

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
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2025
2:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 309

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 104 / HOUSE RESOLUTION 100

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

Chairs Woodson and Garrett, Vice Chairs La Chica and Amato 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.





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 Education
Thursday, March 20, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

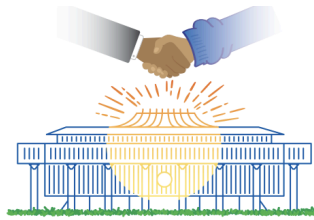
HCR 104/HR 100 – URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO
STRENGTHEN FARM-TO-SCHOOL INITIATIVES

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, 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 bill 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.



CLIMATE FUTURE FORUM

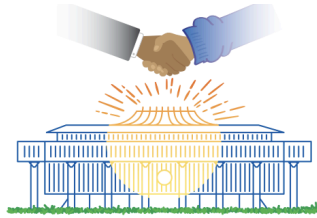
Date: 03-18-25
To: Representative Woodson, Chair
Representative La Chica, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Education (EDN.)
From: Climate Future Forum
Re: SUPPORT for HCR104
Hearing: 03-20-2025, 2 pm

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the House Committee on Education,

The Climate Future Forum's Regenerative Food Systems Working Group **strongly supports** HCR104, which urges the Department of Education to strengthen farm-to-school initiatives. Our purpose is to advance policies that build a resilient, equitable, and regenerative food system for Hawaii's future. Expanding farm-to-school programs is a key tool in addressing both climate change and food security while supporting local farmers, improving student nutrition, and building up our economy.

Hawai'i currently imports nearly 90% of its food, making us highly vulnerable to external disruptions. Farm-to-school programs decrease our dependence on imported foods while simultaneously supporting local agriculture. However, significant barriers, such as complex procurement policies, inconsistent farm-to-school partnerships, and limited infrastructure—prevent schools from purchasing locally sourced foods at scale. Investing in farm-to-school initiatives is an investment in Hawai'i's food sovereignty, economic resilience, and climate future. By strengthening these programs, we can provide nutritious meals to our keiki, reduce our carbon footprint, and support a thriving local agricultural economy. Hawai'i has already committed to sourcing 30% of school meal ingredients locally by 2030, a goal that demonstrates our state's dedication to food security and agricultural sustainability. However, reaching this target will require removing barriers that make it difficult for schools to buy local—including streamlining procurement policies, strengthening farmer-school connections, and increasing funding for farm-to-school programs.

The Climate Future Forum empowers youth (ages 14–26) to actively engage in shaping and advocating for climate policy and legislation. By bringing together youth, educators, policymakers,



CLIMATE FUTURE FORUM

and nonprofits, the forum fosters meaningful dialogue on climate action priorities and provides actionable steps to address climate change in Hawai'i. Through discussions involving over 100 youth, the forum has identified key high-priority areas, including regenerative food systems, climate and the economy, clean energy and transportation, climate justice and equity, and sustainable infrastructure.

Thank you very much for your support of youth engagement in climate policy. We urge you to pass HCR104 and take bold action to secure a sustainable, just, and resilient food system for Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and leadership.

Sincerely,

Maya Gaudiano, Erika Tien, Vivienne Hill

Regenerative Food Systems Policy Leads of Hawai'i Climate Future Forum

HR-100

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 8:48:21 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii SUPPORT these resolutions!

Increasing local fruits and vegetables in school meals will provide tastier and more nutritious food for our keiki, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Please pass these resolutions!

Mahalo!

Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii (by Ted Bohlen)

Date: 03-18-25
To: Representative Woodson, Chair
Representative La Chica, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Education (EDN.)
Re: SUPPORT for HCR104
Hearing: 03-20-2025, 2 pm

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the House Committee on Education,

My name is Vivienne Hill, and I am a senior at Prisma High School and a member of the Hawaii Youth Food Council. I am writing in strong support of HCR104 because farm-to-school programs are not just about nutrition, they are about supporting our keiki and helping them grow into healthy, engaged adults.

Hawaii has already committed to sourcing 30% of school meal ingredients locally by 2030. Although a strong commitment, we need to ensure that this becomes a reality. Farm-to-school programs offer so much more than just fresh meals. They bring learning to life by allowing students to engage in hands-on experiences that connect science, agriculture, culture, and sustainability. When students get to plant, harvest, and taste locally grown food, they develop a deeper understanding of where their food comes from and why it matters—and make happy memories doing so.

I have seen the demand for these programs from my peers. Over the years, when the Hawai'i Youth Food Council hosts our annual food systems We Grow summit, youth come from across the islands to participate – on a weekend! When they tell their stories, so many of the same themes emerge: they feel discontent with their school meals – disconnected, which is why it often gets thrown away.

Expanding farm-to-school initiatives also helps build responsibility and pride in Hawai'i's unique culture and agricultural heritage. Incorporating kalo, 'uala, and 'ulu into school meals isn't just about supporting local farmers—it's about reconnecting students with our 'ina, their community, and sustainable practices that will benefit generations to come.

I urge you to pass HCR104 and invest in a healthier, more resilient future for our keiki.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
Vivienne Hill

HR-100

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 4:40:14 PM

Testimony for EDN on 3/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angelina Woo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Representative Woodson, Chair

Representative La Chica, Vice Chair

Members of the House Committee on Education (EDN.)

Re: SUPPORT for HCR104

Hearing: 03-20-2025, 2 pm

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the House Committee on Education,

My name is Angelina Woo, and I am a 17-year-old Hawaiian. I am writing in strong support of HCR104 because farm-to-school programs can make a real difference in the lives of students like me as some of our only meals stem from school lunch. Growing up, I always looked forward to the rare days when our school lunch featured fresh, local ingredients—those meals tasted richer, more vibrant, and felt like a true connection to home. It made me wonder why our daily lunches couldn't always reflect the abundance of Hawai'i's farms and fisheries. Then, as I got older, I learned that Hawai'i imports almost 90% of its food, which makes us vulnerable when supply chains break down or we are faced with a national issue, like when we had COVID. Farm-to-school programs help by bringing fresh, local food to our cafeterias while also supporting farmers and teaching students about where their food comes from. Strengthening these programs means making it easier for schools to buy from local farms, increasing funding, and including more traditional Hawaiian crops like kalo, 'uala, and 'ulu in school meals.

I urge you to support HCR104 so that more students can benefit from fresh, locally grown food at school.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Angelina Woo

HR-100

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 9:25:49 AM

Testimony for EDN on 3/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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.

**To: Representative Woodson, Chair
Representative La Chica, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Education (EDN.)
Re: SUPPORT for HCR104
Hearing: 03-20-2025, 2 pm**

LATE

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the House Committee on Education,

My name is Mia Nishiguchi, and I am a junior student at Kalani High School. I am writing in strong support of HCR104 because farm-to-school programs can make a real difference in the lives of students like me.

I constantly have friends who complain about the school lunches and how they wish the food tasted and be prepared better. I know that every one of my friends skips specific lunches they don't like, leading them to have poor habits in remaining classes at school. I also know that tons of students complain about portion sizes and how they aren't enough to sustain them throughout the day until they go home.

Hawai'i imports almost 90% of its food, which makes us vulnerable when supply chains break down. Farm-to-school programs help by bringing fresh, local food to our cafeterias while also supporting farmers and teaching students about where their food comes from. Strengthening these programs means making it easier for schools to buy from local farms, increasing funding, and including more traditional Hawaiian crops like kalo, 'uala, and 'ulu in school meals.

I urge you to support HCR104 so that more students can benefit from fresh, locally grown food at school.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

**Mia Nishiguchi
Grade 11
Kalani High School**