

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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2025
9:30 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

SENATE BILL NO. 1250, S.D.1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1250, S.D.1. This bill seeks to establish the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State, requires reports to the Legislature prior to Regular Sessions of 2026 and 2027 and appropriates funding for the next two fiscal years.

The Department of Agriculture (Department) supports the bill and recognizes the urgent need to relieve food shortages by providing funds to food banks located in the State to facilitate consistent supply chains of fresh, Hawaii-grown or produced food to insecure communities. To establish and administer the program the Department requests an SR22 Program Specialist (\$63,096) and resources to successfully implement to program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB1250 SD1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 19, 2025

9:30 AM

Conference Room 325

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

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) strongly supports **Senate Bill 1250 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 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 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 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 could assist these farmers by ensuring consistent demand for their produce and reducing the financial uncertainty they face.

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. 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.

OHA urges the Legislature to **PASS SB1250 SD1** and consider the recommendations outlined above to ensure its success and sustainability. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

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)

² *Id.*



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)

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: Representative Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair
Representative Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

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

DATE: March 17, 2025

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF SB1250 SD1, RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

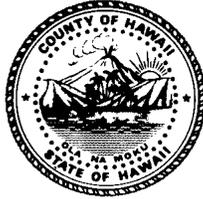
Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure. The act establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State. Requires reports to the Legislature prior to the Regular Sessions of 2026 and 2027. Appropriates funds.

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 farmers.
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 reasearch that clearly shows the significant economic returns on governments 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.

Mahalo for your consideration.

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 18, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

WEDNESDAY, March 19, 2025

9:30 AM

CONFERENCE ROOM 325

TESTIMONY ON SB 1250 SD1

Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch 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 SB1250 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 18, 2025

Page 2

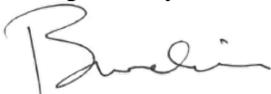
commodity food from breaks in the supply chain due to COVID- 19 and prices have skyrocketed, causing them to increasingly rely on our local food supply.

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 SB1250 SD1.**

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benson Medina". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B".

Benson Medina
Director

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

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
PHONE: (808) 768-2277 • EMAIL: resilientoahu@honolulu.gov • INTERNET: www.resilientoahu.org

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



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

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

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2025, 9:30 A.M.

STATE OF HAWAII
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 1250, SD1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES**

BY,

BENJAMIN SULLIVAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

Dear Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

The City and County of Honolulu (“City”) Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (“Resilience Office”) **supports** SB1250, SD1, which establishes the Hawai’i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the state.

The City’s climate adaptation strategy, *Climate Ready O’ahu*, highlights the need for a resilient and thriving food system to help communities adapt to climate impacts. In alignment with this, the Resilience Office is developing O’ahu’s first-ever Food System Plan to support integrated solutions across the food sector. This measure directly advances these efforts by investing in local food production and expanding access to fresh, Hawai’i-grown food for families in need.

Support for Hawai’i’s food banks not only improves food security—especially for our Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino communities, who face high rates of food insecurity—but also strengthens Hawai’i’s agricultural economy. Food banks have already invested over \$11 million in local farms over the past five years, demonstrating the value of these partnerships. SB1250, SD1 builds economic and social resilience by strengthening connections between local farms and food assistance programs, making Hawai’i’s food system more sustainable and adaptive to future challenges.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB1250, SD1.



Date: 03-14-2025

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: **Representative Kahaloe, Chair**
Representative Kusch, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems (AGR)

From: **Hawai'i Youth Food Council**

Re: **SUPPORT for SB1250**

Hearing: **03-14-2025, 9:30 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 SB 1250, 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.

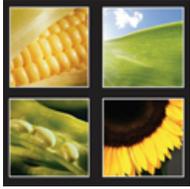
We urge the committee to pass SB 1250 and invest in a future where every person in our community has access to fresh, locally-grown food.

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.



HAWAII CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

SB1250 SD1 – In Support
Relating to Farm to Families

House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2025
Time: 9:30 AM
Place: Conference Room 325

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

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association (HCIA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony **in support of SB1250 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 SB1250 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.

