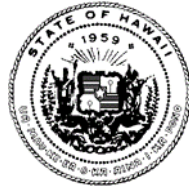


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 24, 2026

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 3245 SD1 – RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

Hearing: February 25, 2026, Time 10:56 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the bill and provides comments.

This bill requires DHS to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit households and participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP). Participation shall include the following:

- (1) Establishing recertification periods of at least thirty-six months for households composed entirely of adults sixty years of age or older or adults with disabilities; and
- (2) Waiving the recertification interview for eligibility households, to the extent allowed by federal law.

The Department appreciates the SD1 amendment to change the effective implementation date to July 1, 2028 as this will give DHS time to focus efforts to lowering the payment error rate, adjust to the new Benefit Eligibility Solution system (BES), and assess the impact, if any, of mandated changes of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), Public Law 119-

21, signed July 4, 2025.

Amongst other things, OBBBA changed fiscal requirements and expanded the population of SNAP recipients from ages 18-54 to (OBBBA) 18-64 required to comply with the SNAP Able-Bodied Adults without Dependent Children (ABAWD) work requirements. DHS will need time to analyze the impacts the OBBBA changes have on other States with ESAP programs, and the potential resources needed by the Department to effectively implement ESAP.

As referenced above, in addition to implementing SNAP changes required by OBBBA, DHS is currently testing its replacement eligibility BES system, with piloting scheduled for October 2026, followed by a statewide rollout in February 2027. Once operational, BES will be able to support the option granted to states to extend the certification period for SNAP households aged sixty years or older from twelve (12) months to twenty-four (24) months without a waiver.

For the committee's information, beginning in federal fiscal year 2028 and continuing annually, OBBBA authorized a new cost-share model for SNAP benefits tied to payment error rates. Currently, the SNAP benefit is 100% federally funded and the OBBBA cost-share will require states to pay a percentage of the SNAP benefit. Specifically, states with a payment error rate of 6% or higher, based on their payment error rate from either federal fiscal year 2025 or 2026 (states choose which year's error rate to use as the baseline), will be required to state-fund a percentage of total SNAP benefits.

Hawaii currently issues roughly \$660 million in SNAP benefits annually. Using this annual amount as an estimate, the percentage tiering for Hawaii would be the following:

Table 1. Cost Share for SNAP Benefits by payment error rate, beginning federal fiscal year 2028.

	Cost Share for SNAP Benefits	
Payment Error Rate	% of State Cost Share for SNAP	Est. Annual Amount to be paid by Hawaii
<6%	0%	\$0
6-7.99%	5%	\$33,000,000
8-9.99%	10%	\$66,000,000
10% or above	15%	\$99,000,000

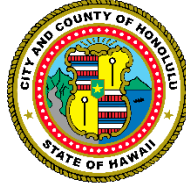
For the federal fiscal year 2024, DHS had a payment error rate of 6.68%. This is the

most recent official and final federal fiscal year error rate published by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food & Nutrition Services. DHS achieved this by streamlining and solidifying certain processes, thereby stabilizing the overall eligibility process. Although we continue to work to lower the payment error rate, some OBBBA changes took effect on July 4, 2025, the date OBBBA was signed, and we anticipate payment errors. Understanding the financial magnitude a high error rate would have for the State, the Department will continue to prioritize lowering our payment error rate as our top on-going priority for SNAP.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

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

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

KEALOHA FOX, Ph. D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR &
CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
PO'O HO'OKŌ & KAHU OLA LOA

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

TESTIMONY OF KEALOHA FOX, PH.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY AND
RESILIENCY AND CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Wednesday, February 25, 2026, 10:56 AM
Conference RM 211 and Via Videoconference

TO: Sen. Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair, Sen. Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

RE: SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 3245 SD1, RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL
NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The City and County of Honolulu's ("City") Office of Climate Change, Sustainability, and Resiliency ("Resilience Office") **supports** Senate Bill 3245 SD1, which would extend minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households and require the Department of Human Services to participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project.

