize the importance of providing students with fresh, local, and nutritious food, including locally raised beef. Farm-to-school programs allow students to connect with the food they eat and the people who produce it. Through hands-on experiences, students not only learn about the nutritional value of locally sourced ingredients, but they also gain insight into how farming and ranching are intertwined with the culture and sustainability of our islands.

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

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director



HCR-104

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 7:25:22 PM

Testimony for AGR on 4/1/2025 11:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

The Department of Education has the responsibility of educating Hawai'i's children, and it may seem that investing in local farming is not necessary. Actually, the partnership between our public schools and local farms provide fresh food to the cafeteria's at our schools, they offer opportunities for our young people to experience farming, and this partnership may help shed light on the economic benefits local farming can provide our state.

HCR-104

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 9:26:55 PM

Testimony for AGR on 4/1/2025 11:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It's time for the DOE to take serious and honest attempts towards implementing farm to school initiatives. In public testimony for legislation on this very issue, the DOE has provided ample excuses for their lack of progress, excuses not unlike "the dog ate my homework." Enough already.

HCR-104

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 8:12:12 AM

Testimony for AGR on 4/1/2025 11:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tinamarie Cura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimonial in Support of the Farm-to-School Initiatives:

I strongly support initiatives that recognize and support the Farm-to-School Programs, which provides a valuable opportunity to connect our students with fresh, locally grown food while supporting our local farmers and strengthening our communities.

The Farm to School Programs ensure that children have access to nutritious meals that promote their health and well-being. By incorporating fresh fruits, vegetables and other locally sources ingredients into school meals, we not only enhance the quality of the food served but also introduce students to the benefits of healthy eating habits.

Additionally, the program offers educational opportunities that foster a deeper understanding of agriculture, nutrition and sustainability. Students gain hands-on experience through school gardens, farm visits, and nutrition education, cultivating lifelong skills and appreciation for where their food comes from.

Supporting local farmers through this initiative also stimulates our local economy and reduces the environmental impact of long-distance food transportation. Working with our local farms aid in providing nutritious, balanced meals to our students which is not only essential for their physical health but also for their academic success and overall well-being. It's a win-win for our students, farmers and our communities.

By creating more programs with the concept of "Farm-to-Table" it will offer a greater variety of farm fresh fruits and vegetables to our children. Local, seasonal produce not only enhances the nutritional value of school meals but encourages the children to make healthier choices and helps our economy by working with our local farmers.

I urge lawmakers to continue to support and expand the Farm to School Programs. Investing in the health of our children and the resilience of our local agricultural system is a step toward a brighter and healthier future for all.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Tinamarie Cura