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2025 2:31:54 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Green Party Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, I am co-chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i. The Green Party of Hawai'i is in Strong Support of SB1250 SD1. I am an agricultural worker myself and I see the value that our organic farm has on the community it serves. This bill will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii farm to families program to fund food banks in the State to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food to food insecure communities. By doing so, it 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 creates an added win. Supporting local farmers strengthens food resilience and reduces greenhouse gas emissions by minimizing the need for long-distance food transportation, which is a significant source of carbon emissions.

Green Party of Hawai'i urges you to Support, SB1250 SD1.

Sincerley,
Susan RobertsEmery
Green Party of Hawai'i
Paauilo

Wednesday, March 19, 2025 at 9:30 AM
Via Video Conference; Conference Room 325

House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

To: Representative Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair
Representative Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

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

**Re: Testimony in Support of SB 1250, 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 SB 1250, 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.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair

Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

SB1250 SD1

RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 10:04 AM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB1250 SD1** which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Food security should be a top priority for the state – to ensure that each person has access to healthy food every day. Today, too many families struggle to put a square meal on the table. This bill will ensure that the DOA is focusing on relieving food shortages. It will help the many food-secure families in Hawaii, as well as support farmers and ranchers providing local, fresh food.

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



SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2025 7:04:06 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Ohana Unity Party & Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Honorable Members of the Hawaii State Senate
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Honorable Senators,

I'm thrilled to write in enthusiastic support of Senate Bill No. 1250 (S.D. 1), "Relating to Farm to Families"—a game-changer for Hawaii's families, farmers, and future! This bill tackles our state's food insecurity crisis head-on while boosting local agriculture and our economy. Let me share why I'm so excited about this visionary legislation, backed by jaw-dropping stats and real-world impact!

- **A Crisis We Can't Ignore—And a Solution We Can Celebrate!**
 - One in three households in Hawaii struggles to put food on the table—that's over 150,000 families facing hunger daily. For our keiki, it's even worse: nearly 30% grow up food-insecure, some skipping meals entirely. S.B. 1250 says, "No more!"
 - The Hawaii Farm to Families Program will fund food banks to deliver fresh, Hawaii-grown produce—like Okinawan sweet potatoes and kalo—to those who need it most. Imagine the joy of kids biting into nutritious, local food instead of going hungry!
- **Keiki and Communities Win Big!**
 - Hunger isn't just an empty stomach—it's a health crisis. Studies show food-insecure kids face 2-3 times higher risks of anxiety, depression, and cognitive delays. By bringing fresh produce to 240,000 people monthly (that's how many food banks served in 2023!), this bill is a lifeline for our most vulnerable.
 - Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander households, hit hardest with over 40% food insecurity, will see targeted relief—honoring equity and aloha in action!
- **Farmers Are the Heroes We Need—And This Bill Empowers Them!**
 - Hawaii's food banks already partner with 575 local farms, injecting \$11 million into Hawaii-grown produce over five years—that's a \$19 million economic boost

with the local food multiplier! S.B. 1250 doubles down, creating a steady market for farmers to grow more breadfruit, bok choy, and long beans.

- With 85% of our food imported (costing us over \$3 billion annually), this bill slashes that reliance. Every dollar spent on local farms keeps money circulating here—strengthening our resilience and sustainability!
- A Resilient, Thriving Hawaii Awaits!
 - In 2023, food banks distributed 27 million meals—numbers rivaling the COVID-19 peak—yet pandemic-era aid is gone. This bill fills that gap with a permanent, proactive solution. It’s mālama ‘āina in motion: caring for our land and people together!
 - The appropriation for 2025-2027 (even if the exact amount is TBD) promises immediate impact. Picture food banks bustling with Hawaii-grown goodies, delivered free to families—priceless!

I’m beyond excited for S.B. 1250 because it’s a win-win-win: kids eat healthier, farmers thrive, and our economy grows stronger. Please vote YES to launch the Hawaii Farm to Families Program and build a brighter, tastier future for our islands! For more discussion, reach me at [Your Phone Number] or [Your Email Address]. Mahalo for your leadership!

