



**STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I**  
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TESTIMONY  
OF  
BONNIE KAHAKUI, ADMINISTRATOR  
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE  
ON  
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS  
FEBRUARY 7, 2025, 9:30 AM

HOUSE BILL 1187  
RELATING TO PROCUREMENT

Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 1187. The State Procurement Office (SPO) supports the intent of HB 1187, which aims to phase in restrictions on purchasing imported flowers and lei to encourage the use of locally grown and harvested plant materials. However, the SPO has some concerns that require careful consideration:

1. **Local Vendor Capacity:** Many local vendors may not have the capacity to meet the increased demand for flowers and lei within the proposed implementation timeline. This may result in supply chain challenges and potential delays in fulfilling procurement orders for state departments and agencies.
2. **Cost Implications:** The cost of locally sourced flowers and lei could be significantly higher compared to imported alternatives due to factors such as limited economies of scale, higher production costs, and supply shortages. These cost increases could impact departmental budgets and require additional funding considerations.

While we recognize the importance of supporting local agriculture and sustainability, we recommend a comprehensive assessment of local production capacity and cost implications.

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



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February 7, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1187**  
RELATING TO PROCUREMENT

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 HB 1187**, which phases in a ban on state departments and administratively attached agencies from purchasing imported flowers and lei. Encouraging the procurement of locally grown flowers and lei supports Hawai'i's farmers, strengthens the local floriculture industry, and promotes sustainability by reducing reliance on imports.

Hawai'i's floriculture industry is an important part of the state's agricultural sector, providing lei and flowers that are deeply embedded in Hawaiian culture and traditions. However, the industry has faced challenges due to competition from imported flowers, high production costs, and market fluctuations. Phasing in a requirement for state agencies to purchase locally grown flowers and lei will help provide a stable and predictable market for local producers, allowing them to reinvest in their operations and expand production.

While we support the intent of HB 1187, we recognize that increasing local production will be necessary to meet the growing demand created by this transition. Farmers need time to scale up their operations, invest in infrastructure, and address workforce challenges to ensure they can meet the benchmarks established in the bill. Strengthening Hawai'i's floriculture industry will require a collaborative approach, including:

- **Providing resources and support for farmers** to increase production capacity, including access to land, water, and financial assistance.

- **Encouraging research and development** in floriculture to improve yields, pest management, and post-harvest handling.
- **Ensuring procurement practices** that make it easier for local flower growers to participate in state purchasing programs.

We encourage the Legislature to consider mechanisms to support local flower producers as this transition takes place, such as investment in agricultural infrastructure, increased funding for agricultural research and extension services, access to affordable land, water, and energy, access to capital, protection of agricultural lands from non-agricultural uses and development, expansion of workforce training programs, streamlined permitting processes that reduce regulatory barriers for farmers, and business development programs and technical assistance for floriculture farmers. With the right support, Hawai'i's floriculture industry can grow to meet the demand, ensuring that locally grown lei and flowers are available for state procurement while strengthening local agriculture.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports HB1187.**

HB1187 aligns with the mission to bolster local agriculture and support Hawaiian farmers by phasing out the purchase of imported flowers and lei by state departments and agencies. By prioritizing the procurement of locally grown flowers, this bill reduces the carbon footprint associated with importing flowers from other regions. This legislation will also have positive economic impacts, stimulating job creation and economic growth within the agricultural sector. The transition to local purchasing acts as an investment in Hawaii's future agriculture, encouraging younger generations to engage in farming and agricultural entrepreneurship.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union