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Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



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

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2025
1:02 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE BILL NO. 1111
RELATING AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS**

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1111. This bill aims to establish the agricultural statistics program in statute and allocate appropriate funding. The Department of Agriculture (Department) strongly supports this important initiative.

The Department acknowledges the significance of providing timely, accurate, and relevant statistics to support agricultural production, marketing, logistics, investment, planning, and executive decision-making, with the goal of revitalizing and reversing the decline in value of Hawai'i's agricultural industries.

Due to the inherently high risks associated with agricultural activities, a greater amount of data and information is essential to help mitigate, if not fully manage, these challenges. As Peter Drucker, widely regarded as the "father of modern management," famously stated, "*You can't manage what you don't measure.*"

Furthermore, as food systems continue to evolve within the counties and regional food production centers are established, the Department remains committed to



supporting these positive developments to strengthen food security across the state. This initiative, which facilitates the collection, compilation, analysis, and dissemination of market data at the country level, will provide valuable support to local farmers and ranchers, helping them enhance food production and improve their income levels.

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

OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRACTICES

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To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

From: Carlotta Amerino, Director

Date: February 3, 2025, 1:02 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

Re: Testimony on S.B. No. 1111
Relating to Agricultural Statistics

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill, which would establish and fund an agricultural statistics program. The Office of Information Practices (OIP) offers **comments and a proposed amendment** for the proposed section 148-__, HRS, titled Exemption, starting at bill page 4 line 11.

Subsection (a) of the Exemption section makes all data and information the Department of Agriculture collects through the agricultural statistics program exempt from public disclosure under the Uniform Information Practices Act (UIPA), chapter 92F, HRS. Subsection (b) goes on to reiterate that all data collected by the program is confidential, stating that it “shall be confidential and protected from discovery, production, and disclosure.” These provisions would thus make all the data collected and all the agricultural statistics generated under the program confidential, not just the information specific to identifiable farms or farmers. OIP would not be concerned about a UIPA exception for data identifiable to an individual farm or business, but there appears to be no good reason to exempt the aggregated data (i.e., not individually identifiable) collected through the new program, and the statistics generated from it, from public disclosure. Indeed, given

the bill's intent is for this program to provide agricultural producers with better information and provide decisionmakers with analyses related to agricultural production, it would be counterproductive to make all the information and analysis resulting from the program confidential.

OIP respectfully recommends that this Committee amend the Exemption section starting at bill page 4, line 11, by replacing it with the following:

§148- Exemption. Data and information collected by the department of agriculture for the purposes of this part or collected, compiled, and stored in the agricultural statistics program shall be confidential and shall not be subject to discovery or to disclosure under chapter 92F; provided that nothing in this section shall preclude disclosure of such information in a statistical or aggregate form that does not allow the identification of an individual person or entity. Unauthorized review, use, disclosure, or distribution of data shall be strictly prohibited. The State shall not be liable for any dissemination of information collected, compiled, or stored for use in the agricultural statistics program.

Thank you for considering OIP's testimony.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT
Monday, February 3, 2025 — 1:02 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports SB 1111, Relating to Agricultural Statistics.

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mariah Yoshizu, and I am the Government Affairs Associate 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 SB 1111, which establishes the agricultural statistics program in statute.

Severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the demise of markets, surging inflation, and the substantial increased costs of doing business, local agriculturalists need our support more than ever. Farmers, ranchers, and vested stakeholders from across the state have expressed a strong desire to move forward on shared goals to grow and invest in local agriculture.

Recognizing its pivotal role, the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) last year launched a massive statewide outreach effort — its most extensive in recent memory — to identify the industry's top priorities and long-standing challenges. Through this process, Hawai'i's agricultural producers and affiliated organizations shared intimate experiences and insights on the most pressing needs. A recurring theme was the pressing need for accessible, current data.

This bill relating to agricultural statistics seeks to drive forward a key initiative supporting Hawai'i's agricultural community and advancing the state's broader goals for sustainable and economically viable agriculture.

Ulupono supports this bill because having accurate, timely data is essential for informed decision-making and will provide invaluable support to farmers to scale up their operations. The enhanced agricultural statistics program will provide the data framework needed to support the growth and sustainability of Hawai'i's agricultural sector for years to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Mariah Yoshizu
Government Affairs Associate

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



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Kaua'i

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

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports SB1111.**

For farmers and agricultural stakeholders, having access to accurate and comprehensive data is crucial for informed decision-making, efficient resource allocation, and strategic planning. This program will offer a reliable foundation for tracking trends, yields, and other vital metrics that impact the agrarian community, enhancing the ability to respond effectively to challenges such as climate change, pest management, and market fluctuations.

The appropriation of funds to support this program is a justified investment that will have far-reaching benefits for the whole state. By ensuring the availability of precise data, SB1111 supports the advancement of sustainable agriculture and strengthens our local food systems, promoting resilience and self-sufficiency. Access to robust statistical data will empower farmers by improving transparency, allowing them to tailor their practices to align with market trends, and enhancing their overall competitiveness. Moreover, this initiative underscores a commitment to supporting our local farmers, subsequently driving economic growth within the agricultural sector and preserving the cultural and social fabric of our rural communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



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February 3, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 1111
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:02 PM

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

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 1111, which establishes the agricultural statistics program in statute and appropriates funds for its implementation.