With enthusiasm and aloha,

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM

Ohana Unity Party, Chairman

www.Ohanaunityparty.com

Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I.

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2025 8:54:55 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Strong support for funding to purchase from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers. Supporting local farmers, those using regenerative practices in particular is good for the environment, good for our local economy and good for the people.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS
Wednesday, March 19, 2025 — 9:30 a.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports SB 1250 SD 1, Relating to Farm to Families.

Dear Chair Kahaloa 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 SB 1250 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



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB1250 SD1, RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2025

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

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** SB1250 SD1, RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES. Pursuant to the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, we support initiatives aimed at addressing food insecurity in Hawai'i.

The Hawai'i Farm to Families Program will establish a consistent market for Hawaii's food producers, reduce our reliance on imported food and products, and ensure that more local families have access to healthy, Hawai'i-grown produce. By providing funds to food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, locally-grown food, we can alleviate food shortages and sustainably support our local farmers. Hawaii's future depends on a resilient agricultural sector and ensuring that all residents have access to fresh, nutritious food. This bill is a critical step in that direction. This initiative and investment not only address immediate food needs but also strengthen our local economy and promote sustainable agricultural practices.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of SB1250 SD1, RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org.



Date: March 19, 2025

Subject: Hawai'i Foodbank in Strong Support of SB 1250, SD1, Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our **STRONG** support for SB 1250, 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. SB 1250 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 SB 1250, SD1.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for SB 1250 – Relating to Farm to Families
House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems
Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 9:30am

Dear Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **SB 1250**, 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 SB 1250. 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>



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

Executive Officers

Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale Grocer, *Chair*
Kit Okimoto, Okimoto Corp., *Vice Chair*
Jayson Watts, Mahi Pono, *Secretary/Treasurer*
Lauren Zirbel, HFIA, *Executive Director*
Paul Kosasa, ABC Stores, *Advisor*
Derek Kurisu, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 19, 2025
TIME: 9:30am

RE: SB1250 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.



Maui Food Bank
Nourishing Lives. Feeding Futures

March 19, 2025

RE: Support for SB 1250 SD1, Relating to Farm to Families

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

On behalf of the Maui Food Bank, I express our strong support for SB 1250 SD1 establishing 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 an average of almost 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.

SB 1250 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.

Just last week, 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



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

3/19/2025

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

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

The Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) 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.

HHRC'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, HHRC 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



March 19, 2025

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



**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

Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Rep. Kirsten Kahaloa, Chair
Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

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

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

alike while advancing a more equitable food system.

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

RECREATION | EDUCATION | CELEBRATION | INSPIRATION

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

March 19, 2025

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 cursive and fluidly connected.

G. Noe Neumann

808-228-8865

info@lokoeafarms.com

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 1250
Relating to Farm to Families**

March 18, 2025

To: Chair Representative Kahaloa, Vice Chair Representative Kusch, and members of the committee

My name is Joe Chee, Jr., and I currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Maui Food Bank, an organization dedicated to alleviating hunger and ensuring that no one in our community goes without nutritious food. Every month, the Maui Food Bank provides critical food assistance to thousands of individuals and families, including seniors, children, and those experiencing economic hardship.

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.

Sincerely,

**Joe Chee, Jr.
Board Member, Maui Food Bank**



House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports: SB1250 SD1
March 19th, 2025 at 9:30am; Conference Room 325

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

As a member of the Hawaii Hunger Action Network, HAPA strongly supports SB1250 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 or crisis.

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.

Given the uncertainty around how federal cuts will impact resources coming into the state it is even more imperative that we ensure our food insecure residents and local farmers are not left behind. Please consider support for progressive revenue sources to enable important food security measures such as the farm to foodbank program. Please support SB1250 SD1.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick, Executive Director

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

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



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

March 17, 2025

To: The Honorable Representative Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair
The Honorable Representative Mattias Kusch, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

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

Testimony in Strong Support of SB1250 SD1, Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Kahaloa and Vice Chair Kusch,

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 only 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 to the immediacy of dire need due to an often-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 so many families across the state.