Food security is a cornerstone of community resilience. On O'ahu, more than one in four households experience food insecurity, and over one-third of residents live below the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) threshold, reflecting the growing gap between wages and the cost of basic necessities. These pressures are intensified by climate-related disruptions, including extreme heat, rising food prices, and supply chain vulnerabilities, which disproportionately impact kūpuna, people with disabilities, and low-income households. Reliable access to nutritious food improves public health outcomes, reduces emergency response needs during climate shocks, and strengthens household capacity to withstand rising costs associated with climate change.

This measure reduces unnecessary administrative barriers that may prevent eligible individuals and families from maintaining their SNAP benefits. Extending certification periods and simplifying recertification for vulnerable populations will reduce the risk of benefit interruptions and help ensure more consistent access to nutrition and improve stability for households already facing compounding economic and climate stresses. This complements City efforts to build a more resilient local food system, reduce disparities in health and economic outcomes, and supports aging in place for kūpuna.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support** of SB3245 SD1.



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The State Legislature
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Wednesday, February 25, 2026
Conference Room 211, 10:56 a.m.

TO: The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
FROM: Kealii Lopez, AARP State Director
RE: Support for S.B.3245, SD1 Relating to SNAP

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 135,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

AARP Hawaii supports S.B. 3245, SD1 because it will significantly improve access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for older adults, a population that faces disproportionately high rates of food insecurity.

SNAP is the nation's largest anti-hunger program and currently supports more than 11 million adults ages 50 and older nationwide, providing essential monthly benefits that help low-income seniors afford nutritious food. Research from AARP shows that more than 9 million older adults experience food insecurity, making SNAP an especially critical resource for older populations.

For Hawai'i—where the cost of living is among the highest in the nation—these national trends are even more pronounced. Many kūpuna rely on fixed incomes and face increased barriers to maintaining consistent access to food. Simplifying SNAP enrollment and reducing administrative burdens is one of the most effective ways to increase participation among eligible older adults. Simplifying application and recertification processes leads to higher enrollment among seniors, which directly reduces hunger and supports health and independence.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure.



February 23, 2026

**Testimony in Support of S.B.3245 SD1
Relating to The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**

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

Aloha United Way is in strong support of this measure to extend SNAP certification periods and implement the Elderly Simplified Application Project.

In Hawai'i, approximately 40% of households are below the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) threshold. These are working families who earn above the federal poverty level but still cannot afford basic necessities. Too often, food is one of the first expenses reduced when budgets are strained. For many of these households, SNAP is not optional; it is essential economic infrastructure that keeps food on the table and prevents deeper crises.

Extending certification periods reduces unnecessary administrative churn for both participants and the Department of Human Services. Families and kūpuna who currently navigate frequent paperwork, interviews, and recertifications just to maintain basic nutrition support should be prioritized for simplified access, not burdened with additional bureaucracy. Streamlining the process helps eligible households stay connected to benefits and reduces interruptions caused by missed deadlines or complex requirements.

For older adults and people with disabilities, longer certification periods and waived interviews recognize the realities of fixed incomes, mobility challenges, and health concerns. These changes promote dignity, stability, and consistent access to food, while also improving administrative efficiency.

When households can rely on stable food assistance, they are better able to stay housed, maintain employment, and remain healthy. This bill is a practical, cost-effective step toward strengthening Hawai'i's social safety net, reducing administrative burden on State employees, and supporting our most vulnerable residents.

We urge you to support S.B.3245 SD1.

Mahalo,

Michelle Bartell
President & CEO
Aloha United Way

¹<https://www.auw.org/about/alice-initiative/alice-reports/>



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

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Director of Public Policy
Maria Rallojay, Public Policy Specialist

Hearing: Wednesday, February 25, 2026, 10:56am, Conference Room 211

RE: **SB3245 SD1 Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of SB3245 SD1**. This measure would require the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project, and report to the legislature.

AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan founded by Hawai'i's Community Health Centers and the Queen Emma Clinics. We serve over 66,000 Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dual-eligible residents on all islands. Since 1994, AlohaCare has partnered with providers, government entities, and community-based organizations to meet the evolving needs of our safety net community as Hawai'i's only health plan focused solely on Medicaid-eligible individuals. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for equitable access to quality, whole-person care for all.

AlohaCare is committed to ensuring whole-person care by addressing key social determinants of health like nutrition. We understand that food insecurity is a critical health issue and a key driver of health inequities. Food insecurity remains high among households receiving or seeking SNAP, particularly when benefits are denied¹. SNAP provides essential support to many families, but the application and recertification process can be complicated and often causes eligible recipients to lose their benefits. Extending the certification period for all recipients would reduce these barriers and ensure more people maintain their benefits. Participating in the Elderly Simplified Application Program would allow kūpuna to recertify only once every three years. As such, AlohaCare supports this measure because these changes would ease the burden on both applicants and SNAP staff, improving access to this vital program for everyone.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of SB3245 SD1**.

¹ 75% food insecure for households who applied or received SNAP, and 83% food insecure for those denied SNAP. Hawai'i Food Bank, Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i, Maui Food Bank, The Food Basket. The State of Food Insecurity in Hawaii 2024-2025. 2025.
https://hawaiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/HawaiiFoodbank_FoodInsecurityReport_2025-25.pdf



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for SB 3245 – Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at 10:56AM

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **SB 3245**, which would require the Department of Human Services (DHS) to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP), and report to the Legislature.

SNAP is a critical lifeline for more than 160,000 Hawai‘i residents. Without it, many of these individuals would not have any money to pay for food at all. Since benefits are federally funded, federal rules require tedious paperwork and documentation both upon initial application and for periodic recertification.¹ **Some SNAP users lose these crucial benefits during the recertification process, despite no changes to eligibility.** This phenomenon, known as “churn,” adds significantly to the administrative burden of administering SNAP at the state level.

This bill would provide some relief for the churn issue. Currently, Hawai‘i requires recertification every 12 months for most households (with a six-month “interim report”). However, federal rules allow states to extend the SNAP certification period for certain households to 24 months. Using the ESAP waiver, the recertification period can be even longer—up to 36 months, and the waiver removes some additional application barriers for seniors. As of 2024, 23 other states have already implemented ESAP and there are more to follow suit.²

In fact, the Legislature has already requested that DHS implement this waiver, through last year’s adoption of HCR146 HD1 SD1 (2025), which requested “*DHS to apply for and implement the Elderly Simplified Application Project in the State when capable*” and to “*seek any necessary federal approvals or waivers to implement the ESAP in the State, including amending its rules, policies, and procedures.*” This bill formalizes this request into a mandate, and addresses the “when capable” clause by setting the effective date to July 1, 2028.

The proposed extended certification periods for most households have twofold benefits, reducing workload for both applicants and eligibility staff. We have a unique opportunity to ease the burden on both sides of the application process. Thank you for considering these comments in your deliberation of SB 3245.

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, “SNAP Data Tables: National and/or State Level Monthly and/or Annual Data,” Food and Nutrition Service, 2024. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, “SNAP State Options Report,” Food and Nutrition Service, 2024, p. 26. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-16th-state-options-report-june24.pdf>



HIPHI Board

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Hawai'i Climate Change and Health
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Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Immunization Coalition

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: February 24, 2026

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

RE: Support for SB 3245 SD1, Relating To The Supplemental Nutrition
Assistance Program

Hrg: Wednesday, February 25, 2025, at 10:56 AM, Conference Room 211

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating, Active Living² (HEAL) coalition is in **support of SB 3245 SD1**, which requires the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits for households, and would participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project.

One in three households in Hawai'i faces food insecurity. Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are a lifeline to many of these residents. Local families in need receive over \$600 million annually in SNAP benefits. Unfortunately, the state has made accessing these benefits incredibly difficult. The state needs to improve the enrollment process and ensure local SNAP-eligible residents can receive the federal benefits they need.

Kupuna Could Re-Certify Once Every Three Years Rather Than Annually

Residents in Hawai'i face frequent SNAP recertification requirements, with some needing to submit paperwork as often as every six months. Kūpuna (60 years and over) are required by the state to recertify annually, even though federal regulations permit them to do so only once every three years.³

Hawai'i has the opportunity to extend SNAP certification periods to the federal maximum for all recipients. This change would significantly reduce the paperwork burden on families and kūpuna, easing stress and administrative challenges.

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

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

³ USDA - SNAP State Options Report.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/waivers/state-options-report>



Importantly, it would also reduce the risk of losing benefits during the recertification process, a common issue caused by paperwork difficulties and bureaucratic barriers. By adopting this policy, Hawai'i can ensure more consistent access to essential food assistance for its residents.

Decreased Workload for SNAP Staff

Hawai'i's SNAP department faces overwhelming demand for its services, yet it lacks sufficient staffing to meet that demand effectively. By reducing the frequency of recertification, the department can significantly decrease its administrative workload.

This would free up valuable resources and allow staff to focus on improving the overall efficiency and accessibility of both the SNAP application and recertification processes. Streamlining these operations would benefit not only the department but also the thousands of residents who rely on SNAP for essential food assistance.

Extended Certifications can be Implemented with New Benefits Eligibility System This Fall

We are excited for the new eligibility system to launch this fall which can accommodate extending certification periods. This will streamline the process for both DHS staff and the SNAP applicants.

Please extend the SNAP certification periods to ensure we're doing everything we can to make SNAP as accessible as possible. Mahalo for your consideration.

Mahalo,

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

Nate Hix
Director of Policy and Advocacy

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 5:20:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:56:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Nguyen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Lynn Nguyen, and I am writing in strong support of SB3245, which seeks to strengthen support for Hawai‘i’s underserved and ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) communities.

Across our state, many hardworking families are doing everything “right” — working full-time, contributing to their communities, raising children, caring for kūpuna — yet still struggling to afford basic necessities. ALICE households often earn too much to qualify for traditional public assistance, but not enough to achieve financial stability. They are one unexpected expense away from crisis.

This bill represents an important step toward closing that gap.

Underserved communities in Hawai‘i face layered challenges, including high housing costs, food insecurity, limited access to childcare, transportation barriers, and workforce constraints. When families lack stability in one area, it often impacts every other area of life — including children’s educational outcomes, mental health, and long-term economic mobility.

By investing upstream and strengthening systems that support working families, we reduce the need for more costly crisis interventions later. Supporting ALICE households is not only a moral imperative — it is fiscally responsible and economically strategic.

When families are stable:

- Children are better able to learn and thrive
- Workers are more productive and reliable
- Communities experience stronger social cohesion
- Public systems experience reduced strain

This legislation acknowledges that prevention and stabilization are just as important as crisis response. It recognizes that resilience is built not only at the individual level, but through strong and responsive systems.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this Senate Bill and continue prioritizing policies that create pathways to stability, dignity, and opportunity for Hawai'i's working families.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your continued commitment to serving our communities.

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 5:40:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:56:00 AM

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

Comments:

Extending SNAP certification periods for seniors makes good sense because it reduces administrative burdens on both elderly participants with fixed income and state agencies, while increasing program access, and decreasing unintentional loss of benefits. Importantly, this will result in ensuring continuous food security for seniors in need.

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 6:45:51 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:56:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

3245 SB RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.



PO Box 4, Kunia, Hawaii, 96759 || 808-622-9026 || www.agstewardshiphawaii.org

February 23, 2026

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

Re: **SB3245 SD1**, RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

On behalf of **Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i**, we support **S3245 SD1** which would adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households, enable participation in the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP), and require reporting to the Legislature.

Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i leads the **Statewide Food Systems Coordination Initiative (HSFSC)**, launched in 2024 with philanthropic and gubernatorial support. HSFSC works to align agricultural stakeholders, address infrastructure barriers, secure federal resources, advance institutional procurement of local food, and support policy priorities that strengthen Hawai'i's food system.

SB 3245 aligns with these goals by directly addressing Hawai'i's food insecurity crisis, helping families maintain consistent access to healthy food, easing administrative burdens for participants and staff, and supporting a stronger, more resilient local food system through reduced disruptions in SNAP benefits.

As of 2024, **23 other states** have implemented ESAP, with more planning to follow. Hawai'i has an opportunity to join this growing cohort, providing meaningful relief to both SNAP participants and staff, while supporting food security statewide. We respectfully urge the Committee to support SB 3245, S.D.1, as a practical and impactful measure to strengthen Hawai'i's safety net and food system.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Dr. Amanda Shaw, PhD, Statewide Food Systems Coordinator
Email: amanda@agstewardshiphawaii.org, Tel: 808 429 5310

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:57:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:56:00 AM

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

Comments:

In support of. Thank you.



2026 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 Applesseed
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

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at 10:56AM

RE: Support for SB 3245, Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

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

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, would like to express strong support for **SB 3245**. This bill would require the Department of Human Services (DHS) to extend minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits households and participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP).

SNAP is a critical lifeline for around 160,000 Hawai'i residents, supporting working families, individuals with disabilities, and others living on fixed or limited incomes. Yet food insecurity remains widespread, with 1 in 3 Hawai'i residents struggling due to the state's high cost of living. Without SNAP, many would not have any money to pay for food at all.

One issue our network members report is that the frequent need to recertify can result in some families losing benefits, even when they still qualify. Extending certification periods to the maximum allowable by federal law could alleviate the burden on both applicants and SNAP staff workers. This bill would extend the certification period up to 36 months for kūpuna and people with disabilities—an opportunity to reduce the risk of losing benefits due to paperwork issues. Following suit of 25 other states, implementing ESAP would also simplify the process by allowing kūpuna to waive recertification interviews.¹

Mahalo for your leadership and for your consideration of **SB 3245**. Extending SNAP certification periods will be a tremendous relief for struggling families as well as eligibility staff.

Hawai'i Hunger Action Network membership

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, "SNAP State Options Report," Food and Nutrition Service, 2025, p. 28.
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-stateOptionsReport-17edition-120925.pdf>

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 2:27:59 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:56:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathryn Braun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Kathryn Braun, and I am a long-time educators in the Hawai‘i School System. I also am an older adult and help other older adults access programs they need.

I am writing to express strong support for SB 3245, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to improve SNAP access and ultimately strengthen our state’s food security landscape.

Some SNAP users lose crucial benefits during the recertification process, despite no changes to eligibility. The proposed Elderly Simplified Application Process (ESAP) extends the recertification period to every 3 years and allows kūpuna and adults with disabilities to waive recertification interviews.

Hawai‘i should join the other [25 US states that have already implemented ESAP](#). Ensuring food access reduces reliance on emergency services and homelessness, ultimately benefiting individuals saving taxpayer dollars.

Mahalo for your leadership and for your consideration of SB 3245.. This bill is essential to building a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i while strengthening one of our most essential safety nets.

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 3:56:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:56:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support** of SB3245, a bill that modernizes Hawai‘i’s administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by extending certification periods for our kūpuna, streamlining the recertification process, and ensuring a smooth transition for individuals reentering the community from incarceration.

For the over 155,000 residents of Hawai‘i who rely on SNAP, this program is not just a benefit; it is a critical lifeline that ensures families can put food on the table. However, bureaucratic barriers often prevent eligible residents from accessing the nutrition they need.

Currently, many SNAP recipients—particularly our elderly and disabled residents—lose benefits during the recertification process due to paperwork burdens or mandatory interviews, even when their financial and medical circumstances have not changed. This "churn" disrupts access to nutritious food and creates unnecessary administrative costs.

By requiring the Department of Human Services to participate in the **Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP)**, this bill would extend certification periods for qualified kūpuna and adults with disabilities to up to 36 months and waive the burdensome recertification interview. This allows our most vulnerable residents to maintain consistent access to food with dignity and less red tape. It is important to note that **25 other states have already implemented ESAP** and have seen success in reducing administrative burdens while maintaining program integrity. Hawai‘i should not lag behind in serving our kūpuna.

SB3245 is a smart, efficient, and humane update to our SNAP administration. It honors our kūpuna, and ensures that federal dollars are used effectively to fight hunger in our state.

I urge the Committee to pass this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 6:28:32 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:56:00 AM

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

Comments:

Ways and Means

2/25/26

RE: Support for SB3245SB 3245

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

My name is Gayle Goodman and I am writing to express strong support for SB3245, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to improve SNAP access and ultimately strengthen our state's food security landscape. This bill will strengthen SNAP by:

- SNAP is critical to the over 155,000 residents who receive benefits in Hawai'i.
- SNAP applicants face many barriers to applying for federal SNAP benefits.
- Some SNAP users lose crucial benefits during the recertification process, despite no changes to eligibility.
- Elderly Simplified Application Program (ESAP) extends the recertification period to every 3 years and allows kūpuna and adults with disabilities to waive recertification interviews.
- 25 other states have already implemented ESAP.
- Allowing inmates to apply for SNAP before being released allows people to access food immediately upon reentry, instead of waiting weeks or months during community reintegration.

Mahalo for your leadership and for your consideration of SB3245. This bill is essential to building a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i while strengthening one of our most essential safety nets.

Thank you, Gayle Goodman, Honolulu

SB-3245-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 9:40:38 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:56:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John A. H. Tomoso	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: SB3245 SD1

Aloha,

This Bill would extend SNAP certification periods and require participation in the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP). It is urgent that this Bill is passed, as Hawai'i is increasingly aging!

Mahalo

John A. H. Tomoso+, MSW, ACSW

51 Ku'ula St, Kahului, HI 96732-2906

john.a.h.tomoso@gmail.com

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at 10:56 am
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 3245, SD1 - RELATING TO THE
SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Senator Hashimoto for my district, Senator DeCoite for Upcountry Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews, and I live in Wailuku, Maui. I write to you today in **strong support of SB 3245, SD1**, which requires the Department of Human Services to adjust the minimum certification periods for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits households, participate in the Elderly Simplified Application Project, and report to the Legislature.

SNAP is critical to the over 155,000 residents who receive benefits in Hawai‘i.¹ Unfortunately, SNAP applicants face many barriers to applying for federal SNAP benefits and some SNAP users lose crucial benefits during the recertification process, despite no changes to eligibility. Senate Bill 3245, SD1 would help overcome some of these barriers for our elderly community members by implementing the Elderly Simplified Application Program (ESAP). ESAP is a SNAP demonstration project focused on households with adults aged 60 or older and people with disabilities. ESAP streamlines the application and certification process by simplifying the verification process, providing 36-month certifications, and waiving the recertification interview. ESAP serves households that do not have earned income and in which all adult members are aged 60 or older and/or have a disability. Twenty-five other states have already implemented ESAP.²

ESAP is a model program with documented benefits that would help provide food security for our vulnerable kūpuna. I respectfully request that you **vote in support of SB 3245, SD1**.

Mahalo for supporting our most vulnerable community members,

Christine Andrews
Wailuku, Maui

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, “SNAP Data Tables: National and/or State Level Monthly and/or Annual Data,” 2025.
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, “SNAP State Options Report,” Food and Nutrition Service, 2025, p. 28.
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-stateOptionsReport-17edition-120925.pdf>