Reliable agricultural data is essential for informed decision-making, policy development, and ensuring the success of Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers. Accurate and up-to-date agricultural statistics provide critical insights into crop production, market trends, land use, and economic contributions of the agricultural sector. This information is vital for farmers, policymakers, researchers, and industry stakeholders to plan effectively, allocate resources, and respond to emerging challenges such as supply chain disruptions, climate variability, and market fluctuations.

A formalized agricultural statistics program within the Department of Agriculture will ensure that Hawai'i has a consistent and credible source of data to support agricultural growth. This will help:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



February 2 2025

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

Subject: **SB1111**, Relating to Agricultural Statistics

Aloha,

I am testifying in **support with comments** for SB1111 which asks to revitalize the Agricultural Statistics department within the Department of Agriculture (DOA). The measure states that DOA shall collect and maintain data and provide a report on intra- and inter-island transportation related to agriculture as well as key agricultural activities such as agricultural tourism, aquaculture, agricultural theft, and others.

Farmers are not only involved in farming. They are businessmen/women, owners, marketers, environmental stewards, scientists, researchers, cooks, and so much more. Agricultural statistics serve as a resource and information that helps farmers make informed decisions about their daily financial matters. These decisions impact multiple agencies within the food system at varying levels. With that said, the measure mentions developing and maintaining electronic systems. IF this is meant to utilize AI or building AI data centers in order to modernize our data collecting, then I must advocate for limiting our use of AI. At this time, there is no alternative to cool down these systems (other than using water and or electricity) which **overwhelms** our Planet, precious natural resources, water, and electricity.

Hawai'i's unique geographical location, which consists of multiple islands within the State, poses a unique challenge for agriculture. According to reports published by the [Market Analysis and News Branch](#), the Department of Agriculture does not collect data on intra- and inter-island agriculture-related transportation, nor do they have any updates or reports on several of the key agricultural activities listed in the measure. These reports will impact Hawai'i society and Hawai'i Aloha Plus Challenge for local production goals, zero hunger, climate action, responsible consumption and production, and labor resources.

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.



**HAWAI'I
FOOD+
POLICY**

Honolulu, HI 96813
food@purplemaia.org

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,
Lea iaea & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

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UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
February 3, 2025 at 1:02 p.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 1111 – RELATED TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 1111 which establishes the agricultural statistics program in statute and appropriates funds for the program.

First, we respectfully offer an amendment on page 5, lines 11-12, to correct the name of the college to University of Hawaii college of tropical agriculture and human [resources] resilience (CTAHR). The renaming of the college was approved in October 2024 to better align CTAHR's name to its land-grant mission of improving the human condition and human use of natural resources through research, education and Cooperative Extension.

Second, we respectfully offer the following comments that CTAHR has increased its capacity in agricultural economics with two new agricultural economists hired last year and a third food and agricultural marketing faculty under recruitment currently. CTAHR already had two agricultural economists. With this expanded expertise and the opportunity to involve Extension Agents and undergraduate and graduate students in targeted data collection and analysis, CTAHR is planning to build a center on Food and Agricultural Marketing, Business and Economic Systems. CTAHR Dean has briefly discussed with HDOA Board Chair the possibility of collaborating. HDOA and CTAHR will work together to identify specific roles for each in building a comprehensive and impactful agricultural statistics program for the state.

CTAHR believes that the unique climate and agricultural practices of Hawai'i make it critical to collect specific agricultural data. Accurate and up-to-date ag statistics are crucial for all stakeholders in the Hawaiian agriculture sector to make informed decisions, develop effective policies, and monitor effective programs that will have large and far-reaching impacts.

A revitalized and enhanced Agricultural Statistics program could allow CTAHR to better respond to and serve the following needs of the Hawaii's agricultural sector.

1. **Pest and Invasive Species Control:** Data on crop, livestock and forestry losses could guide research and extension priorities to address issues facing Hawaiian farmers such as crop diseases and pests.
2. **Productivity Analysis:** Yield data could allow researchers to identify ways in which yields could be sustained and increased.
3. **Weather Impact:** Impact on weather changes can be assessed to provide information for CTAHR to focus research and extension priorities for sustainability.
4. **Risk Management:** Consistent statistics help in identifying potential risks such as pests, diseases, and climate change impacts, enabling proactive measures to mitigate these risks.
5. **Resource Allocation:** Accurate data helps in the proper distribution of resources and funding.
6. **Crop Management:** Understanding which crops thrive in which geographic areas can guide farmers in crop selection and management practices.
7. **Unpredictability Management:** Data on pest outbreaks and management techniques can be shared, helping farmers across the state.
8. **Market Analysis:** Accurate data provides insights into market trends, consumption and supply, and price fluctuations, which help farmers plan their production and marketing strategies effectively.
9. **Research and Innovation:** Consistent data supports agricultural research and innovation, leading to the development of new technologies and practices that enhance productivity and sustainability.
10. **Market Planning:** Knowledge of what's grown and harvested can help in market planning and export strategies.
11. **Labor Market:** Analysis on labor supply and demand to mitigate labor shortage and cost of production.

In essence, consistent agricultural statistics are the backbone of a thriving agricultural sector, ensuring that all stakeholders have the information they need to drive progress and sustainability. As Hawai'i strives to increase food security within the islands, having accurate data on Hawaii's agricultural production will be key to achieving greater food security as we will need up-to-date production and consumption data.

We support the intent of SB 1111 with the suggested amendment. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.