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, Ho'olaha Ka Hua DA BOX community supported agriculture program, Kūpuna Fresh, and Poi Joy, to name a few. 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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ANN EBESUNO BOARD CHAIR

MARK KRZYZANOWSKI VICE-CHAIR

JASON COHN TREASURER

JULIA ZEE SECRETARY

STEPHEN UEDA

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA COLLINS

CASEY HALPERN

LAUREN ZIRBEL



**THE
FOOD BASKET**
HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST
ALBRECHT

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

ANN EBESUNO
BOARD CHAIR

MARK
KRZYZANOWSKI
VICE-CHAIR

JASON COHN
TREASURER

JULIA ZEE
SECRETARY

STEPHEN UEDA

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA
COLLINS

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
808-933-6030 Phone | 808-934-0701 Fax 808-322-1418 Phone | 808-322-7373 Fax

To: House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Re: **SB 1250 SD1 – Relating to Farm to Families**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
March 19, 2025, 9:30 AM

Dear Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of SB 1250 SD1**. This bill 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, and appropriates funds.

According to 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://hawaiifoodbank.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/>



To: The House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems (AGR)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 9:30 am

In strong support of SB1250 SD1

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and AGR 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 SB1250 SD1** that establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Many families in Hawaii struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. This measure is a wonderful idea that supports our farmers and at the same time helps our local families in need by providing local, fresh, healthy options. For families facing hunger, fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables are often one of the first things removed from grocery lists, negatively affecting long-term health. Healthy diets rich in fruits and vegetables are also healthier for the climate as plant-based foods generally have a lower environmental impact. Moreover, efforts to support our farmers also builds our resiliency and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. Bottom line, SB1250 SD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

Please pass SB1250 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



KŌKUA KALIHI VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY SERVICES

2239 N. SCHOOL STREET ♦ HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819 ♦ TEL: 808-791-9400 ♦ FAX: 808-848-0979

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

March 17, 2025

Kōkua Kalihi Valley, CFS works to bring health to Kalihi through increasing access to fresh local produce. We have a food hub and work with 32 local food producers and provide healthy produce for the community while supporting the local food economy. We strongly **SUPPORT SB1250**. It will continue to expand institutional purchasing by partners such as food banks, and provide healthy options and economic resiliency to our local food system.

We ask that you support this bill and continue to join the work of community organizations and institutions to invest in our local farmers and the food system infrastructure and funding mechanisms that make them competitive with imported food distributors.

Sincerely,

Jesse Lipman
Roots Program Director



Our Lady of Sorrows Church

1403-A California Ave.
Wahiawa, HI 96786

March 19, 2025

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



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

House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

March 19, 2025 at 9:30am

RE: Support for SB 1250, Relating to Farm to Families

Dear Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, 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 SB 1250. 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

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 9:06:58 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Warren Watanabe	Maui County Farm Bureau	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Maui County Farm Bureau strongly supports SB1250 SD1, Relating to Farm to Families.



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 19, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON SB 1250, SD1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, 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 SB 1250, 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.

SB 1250, 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.



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

Food+ Policy strongly supports SB1250, which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to fund food banks in purchasing, storing, and transporting fresh, Hawaii-grown food to food-insecure communities.

Hawaii faces an urgent food security crisis, with **one in three households struggling to access consistent nutrition. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are disproportionately impacted, with over 40% experiencing food insecurity.** Fresh, nutritious food is often inaccessible to those most in need, exacerbating health disparities and economic challenges.

Hawaii's food banks, already serving over 240,000 individuals monthly, have successfully partnered with 575 local farms and food hubs, demonstrating the viability of connecting agriculture with food assistance. **This bill strengthens those efforts, reducing reliance on food imports while bolstering the local economy and agricultural sector.**

By investing in Hawaii-grown food for those most vulnerable, this bill not only fights hunger but also fosters a resilient and sustainable food system for future generations. We urge the legislature to pass SB1250 to support both Hawaii's farmers and food-insecure families.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Hawaii Food+ Policy

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.

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 9:22:31 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Moana Lutey	Maui Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Kahaloe, Vice Chair Representative Kusch and Committee Members:

My name is Moana Lutey and I currently serve on the board of the Maui Food Bank, an organization dedicated to alleviating hunger and ensuring that no one in our community goes without nutritious food. The Maui Food Bank provides critical food assistance to thousands of individuals and families.

I am humbly requesting your support of the "Farm to Families" bill because it has the potential of transforming our state's food security. This would be significant by allowing food distribution organizations to strengthen their relationships with local farmers and food producers by ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

I am from Lahaina and many of my family members were directly impacted by the Lahaina fires in August 2023. People who had been able to own their homes and provide food for their family were suddenly faced with owning nothing but the clothes on their backs and finding it difficult to provide for their families. Since the Lahaina fires, many people in our community have experienced new struggles with being able to provide for themselves in the same manner they had prior to the fire. This bill could be life changing for our fire survivors and many others.

Thank you for your consideration and commitment to a food-secure Hawaii.

Aloha,

Moana M. Lutey

Board Member, Maui Food Bank



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents

Clarence Baber
Kohala, Hawaii

Tony Vera
East Hawaii

Puna, Hawaii

Andrea Drayer
Ka'u, Hawaii

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawaii

Fawn Helekahi-Burns
Hana, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahalawai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Moloka'i

Negus Manna
Lana'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
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

The Hawaii Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports SB1250.**

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 SB1250, 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
Hawaii Farmers Union



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 325
Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 9:30 A.M.

To The Honorable Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair
The Honorable Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

SUPPORT SB1250 SD1 RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS SB1250 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 SB1250 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.



Government Relations

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Director

Before:
House Committee on Agriculture and Food Services
The Honorable Kirsten Kahaloo, Chair
The Honorable Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

March 19, 2025
9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 325
Via Videoconference

Re: SB 1250, SD 1, Relating to Farm to Families

Chair Kahaloo, Vice Chair Kusch, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 1250, SD 1, which appropriates general funds to establish the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i SUPPORTS SB 1250, SD 1.

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 SB 1250, SD 1 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.

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 4:12:29 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support. Thank you.

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 5:20:31 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Greetings Chair and Committee members,

Please support SB1250 SD1. 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 during times of crisis.

Preparing Hawaii’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 for your consideration.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 10:03:48 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support this important bill. Mahalo.

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2025 2:06:46 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members.

One in three households in Hawaii faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. I strongly support this critical bill that 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. This program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger in our state.

-- Many families in Hawaii struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. SB1250 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. SB1250 SD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

Mahalo for your consideration.

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2025 3:54:25 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

March 19, 2025

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, & Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

I am a Master’s students in Early Childhood Education and an early childhood home visitor, committed to serving vulnerable young children and their families in Kona on Hawai‘i Island.

For this reason, **I am in strong support of SB 1250, Relating To Farm To Families**, which establishes the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the state.

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.

This bill offers a meaningful solution to the food shortages affecting our communities. By ensuring greater access to fresh, locally grown food, this bill has the power to uplift not only our keiki but also their families and the farmers who nourish them.

According to a 2024 report by the Hawai‘i Foodbank, our state is facing a growing food crisis, 30% of households are struggling to maintain consistent access to food. Rising food costs are putting even more strain on Hawai‘i’s families. From November 2024 to January 2025, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2025) reported a 1.9 percent increase in food prices in urban Hawai‘i, while four of the six major grocery stores reported an even steeper increase of 3.4 percent. This crisis affects our keiki the hardest, placing them at increased risk for cognitive delays, behavioral challenges, and long-term health disparities (Gallegos et al., 2021). No child should have to face these obstacles simply because their family cannot afford nutritious food.

SB 1250 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 ensures that vulnerable populations receive nutritious food and also fosters economic resilience by investing in our local agriculture sector by providing them access to local families who need healthy produce and other food products and a regular and predictable way to distribute their goods. This bill aligns with our values of mālama ‘āina and kuleana, reinforces the deep connection between food security and community well-being, and has broad support from local farmers on all islands.

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, and resilient Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

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

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2025 6:30:53 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katherine Fryer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB1250 SD1, which will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii farm to families program to fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh produce grown in Hawaii. This program is urgently needed to assist the one third of our state's households who are currently facing food insecurity. By providing low-income families with access to fresh local foods, SB1250 SD1 will help reduce hunger while also supporting Hawaii's farmers.

In our era of climate change and severe weather events, investing in local agriculture is an especially smart move. Rising ocean temperatures are increasing Hawaii's risk of severe hurricanes with the potential to disrupt air traffic and shipping. A major storm landfall at or near Pearl Harbour could cut us off from container ships for months. The more food we grow locally, the more resilient we will be in the face of natural disasters. SB1250 SD1 will allow food distributing organizations and local farmers to build mutually beneficial partnerships that will help our vulnerable communities and might also help future disaster recovery efforts.

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2025 10:57:44 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Antoinette M Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opporunity to testify. Our islands must and can grow **much** more food! The ancient Hawaiian's gathered daily and ate the most fresh and nutritious foods caught/grown locally. I strongly support SB1250, as someone who personally gathers from my back pasture daily. I see, smell, taste and feel the difference in quality.

We (Hawaii's community) should do our best to not allow anyone to go hungry. Feeding those in need expired, overly processed, depleted in nutrients foods is lazy and not helpful.

This program supports our most vulnerable and local farmers - by providings and the connections/hubs to get their products to those that most need it.

Feed the hungry with healthy food while supporting the Hawaii farmers.

Win-Win-Win (Hungry - Farmers - Community)

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 8:48:48 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Barker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Members,

I am writing to respectfully ask that you support SB1250 SD1 which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

This bill will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii farm to families program to fund food banks in the State to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food to food insecure communities. By doing so, it 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.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 10:17:55 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nanea Lo, and **I am writing in strong support of SB1250 SD1**, which will establish and fund the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program. This initiative is critical to ensuring that fresh, locally grown food reaches the families who need it most while simultaneously supporting our local farmers and reducing our dependence on imported food.

One in three households in Hawai‘i faces food insecurity. Too many of our families struggle to put food on the table, and it is our responsibility to ensure that our most vulnerable communities have access to fresh, nutritious food. By funding food banks to purchase, store, and distribute locally grown and produced food, SB1250 SD1 takes a direct step toward alleviating hunger in our state.

Beyond addressing food insecurity, this bill strengthens Hawai‘i’s food systems by investing in local agriculture. Supporting our farmers keeps our food dollars in the local economy and builds our community’s resilience. Additionally, by reducing the need for imported food, this program helps cut greenhouse gas emissions associated with long-distance food transportation.

SB1250 SD1 is a triple win—for our families, our farmers, and our climate. I urge you to pass this critical measure and ensure that fresh, locally grown food is accessible to all who need it.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo

Mō‘ili‘ili, HI 96826

Sierra Club of Hawai‘i Executive Committee Member

Board Member, Hawai‘i Workers Center

Kanaka Maoli/Lineal Descendant of the Hawaiian Kingdom

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 11:05:59 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karin Hoida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii farm to families program to fund food banks in the State to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food to food insecure communities. By doing so, it 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 creates an added win. Supporting local farmers strengthens food resilience and reduces greenhouse gas emissions by minimizing the need for long-distance food transportation, which is a significant source of carbon emissions.

Seems like a no-brainer to support this bill! Mahalo!

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 3:59:29 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Leake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

All citizens of Hawaii will benefit from getting more fresh Hawaii-grown food to families and supporting for our amazing local agriculture partners. Please give favorable consideration to SB1250. Mahalo.

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 4:19:50 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniela Escontrela	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

One in three households in Hawaii faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. I strongly support this critical bill that 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. This program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger in our state.

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 9:52:45 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jimmy Gomes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB-1250 and stand with HFB Testimony

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 10:36:45 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie A Whalen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Kunia Village is home to many agricultural workers who provide the labor for local produce. In addition, over 80% are themselves in the Extremel low income or Low income categories. By passing this measure you are not only feeding many of the impoverished families in the state but feeding those helping to provide the food for them!

KVTHC can not express how strongly it supports this measure. It is OUR responsibility to make sure all of our citizens receive the nourishment needed to live healthy lives.

Thank you for this opportunity to express support.

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 10:52:26 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jill Coombs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am a local agricultural business owner who recently started the process of starting my own farm on Molokai. **I support SB 1250, 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**.

SB 1250, 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.

Jill Coombs 808-658-9849

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 11:17:22 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steve Parsons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Help Familes, Vote yes on this!

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 11:25:35 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John R. Gordines	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill to support our Hawaii farmers and ranchers to continue to provide food from the farms to those in need.

March 19, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON SB 1250, SD1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

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

I am a local agricultural business owner/manager/employer at 4571 Wailapa Rd. Kilauea, HI 96754. I **support SB 1250, 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.

SB 1250, 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.

Mark L. Soppeland
President, Soppeland Inc. dba Island Estates
(808) 635-4052
Mleos8@outlook.com

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 12:38:36 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gary R Ueunten	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB1250. We are a small farm on Kauai that has worked with food banks on Kauai for more than 5 years and have seen funding fluctuate. Steady funding would allow food banks to establish better working relationships with farmers allowing for more food production. We also believe food banks target needy families at the grassroots level.

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 1:04:56 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nikos Leverenz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and AGR Committee:

I am writing in support of SB 1250, SD 1, which would establish the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food insecurity in Hawaii.

With the federal government having just [rescinded more than \\$1 billion](#) in support for the Local Food For Schools Cooperative Agreement Program, and with [more cuts likely on the way](#), it is imperative for state policymakers to support a range of programs in each county that meets growing demand for food in light of persistent upward cost pressure in the retail grocery market.

Programs like DA BOX Community Supported Agriculture, Kokua Harvest, DA BUX, Fresh 4 All, Ai Holo, and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition directly benefit local farmers and low-income residents.

Empowering more residents to access fresh local produce in each county is a [vital public health measure](#) that also supports our local agricultural sector.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 1:20:19 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gil Keith-Agaran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Chair Representative Kirstin Kahaloe, Vice Chair Representative Matthias Kusch, and members of the committee

My name is Gil Keith-Agaran, and I currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Maui Food Bank, an organization dedicated to alleviating hunger and ensuring that no one in our community goes without nutritious food. Every month, the Maui Food Bank provides critical food assistance to thousands of individuals and families, including seniors, children, and those experiencing economic hardship.

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Hawai'i Farm to Families Program" 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 (like the Maui Food Bank) 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.

Sincerely,

GIL KEITH-AGARAN

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 2:01:08 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglass Adams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in STRONG support of SB1250 SD1, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State. As hundreds of organizations and private citizens have already testified with passion, data-based evidence, and relevant anecdotes in support of this legislation, I will only state that during the past four years my county team and I worked to create a stronger food system for the people of Hawai'i County and the state. This legislation is sorely needed to help continue those efforts.

I strongly encourage the Committee to support SB1250 SD1 and move it to the Committee on Finance with a favorable recommendation.

respectfully,

Douglass S. Adams

Hilo

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 3:18:40 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	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.

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 6:57:58 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
gayle goodman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- **RE: Support for [Bill SB 1250, Farm to Family**

Dear Mike Gabbard and Clarence Nishihara,

My name is Gayle Goodman and I am a private citizen.

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.

It needs to be a priority for us to support our local farmers and to make sure that noone goes 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.

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 8:44:03 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee,

Please support SB1250. 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 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. Please invest in and pass SB1250.

Sincerely,

Jordan Smith

Honolulu, 96813

SB-1250-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 9:14:46 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/19/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
McKenzie Wildey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure.