



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/07/2025

Time: 09:30 AM

Location: 325 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Committee: House Agriculture & Food Systems

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Bill Title: HB 0328, HD1 RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education to authorize and facilitate complex areas or individual public schools to form their own farm to school meal programs through partnerships to meet the local farm to school meal goal of thirty per cent of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030. Allows the Department of Education to establish a plant-based meal program no later than the 2026-2027 school year. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully provides comments on HB 328 HD 1.

The Department remains committed to increasing locally sourced products for the school meal program in alignment with Act 175, Session Laws of Hawaii 2021 (Act 175). The School Food Services Branch continues to expand its reach to food vendors across the state, to increase the procurement of locally grown and locally raised products, and to assist with incorporating culturally appropriate meals into school menus. It also continues to support and include students in the recipe development and menu planning process.

The Department is concerned that the decentralization of the farm-to-school program to complex areas will place an inordinate burden on Complex Area Superintendents to manage. School complexes do not have the ability to plan menus that are in federal compliance with the United States Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program, nor to procure food through competitive and fair bids that abide by state and federal laws.

For plant-based meals, for the Department to meet federal meal credit compliance statewide and maintain federal financial support, the Department must be able to procure plant-based meat/meat

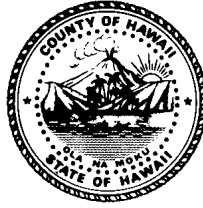
alternates or entrees that meet the definition of a locally sourced product to be able to serve a plant-based meal option.

The Department's School Food Services Branch (SFSB) is currently able to offer local plant-based meal items such as salads and sides, but for plant-based proteins, the SFSB finds that Hawaii farms and vendors are not prepared to provide local plant-based meats/meat alternatives sufficient for meals at 257 schools statewide at this time. The SFSB's assessment of the capacity of local vendors, through its 2023 Request for Information campaign, found that Hawaii's agriculture and food manufacturing industry does not yet have large-scale vendors producing sufficient plant-based proteins made from local ingredients. To meet the demands of this bill by the school year 2026-2027, the unintended consequence of this measure may compel the Department to purchase plant-based manufactured products from the mainland to meet this bill's mandate and, therefore, reduce the demand for locally raised animal proteins that we currently purchase to pursue the thirty percent by 2030 local food purchases goal.

Finally, the Department already provides two plant-based meal options that are incorporated regularly in the meal rotation at schools. However, due to the lack of available local plant-based protein suppliers, this is currently procured from mainland vendors.

The Department has and will continue to work towards increasing plant-based meal options within the federal guidelines while prioritizing local food purchases in support of Act 175, sensitive to the environmental impact it may have.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: February 5, 2025
TO: Committee of Education
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member,
Council District 2
SUBJECT: HB 328 D1

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

I am testifying in support of HB 328 D1 to require the Department of Education to authorize and facilitate schools to form their own farm-to-school meal programs through partnerships to meet the local farm-to-school meal goal of 30% locally sourced products by 2030.

Progress in Hawai'i's goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals has fallen behind. Action is needed to ensure this very important goal is met. Moreover, offering fresh local food options is found to enhance student health outcomes and provides an opportunity to support local agriculture, while also supporting a healthy climate by eliminating greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from importing food. Providing plant-based meal options provides healthy, tasty, environmentally friendly options our keiki can enjoy.

--HB328 is both a wonderful and common-sense idea that supports our farmers and at the same time helps our keiki by providing local, fresh, healthy options. We know that by promoting healthy lifestyle choices and providing access to meals that contain less processed food, and more fruits and vegetables, we can help keiki reduce their risk for developing chronic diseases and improve their overall health.

--Efforts to support our farmers to build our resilience and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping food in for meals offered at public schools. In addition, it stimulates our economy by creating local jobs and supporting the growth of local agriculture. These efforts and more are the type of actions needed to move Hawai'i to a decarbonized economy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

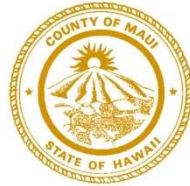
Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenn Kagiwada", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jenn Kagiwada

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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: February 5, 2025

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB328 HD1, RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this measure. The Act requires the Department of Education to authorize and facilitate complex areas or individual department schools to form their own farm to school meal programs through partnerships to meet the local farm to school meal goal of thirty per cent of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030. Allows the Department of Education to establish a plant-based meal program no later than the 2026-2027 school year.

We **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

1. We believe that empowering our complex areas or individual department schools to form their own farm to school meal programs creates an overall better situation for collaboration and economic opportunities for farmers and producers within their respective regions.
2. As a collective we have not made significant progress to meeting the farm to school meal goal of thirty per cent of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030. This has negative impacts on our local agricultural economy and our keiki who are subject to eating unhealthy, highly processed foods. These non-locally sourced foods may meet our keiki caloric needs, but not their nutritional needs, which this farm to school system would address.
3. Our DOE institution is the largest market for our farmers to offer their produce too. Creating regional opportunities for farmers to sell their produce to positive impacts economic viability because it will bring down the cost of transportation of goods. Furthermore, regional DOE farm to school systems would increase our overall community's sustainability and resilience during blue sky days and emergency situations, by being foundational components of communities and producers food systems.

Mahalo for your consideration.



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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 HB328.**

This initiative strengthens the bond between educational institutions and local farmers, enhancing the resilience and sustainability of our food systems. Local sourcing not only enriches the nutritional quality of school meals but also serves as a pivotal educational tool to teach students about the importance of local agriculture and food security.

Our local farmers are eager to supply schools with high-quality, fresh ingredients and are ready to expand their crop varieties to support this initiative. Through this legislation, we can pave the way for a healthier, more sustainable future for our children and our islands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

Fawn Helekahi-Burns
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakalā, Maui

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TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAII HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Item: HB 328, HD1 – Relating to School Meals

Position: Support

Hearing: Friday, February 7, 2025, 9:30 am, Room 325

Submitter: Osa Tui, Jr., President - Hawai'i State Teachers Association

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

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA) supports HB 328, HD1 which aims to improve the nutritional quality of school meals in Hawai'i. The bill's focus on increasing locally sourced food and offering plant-based options aligns with our commitment to student health and well-being. We believe that providing nutritious and culturally relevant meals is essential for academic success and overall development.

HB 328, HD1's emphasis on farm-to-school programs and plant-based meals is a step in the right direction. Incorporating more fresh produce and whole grains into school menus will not only benefit students' health but also support local farmers and the local economy. Additionally, offering plant-based options caters to diverse dietary needs and preferences while promoting environmental sustainability.

We urge the committee to pass HB 328, HD1 and invest in the health and future of Hawai'i's keiki. By prioritizing nutritious and sustainable school meals, we can create a healthier and more vibrant learning environment for all students.

Mahalo.



HIPHI Board

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Community Health
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COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Network

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 6, 2024

To: Representative Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair
Representative Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

RE: Support for HB 328 Relating to School Meals

Hrg: Friday, February 7, 2025, at 9:30 am, Conference Room 325

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ supports House Bill 328, which mandates the Department of Education to authorize and facilitate complex areas or individual department schools to establish farm-to-school programs. This legislation aligns with HIPHI's commitment to promoting sustainable food systems, healthy eating, and active living among Hawai'i's youth. By fostering direct connections between local farmers and schools, farm-to-school programs provide students with fresh, minimally processed foods while offering educational opportunities that build their understanding of agriculture, nutrition, and environmental sustainability.

The primary benefit of farm-to-school programs is their positive impact on student health². Childhood obesity and diet-related illnesses, such as diabetes and heart disease, are significant concerns in Hawai'i, and increasing access to fresh, locally grown food in schools is a critical strategy for improving nutrition among students.³ When students consume healthier meals made with fresh produce, they are more likely to develop lifelong habits that support their well-being. Studies have shown that farm-to-school programs increase fruit and vegetable consumption among students while reducing their intake of highly processed foods.

In addition to health benefits, farm-to-school programs provide invaluable educational opportunities. Hands-on learning experiences, such as school gardens and farm visits, help students understand where their food comes from and the importance of sustainable agricultural practices. These experiences also promote science, math, and environmental education by allowing students to engage in real-world applications of these subjects.

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 National Farm to School Network. *THE BENEFITS OF FARM TO SCHOOL*. May 2020, cdn.prod.website-files.com/5c469df2395cd53c3d913b2d/611027419232d281ad2f51ff_BenefitsFactSheet.pdf.

³ Okihiro, May. *Childhood Obesity in Hawai'i: The Role of the Healthcare Provider*. 1 July 2011, [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3158457](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3158457).



By integrating agriculture into the school curriculum, students gain skills that can lead to future careers in farming, nutrition, and environmental science, which are vital to Hawai'i's economic and food security.

HB 328 also supports local agriculture and strengthens Hawai'i's food systems by ensuring that schools can source food directly from local farmers. Hawai'i imports nearly 90% of its food, making it vulnerable to supply chain disruptions and high food costs.⁴ Encouraging local food procurement through farm-to-school programs supports small farmers and agricultural businesses and reduces the state's dependence on imported food. Strengthening Hawai'i's local food economy is crucial to achieving greater food security and resilience, especially with climate change and global supply chain uncertainties.

HIPHI urges the legislature to support HB328, a crucial investment in students' well-being, the strength of the local economy, and the resilience of Hawai'i's food systems. Farm-to-school programs are a proven strategy for improving child nutrition, supporting educational goals, and revitalizing local agriculture, and their expansion will benefit communities across the state.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kawika Kahiapo". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large loop at the end.

Kawika Kahiapo
Hawaii Farm to School Network Program Coordinator
Hawaii Public Health Institute

⁴ OFFICE OF PLANNING, et al. "INCREASED FOOD SECURITY AND FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY." *HAWAII STATE PLAN*, report, U.S. Department of Commerce, 2007, files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/op/spb/INCREASED_FOOD_SECURITY_AND_FOOD_SELF_SUFFICIENCY_STRATEGY.pdf.

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 10:50:28 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dave Mulinix	Greenpeace Hawaii	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha AGR Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and AGR Committee Members [Lowen](#), [Perruso](#), [Quinlan](#), [Ward](#)

My Dave Mulinix I am CoFounder and Hawaii State Representative of Greenpeace Hawaii on behalf of our thousands of members and supporters statewide we stand in Strong SUPPORT of HB328 HD1 Requires the Department of Education to authorize and facilitate complex areas or individual public schools to form their own farm to school meal programs through partnerships to meet the local farm to school meal goal of thirty per cent of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030. Allows the Department of Education to establish a plant-based meal program no later than the 2026-2027 school year.

HB328 HD1 ALLOWS the Department of Education to establish a plant-based meal program no later than the 2026-2027 school year. Plant-based meals provide a healthy, tasty, climate-friendly option that our keiki can enjoy, and is especially important for our vegan and vegetarian students. We strongly urge the Committee to amend this measure and change it from **ALLOWS** and make it a **REQUIREMENT** that the DOE establish a plant-based meal program to ensure this important option is implemented. ***It is important to note that testimony provided by students in previous years revealed that vegan and vegetarian students are going hungry due to the lack of a plant-based meal option.***

HB328 HD1 supports our local farmers and at the same time helps our keiki by providing local, fresh, healthy options. We know that by promoting healthy lifestyle choices and providing access to meals that contain less processed food, and more fruits and vegetables, we can help keiki reduce their risk for developing chronic diseases and improve their overall health.

Efforts to support our local farmers also builds our resiliency and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping food in for meals offered at public schools. In addition, it stimulates our economy by creating local jobs and supporting the growth of local agriculture. These efforts and more are the type of actions needed to move Hawaii to a decarbonized economy. This is a win:win proposition.

It must be noted that in previous testimony by the Department of Education, they stated concerns regarding possible unintended negative consequence of this measure on their efforts to pursue the thirty percent by 2030 local food purchases goal. They stated “Hawaii’s agriculture and food

manufacturing industry does not yet have large-scale vendors producing sufficient plant-based proteins made from local ingredients.” They further expressed concern that this bill’s mandate for plant-based meal options would reduce the demand for locally raised animal proteins that they currently purchase to pursue the thirty percent by 2030 local food purchases goal.

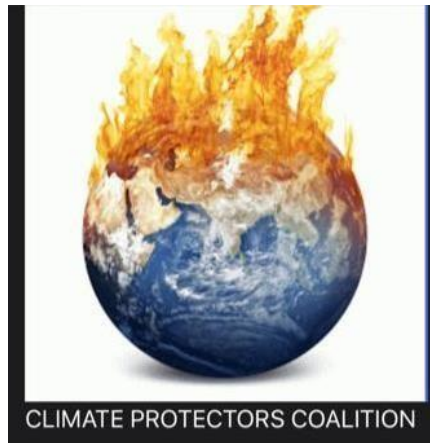
These concerns are unwarranted. Never mind the myriad of delicious ways edamame, a plant-based protein, can be prepared. Protein is just one of the food groups on a school lunch plate. There are also fruits, vegetables, and grains. Rather than fixating on the protein component of the meal to help them meet the thirty percent by 2030 local food purchases goal, they should focus on incorporating more local fruits and vegetables into the meal. ***In addition, school lunch standards now allow schools in Hawaii to substitute ulu and ‘uala for whole grains on menus.*** So now, not only can the fruits and vegetables on the plate be locally sourced, the “grain” portion of the meal can as well. Clearly, if the Department of Education effectively communicated and partnered with our local farmers, there is no reason that the thirty percent by 2030 local food purchases goal will not be able to be met.

If we are to solve the climate crisis, it will require all of us working together. We all need to be part of the solution. Importantly, HB328 HD1 offers an opportunity to empower our keiki by giving them the opportunity to make sustainable food choices that will help mitigate climate breakdown. *Bottom line*, HB328 HD1 will support our local farmers, offer healthy options for our keiki, while also supporting the health of our climate.

Please pass HB328 HD1.

Mahalo,

Dave Mulinix, CoFounder & Hawaii State Representative



To: The Honorable Chair Kristen Kahaloe, the Honorable Vice Chair Matthias Kusch, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems.

From: Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: **Hearing HB328 HD1 RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS.**

Hearing: Friday February 7, 2025, 9:30 a.m., room 325

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems!

The mission of the Climate Protectors Hawai'i is to educate and engage the local community in climate change action, to help Hawai'i show the world the way back to a safe and stable climate.

The Climate Protectors Hawai'i STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB328 HD1!

This bill requires the Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE) to authorize and facilitate complex areas or individual Department schools to form their own farm to school meal programs. It authorizes DOE to establish a plant-based meal program no later than the 2026-2027 school year. **This bill would be good for students, farmers and Hawai'i residents.**

Hawaii's food supply is not secure. We are very vulnerable to food supply interruption because we import over 80 percent of our food.

Locally grown produce enhances food security and can offer students healthier, fresher, better tasting meals. The DOE should play a key role in educating students about healthy meals by facilitating local food and plant-based food options where individual schools elect them. This will also help DOE move closer to achieving the overall goal of 30% local farm to school food by 2030.

A diet that consists of fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds, and herbs and spices has been shown to reduce the chance of developing diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and various forms of cancer, among other chronic diseases. Many students, including many Asian-American students, are lactose-intolerant and should have an option to avoid dairy products. **Offering meal options to students that consist of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds, herbs and spices, and non-dairy beverages can promote a healthy lifestyle for the State's youth and provide broader choices for students.**

DOE should establish a plant-based meal program no later than the 2026-2027 school year, as authorized in this bill!

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo!

Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)



To: The House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems (AGR)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Friday, February 7, 2025, 9:30am

In strong support of HB328 HD1

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, 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 HB328 HD1** that requires the Department of Education to authorize and facilitate complex areas or individual public schools to form their own farm to school meal programs through partnerships to meet the local farm to school meal goal of thirty per cent of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030.

This measure further allows the Department of Education to establish a plant-based meal program no later than the 2026-2027 school year. Plant-based meals provide a healthy, tasty, climate-friendly option our keiki can enjoy. We strongly urge the Committee to amend this measure and make this a **requirement** to ensure this important option is implemented. **It is important to note that testimony provided by students in previous years revealed that some students are going hungry due to the lack of a plant-based meal option.**

HB328 HD1 supports our farmers and at the same time helps our keiki by providing local, fresh, healthy options. We know that by promoting healthy lifestyle choices and providing access to meals that contain less processed food, and more fruits and vegetables, we can help keiki reduce their risk for developing chronic diseases and improve their overall health.

Efforts to support our farmers also builds our resiliency and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping food in for meals offered at public schools. In addition, it stimulates our economy by creating local jobs and supporting the growth of local agriculture. These efforts and more are the type of actions needed to move Hawaii to a decarbonized economy. Truly this is a win:win proposition.

It must be noted that in previous testimony by the Department of Education, they stated concerns regarding possible unintended negative consequence of this measure on their efforts to pursue the thirty percent by 2030 local food purchases goal. They stated "Hawaii's agriculture and food manufacturing industry does not yet have large-scale vendors producing sufficient plant-based proteins made from local ingredients." They further expressed concern that this bill's mandate for

plant-based meal options would reduce the demand for locally raised animal proteins that they currently purchase to pursue the thirty percent by 2030 local food purchases goal.

These concerns are completely unwarranted. Never mind the myriad of delicious ways edamame, a plant-based protein, can be prepared. Protein is just one of the food groups on a school lunch plate. There are also fruits, vegetables, and grains. Rather than fixating on the protein component of the meal to help them meet the thirty percent by 2030 local food purchases goal, they should focus on incorporating more local fruits and vegetables into the meal. ***In addition, school lunch standards now allow schools in Hawaii to [substitute ulu and 'uala for whole grains on menus](#).*** So now, not only can the fruits and vegetables on the plate be locally sourced, the “grain” portion of the meal can as well. Clearly, if the Department of Education effectively communicated and partnered with our local farmers, there is no reason that the thirty percent by 2030 local food purchases goal will not be able to be met.

If we are to solve the climate crisis, it will require all of us working together. We all need to be part of the solution. Importantly, HB328 HD1 offers an opportunity to empower our keiki by giving them the opportunity to make sustainable food choices that will help mitigate climate breakdown. Bottom line, HB328 HD1 will support our local farmers, offer healthy options for our keiki, while also supporting the health of our climate.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support with the requested amendment** to this important legislation.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 6:59:07 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

It's a win, win, win - support our local farmers, improve our children's dietary health, promote food sovereignty for our State, and reduce our greenhouse gases by reducing the shipping of food to Hawaii. **STRONG** support for the action



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloe, Chair
Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

HB328 HD1 RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS

Friday, February 7, 2025, 9:30 AM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **offers comment HB328 HD1** which requires the Department of Education to authorize and facilitate complex areas or individual department schools to form their own farm to school meal programs through partnerships to meet the local farm to school meal goal of thirty per cent of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030 and allows the Department of Education to establish a plant-based meal program no later than the 2026-2027 school year.

The Department of Education should focus on its goal to purchase local food for school lunches – a goal that positively contributes to each student's health as well as to Hawaii's agricultural sector and the local economy overall. Claiming that "providing plant-based meals to students can promote not only a healthy lifestyle for the State's youth but encourage students to make environmentally conscious personal decisions" is a stance that local beef, and other local animal products are not environmentally conscious – this is a stance we do not agree with.

Advancing Food Security

With cattle consistently in the top 5 agricultural commodities in the state, beef is incredibly important to advancing Hawaii's food security. Hawaii's paniolo have endured generations of challenges, and while the pineapple and sugar industries faltered, the cattle industry continues to steward tracts of land and find innovative ways to stay in business. We encourage the State to look to Hawaii's ranchers as partners in increasing food security, such as continuing to provide beef for the Farm to School program and as a resource for reducing fire fuel loads.

Nutrition

The American Heart Association recognizes beef as a heart healthy protein and even provides recipes that include lean beef. Research by Roussell et al (2012) shows eating lean beef as part of a heart-healthy dietary pattern can help maintain normal cholesterol levels. Hawaii's locally grown beef provides 10 essential nutrients in a single 3 oz. serving. This includes high-quality protein, iron, zinc and B vitamins. The iron in beef is heme iron, which is more easily absorbed than nonheme iron, which is the



main form of iron found in plant proteins. Iron is vital as it helps red blood cells carry oxygen to body tissue, but even further, it also plays an important role in cognitive health such as memory, learning, and reasoning.

Environmental Stewardship

If we encourage individuals not to choose beef, some of our most avid land stewards will suffer.

Ranchers are stewards of the land and are key in removing invasive species, reducing fire fuel loads, and increasing carbon sequestration through rotational grazing (Bremer et al., 2021). Beef raised in the US has one of the lowest carbon footprints in the world, and according to the Environmental Protection Agency, cattle are responsible for just 2% of greenhouse gas emissions in the US, with the full lifecycle of raising cattle accounting for 3.7% of greenhouse gas emissions (Rotz et al., 2019). This improvement in production is a result of research in genetics, the quality of cattle feeds, animal welfare and management techniques, and the inclusion of technology.

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

Sources Cited

Bremer, L. L., Nathan, N., Trauernicht, C., Pascua, P., Krueger, N., Jokiel, J., Barton, J., & Daily, G. C. (2021). Maintaining the Many Societal Benefits of Rangelands: The Case of Hawai'i. *Land*, 10(7), Article 7. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land10070764>

Rotz, C. A., Asem-Hiablie, S., Place, S., & Thoma, G. (2019). Environmental footprints of beef cattle production in the United States. *Agricultural Systems*, 169, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agry.2018.11.005>

Roussel, M. A., Hill, A. M., Gaugler, T. L., West, S. G., Heuvel, J. P. V., Alaupovic, P., Gillies, P. J., & Kris-Etherton, P. M. (2012). Beef in an Optimal Lean Diet study: Effects on lipids, lipoproteins, and apolipoproteins. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 95(1), 9–16. <https://doi.org/10.3945/ajcn.111.016261>

February 6th, 2025

To: Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and the State of Hawai'i Board of Agriculture and Food Systems

Subject: **HB328- Relating to localization of school meals**

I am writing to urge you to support HB328, which requires public schools to develop their own farm-to-school meal programs through partnerships with local farms. I want to begin by emphasizing the existing issue of Hawai'i's unstable food supply chain and the threat it poses to students islandwide. Schools are the one place where students and families are guaranteed a meal, but that guarantee becomes unreliable when the supply chain is so dependent on imports.

By supporting HB328, you would be taking steps to ensure that students are fed year-round in a healthy and sustainable manner. This bill builds on the success already demonstrated by the Mililani and Kohala school districts through the 'Āina Pono program. Previous pilot programs have proven the feasibility of implementing similar initiatives in other districts with proper funding and time.

Native Hawaiians represent one of the most at-risk populations for health disparities such as diabetes and obesity. Additionally, plant-based diets have been shown to significantly combat chronic health issues among Hawaiians. We advocate for local food options that are not predominantly beef-based. We should help our students prevent chronic illness by incorporating more plant-based foods into their diets and increasing their nutritional intake with fresh, local produce.

Hawai'i Food+ Policy is testifying in support of HB328, as it secures access to healthy food for students and positively impacts their health. We urge the committee to recognize the broader implications of farm-to-school programs on student well-being.

Mahalo,
Hawai'i Food + Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem



Date: 02-05-2025
To: Representative Kahaloe, Chair
Representative Kusch, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AGR)
From: Climate Future Forum
Re: **SUPPORT for HB 328**
Hearing: **02-07-25, Friday, 9:30 am**

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

On behalf of the Climate Future Forum, thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of HB328, which strengthens Hawai'i's farm-to-school program by requiring the Department of Education (DOE) to increase local food sourcing in school meals to 30% by 2030 and authorizes the DOE to establish a plant-based meal program. Mahalo Rep. Kahaloe for attending and participating in Climate Future Forum this past November!

As young leaders advocating for a sustainable and climate-resilient future, we recognize the critical role of school food systems in public health, local agriculture, and climate action. HB328 represents an opportunity to invest in Hawai'i's students, farmers, and environment by integrating fresh, locally sourced, and plant-based options into school meals.

Increasing locally sourced meals strengthens Hawai'i's food sovereignty, reduces reliance on imports, and supports the local economy. Programs like 'Āina Pono have successfully engaged local agriculture, reduced food waste, and improved meal participation. Fresh, minimally processed meals enhance student health, while expanding plant-based options lowers the risk of chronic illness and offers nutritious, culturally relevant choices. Shifting to local, plant-based meals cuts emissions from food transport and livestock production, advancing Hawai'i's commitment to climate resilience and environmental stewardship.

Personal Stories:

Vivienne

I have seen firsthand how disconnected many students are from their food. I remember sitting outside with my friends at lunch, watching them pick through their meals and toss what they didn't want into the trash without a second thought. The food was meaningless to them—it was



CLIMATE FUTURE FORUM

just another tray of something they had not chosen and didn't connect to. As a vegetarian, most days I had no choice but to bring my own food, which was sometimes difficult and isolating. The lack of options and the disconnect from where our food comes from in our schools not only contributes to food waste, but also is a missed opportunity to nourish students and build a more resilient food system for our future.

Maya

As a student at Punahou, I am grateful for the opportunity that I have to be able to consume nutritious meals during my lunch breaks. However, I have been noticing the lack of local options available for students to purchase and seeing trucks in back of the cafeteria that have been no doubt shipped from the mainland, reminds me of the reality of our food systems and the way we rely so heavily on mainland imports for often unhealthy and unfresh foods. Students, either in DOE schools or private, charter, or home schools, should be able to have access to fresh and local food that will not only allow them to learn better with nutritious fuel in their bodies, but to support our local economy while connecting with farmers and the land.

Erika

Growing up, I have the privilege of accessing a variety of fresh lunches, including fresh produce and local snacks at Punahou. However, before I came to Hawaii, I went to a public school in California. The food served was often highly processed and lacked fresh ingredients. I remember the limited lunch options, often tasting artificial and stale. As I became more involved in food sustainability issues, I noticed the disparities between public and private school meals in Hawaii as well. Schools must nourish their students, no matter their family income, or the school they attend. Healthy food is a right to all, that must be kept if we want our youth to thrive.

The Climate Future Forum empowers youth (ages 14–26) to actively engage in shaping and advocating for climate policy and legislation. By bringing together youth, educators, policymakers, and nonprofits, the forum fosters meaningful dialogue on climate action priorities and provides actionable steps to address climate change in Hawai'i. Through discussions involving over 100 youth, the forum has identified key high-priority areas, including regenerative food systems, climate and the economy, clean energy and transportation, climate justice and equity, and sustainable infrastructure.

Thank you very much for your support of youth engagement in climate policy. HB328 is a practical, forward-thinking step toward ensuring that Hawai'i's school meal programs support student health, local farmers, and our climate goals. We urge the committee to pass this bill and invest in a food system that nourishes both our keiki and our islands.



CLIMATE FUTURE FORUM

Sincerely,

Vivienne Hill, Maya Gaudiano, Erika Tien,
Regenerative Food Systems Policy Leads of Hawai'i Climate Future Forum

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 9:45:23 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jamie Detwiler	Hawaiian Islands Republican Women	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Submitted in support of HB 328.

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 4:44:10 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lourdes Vergara Marcelo	Lou's Quality Home Health Care Services, LLC,	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 328

Re: Farm to School meals.

The bill introduced by Rep. Trish la Chica , District 37 is good for both our students and for our farming community . The school children will get fresh nutritious vegetables & fruits grown here in our state of Hawaii , instead of vegetables ,fruits that have been shipped weeks or so ago from Matson .

A win win situation , the school's, " farm to school." program benefits our own farmers , ensuring their produce will be prepared , consumed , appreciated here by our own school children. It is good for our students to be exposed to farming, gardening such as the projects in Leilehua High School . Organic , no pesticides They are almost self sufficeint . I visited their farm and bought my pumpkin there . Children need to know the journey of the food we consume, from the seeds, germination, growth , harvesting , cooking and finally to their plates . Once implemented school chidlren will appreciate the journey of the food from the farm to their lunch plates . Hopefully they will not be be wasteful.

Thank you.

Lourdes Vergara Marcelo , RN 808 754 3934

Mililani , Hawaii 96789

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 11:10:10 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
katherine skow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this farm-to-school and plant-based school lunch option bill for the health of Hawaii's students and to support local farmers. Plant-based meals reduce carbon footprints, require fewer resources, and cater to dietary restrictions. HB328 fosters health, sustainability, and compassionate values for Hawaii's students.

This bill not only addresses the immediate nutritional needs of students but also encourages lifelong healthy eating habits. By incorporating locally-sourced, plant-based foods into school menus, we promote a deeper connection between students and their communities. Supporting this bill is a step towards a brighter, more sustainable future for all.

Mahalo,

Katherine Skow

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 12:37:02 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

HB328 will have economic and health benefits for all parties involved. Constituents from the community benefit with school students having more meal options that are nutritious and palatable, along with being more culturally relevant. Constituents from industry would also benefit by being able to have large educational institutions purchase local produce. Overall, HB328 would better allow schools to achieve the goal of having 30% of food served in the school to consist of locally sourced products by 2030.

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:04:39 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kimdonghyeon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai‘i’s farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai‘i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes. Please support HB328.

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:10:25 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Hennessy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai‘i’s farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai‘i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes. Please support HB328.

Mahalo,

Lisa Hennessy, Princeville

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:24:33 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Greetings Committee Chair and Committee members,

Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai‘i’s farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai‘i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes. Please support HB328.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:47:45 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eliel Starbright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai'i's goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Eliel, Kapaa

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:48:18 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaiakahinalii Kaopua-Canonigo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Please support HB328. Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai‘i’s farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai‘i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes. Please support HB328!

Aloha nō,

Kaiakahinali‘i Ka‘ōpua-Canonigo, Mānoa

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:59:00 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair & Committee Members:

Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai‘i’s farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai‘i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes. Please support HB328.

Thank you,
Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 2:22:12 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
maiah iseminger	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of bill HB328. I support this bill to familiarize children with plant based options which can be healthier diet choices and factually have a lower carbon footprint as compared to meat options.

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 2:39:49 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hayden Leinau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB328 is a forward-thinking bill that aligns with Hawaii’s legislative priorities to promote local agriculture, enhance student health, and encourage environmental stewardship. Investing in our keiki’s nutrition and supporting our local farmers can bolster the economy, preserve natural resources, and help shape healthier future generations.

I respectfully urge this Committee to pass HB328. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this bill.

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 2:43:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Makamae Brede	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Bill (HB328)

As a resident in Hawai'i growing up school lunches were amazing. Now I come to question where all this food comes from. I've come to realize that the majority is coming in via shipment, however, I would assume that for some lunches there was locally grown produce/products involved in the creation of a "sloppy Joe" or "Pigs in a Blanket" - which were pretty good if I recall correctly.

Introducing this bill is a great way to try and incorporate local farms within local school communities. This intersection of farm-table ideas, rather this farm-to-school lunch table has the potential to change the perspective/appreciation of a student because they know where their food is coming from.

Thank you for allowing me to give my Mana'o on this Bill.

Mahalo,

Makamae

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 3:33:41 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai‘i’s farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai‘i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes. Please support HB328.

Thank you,

Jennifer Lee, Kamuela

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 3:47:19 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good for Hawaii

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 3:52:15 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am very much in favor of this bill. I really am excited about the idea of our keiki having access to fresh local food. This is a great win for everyone, the kids getting healthy food, the agriculture sector investing in our community while growing their businesses. It's a great investment in our future as a society to become more independent from non-local food sources and for our children to learn more about where food really comes from. Mahalo for your time.

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 3:59:48 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kayla Marie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 4:15:55 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai‘i’s farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai‘i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes. Please support HB328.

Susan Wong

Kailua, HI

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 5:49:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keila Paahana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 5:54:10 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kerry Arlene Beane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Please support the Farm to School measure HB328 HD1. so the Department of Education will be incentivized and supported to meet the goal of at least thirty per cent of food served in the schools being locally sourced products by 2030. Support farm to school meal programs, and also please all the Department of Education to establish a plant-based meal program no later than the 2026-2027 school year. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Mahalo for supporting local farmers and also healthy meals for students. It's much needed.

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 6:13:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Representatives!

Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai‘i’s farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai‘i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes. Please support HB328.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 7:34:29 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Troy Schacht	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 7:53:25 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nalani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai‘i’s farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai‘i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes. Please support HB328.

Mahalo,

Nalani from Lahaina

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:36:51 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Val Hertzog	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai'i's goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai'i's farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai'i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes.

As an educator, I see the foods children bring to school which contain tons of sugar which is not conducive to learning and our keiki's health. Being able to access healthy foods in our community can benefit our keiki in so many ways.

Please support HB328.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
Hearing on Feb. 7, 2025 at 9:30 am

SUPPORTING HB 328 HD1

My name is John Kawamoto, and I support this bill.

The Department of Education (DOE) has been having difficulty achieving the noble goal of its farm to school meal program that 30% of food served in the public schools consist of locally sourced products by 2030. About 100,000 lunches are served every school day in Hawaii's public schools. Typically, large amounts of the various ingredients of school meals are needed, and, in most instance, the relatively small agricultural sector of Hawaii's economy is unable to supply them.

The DOE is a very large centralized organization. Centralization can work to bring costs down, but in this case, centralization is a problem because the local farmers are unable to provide the large quantities of food needed. This bill addresses the problem by decentralizing operations. It allows complex areas -- and even individual schools -- to create their own farm to school meal programs. Smaller amounts of food ingredients will be needed for these smaller programs, and farmers will find it much easier to supply them.

This bill is a win-win. It helps the DOE achieve its 30% goal, and it also helps farmers because more of them will be able to sell their products to the DOE.

I urge the committee to pass this bill.

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:52:34 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Stayton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Representatives,

Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai‘i’s farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai‘i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes. Please support HB328.

Thank you for your consideration,

Susan, Lawai, Kauai

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 1:13:25 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai‘i’s farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai‘i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes. Please support HB328. Mahalo.

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 5:08:16 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Please support HB 328 HD 1 to help complex areas or public schools to form their own farm to school meal programs.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 8:09:38 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexander Cilliers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Plant-based meals reduce carbon footprints, require fewer resources, and cater to dietary restrictions. Plant-based meals are also kinder to the other conscious creatures of this planet. Supporting HB328 fosters health, sustainability, and compassionate values for Hawaii's students!

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 8:17:41 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Flora Obayashi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please care for our Hawai'i keiki and ensure Farm to School meal programs continue and retain high nutritional value from locally grown food. I support sourcing 30% of food locally by 2030 and introduce a plant-based meal option once a week starting in the 2026-2027 school year.

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 8:18:52 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Bernstein	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa and members of the AGR committee,

I'm writing in support of HB328 relating to school meals. This bill is one of several that is needed to make Hawai'i more resilient and grow our agriculture sector.

Please pass this bill out of your committee.

Mahalo,

Paul Bernstein

Aina Haina

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 8:21:31 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel C. Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support the bill. More local food in school lunches benefits both the students and the agriculture industry.

We are doing our own little part with a breadfruit tree that just started producing.

Please pass the bill.

Daniel C. Smith

Pearl City

Stephanie Skow, MD

Board Certified Psychiatrist, Plant-Based Physician & Educator

2/05/25

Aloha Legislators,

As a physician, I support bill HB328, with the 30% local food target and the plant-based lunch option for students.

Meat made from plants! Now a popular request among school age children. The Impossible meats, for example, have the USDA Child Nutrition Label. Nutrient packed, protein-packed, and great for the environment, a win-win for school lunches! The “protein portion” of the school lunch will support our mainland farming partners. While the fruit and vegetable portion of the school lunches can meet the 30% support local farmers goals.

And what about the milk mandate?

Soy milk has been officially recognized as having the same protein and calcium content as cow's milk in the latest formulation of the American Dietary Guidelines.

As of today, soy milk needs a written request from a parent to be served at school lunches in lieu of cow's milk. The vast majority (80-90%) of Asian-American, Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Black, and Native American children are lactose intolerant. Cow's milk contains saturated fat and inflammatory whey and casein proteins, and hormones (estrogen's) from the lactating cow which are harmful, as cow's milk increases levels of estrogens in girls and boys, and decreases levels of testosterone in boys. See: [Michael Klaper, MD | Dairy \(doctorklaper.com\)](https://doctorklaper.com)

Why is a plant-based option important?

1. **Obesity: a Public Health Crisis:** (but solvable), with a plant-based diet.
2. **Type II Diabetes:** preventable and reversible with a plant-based diet.
3. **Heart Disease:** preventable and reversible with a plant-based diet.
4. **Cancer:** The World Health Organization has recognized meat and especially processed meat as carcinogens, cancer causing agents, with processed meat in the Group 1A category, the same category as cigarette smoking and asbestos. Plant based eating reduces your risk of cancer.
5. **Acne and asthma:** can improve with a plant-based diet.
6. **Erectile dysfunction:** can improve with a plant-based diet.
7. **Gut microbiome:** improves with a plant-based diet.
8. **Pollution:** improves with a plant-based diet.

9. **Greenhouse gas emissions:** improve with a plant-based diet.
10. **Land stewardship:** improves with plant-based eating.

The **American Heart Association** now recognizes the health benefits of eating plant-based: “Eating plant-based, meatless meals a few times a week can lower your cholesterol and improve your heart health. Meatless meals are better for your health, the planet, and your budget.”

Heart.org, How does Plant-Forward (Plant-Based) Eating Benefit Your Health?

The American Heart Association goes on to say: “Meat is often loaded with cholesterol and saturated fat, which have starring roles in poor heart health.”

I urge the committee to pass this bill.

Thank you,
Stephanie Skow, MD

Please see the attachment for supporting information.

ATTACHMENT

Benefits and nutrients in plant-based foods:

Essential nutrients found in plants include non-heme iron, all essential amino acids, the highest quality protein, since plant protein is packed with fiber and antioxidants. Meat protein is packed with cholesterol and saturated fat.

Plants also contain folate, potassium, Mg, Ca, and polyphenols, and antioxidants, and pre-biotics, pro-biotics, and vitamins, including vitamin C, which is not found in meat; and zinc, selenium, and iodine.

“Heme iron (found in meat) has been shown to be associated with many health outcomes such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, fatal coronary heart disease, and cancer.” BMJ, British Medical Journal, 2017. “High heme intake is associated with increased risk of several cancers, including colorectal cancer, pancreatic cancer, and lung cancer.” *Nutrients*, 2014 Mar 13;6(3):1080-102.

In addition, forever chemicals that are found throughout the environment, such as dioxins, are stored in fatty tissues of animals, and thus humans, also cause disease.

Free range and regenerative grazing:

Grazing **increases** greenhouse gas emissions with the methane produced from the cow’s burping. “Methane released directly into the atmosphere is [more than 80 times](#) more potent than CO₂ over a 20-year time horizon. However, as methane’s atmospheric lifespan is relatively short – [10 to 12](#)

[years](#) – actions to cut methane emissions **can yield the most immediate reduction in the rate of warming**, while also delivering air quality benefits.” *UNEP Oct. 2021*

“Raising livestock for human consumption uses nearly 70% of agricultural land, contributing to deforestation, biodiversity loss and water pollution.” *University of CO, Boulder*. Rewilding the cattle pastures and the crop lands used to grow animal feed will capture 8.1 billion metric tonnes of CO2 each year, freeing up 76% of agriculture land on the planet.

It takes a lot less land to feed 8 billion humans vs. 88 billion land animals.

Environmental Stewardship:

Transitioning to plant-based eating leads to ultimate stewardship of our lands, with rewilding and/or growing foods which are native to the islands, and do not create pollution, disease, and animal waste.

Rewilding programs contribute fire mitigation by restoring ecosystems to their natural states, reducing flammable vegetation, and promoting interactions between species.

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

Friday, February 7, 2025
9:30 a.m., House conference room 325
Hawaii State Capitol

Support for H.B. No. 328, HD1

Aloha, Chair Kahaloa and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

My name is Bonnie Parker, I teach Sustainable Food Systems at Mililani High School. I am submitting testimony in support of the intent of HB 328, HD1 on behalf of my students.

Additionally, we request that there be a correction made to the effective date of the act on page 5, line 15 as well as the last last line of the description. We request the effective date to be changed from July 1, 3000 to July 1, 2030.

Individual student testimonies are as follows:

My name is Riley Tateyama and I am a senior at Mililani High School. I am testifying in support of H.B.No. 328.

I believe that the health of my fellow students is important and the information written in to this bill was not shocking about how antinutritional the school food is. Between my peers I constantly hear school food is bad. School food has continued to have this negative connotation. All school food except private school. Everyone raves about private school lunches and I think it is comical that adults continue to think kids don't like vegetables. Students continue to rave about Kamehameha School's fresh salad bar and how they have fresh food. By having fresh local food that is less processed more kids would eat it. I think having plant based options would be a great addition to support the health of kids growing up in Hawaii, but there needs to be standards to make sure to enforce what is considered plant based because plant based, highly processed foods are definitely not going to be a positive addition to kids' diets.

I hope you will consider passing H.B. No. 328 because Hawaii communities would benefit greatly from this. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Sydney Yamamoto and I am a senior at Mililani High School. I am testifying in **support of H.B.No. 328.**

No one knew what the benefits were of the food that was being consumed and no one knew how it would impact us in our learning environment. While they did put the image of "The Nutrition Plate" Were they ever feeding us the right portions? With this bill it not only helps to

provide an unique opportunity for students who don't eat meat to have school lunches but also provides an opportunity to give students a chance to learn about what they are eating and how it affects them in the classroom. Implementing plant based foods that could be local to many of the schools will help students to learn more about their cultures and the history that surrounds them. But it also provides an opportunity to go deeper into what is in the foods as well as how it can help benefit them in the classroom,

I hope you will consider passing H.B. No. 328 because it helps to provide an unique opportunity for students who don't eat meat to have school lunches but also provides an opportunity to give students a chance to learn about what they are eating and how it affects them in the classroom. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Eric Bemis and I am a junior at Mililani High School. I am testifying **in support of** H.B.No. 328.

My name is Asia Tsuruda and I am a senior at Mililani High School. I am testifying **in support of** H.B.No. 328.

I feel that improving the quality of school food is crucial for the health and well-being of students in Hawaii. Many of my peers, including myself, feel that the meals currently served at school are unappetizing and unhealthy. Having access to fresh, locally sourced, and plant-based food options would not only improve students' diets but also help us feel more connected to the agriculture of Hawaii knowing that our food is sustainably attained . These changes would encourage more students to eat school meals and promote better concentration and performance in class.

I hope you will consider passing H.B. No. 328 because it will benefit both students and the local community by providing healthier food options and supporting local farmers. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Eden Apana and I am a senior at Mililani High School. I am testifying **in support of** H.B.No. 328.

In a family of people who don't eat nearly as good as they should, I see why it's important to have a good diet. It would help a lot of students at schools be able to eat better at school if they can't at home. From my experience, it's easier to eat better when you're given more options and I believe it's the same for a lot of students at the school.

I hope you will consider passing H.B. No. 328 because I believe if students are given/are exposed to different foods, it could greatly benefit their life and health. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Eden Apana
Mililani High School

My name is Kalaniuoa Okano and I am a senior at Mililani High School. I am testifying **in support of H.B.No. 328.**

90% of food in Hawaii is imported into the state, and with the DOE is the largest purchaser of food in the state. If we got the school system to have a greater focus on buying from local farmers this will greatly help and encourage our local farmers here in the state.

I hope you will consider passing H.B. No. 328 because this will help not only our students but also our local farmers. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Quinn Sugahara and I am a senior at Mililani High School. I am testifying in support of the intent of H.B.No. 328.

With so much of our food imported from the mainland, a lot of that food isn't as fresh as the food we grow locally. Buying locally sourced foods helps our local farmers and it gives students the fresh local food they deserve.

I hope you will consider passing H.B. No. 328 because locally sourced food will not only benefit student health and wellbeing, but it will also spark pride in students when they know they eat food from the land they live on. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Quinn Sugahara
Mililani High School

As the largest institutional purchaser of food in the state of Hawai'i, we believe the DOE can lead the change needed to reduce our dependence on imported foods, support our local economy, and provide the most nutritious foods possible to our students.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Parker & the Sustainable Food Systems Class of Mililani High School

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 8:31:50 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisha Moffat	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good Morning and thank you for reviewing my testimony. As a life-long Hawaii resident with 3 school-age children, it is my hope that we will be able to provide more locally grown food to our communities...and the easiest pipeline is through schools. Not only is the food fresher and more nutritious for our keiki, it supports local businesses. As an island-state, why wouldn't we move towards greater sustainability? We are so dependent on outside sourcing for food, supplies, fuel that in times of need, only then do we seem to react. Let's be proactive and work together towards an initiative that will help set the stage for even greater independence! Mahalo. Lisha

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 8:49:22 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elena Arinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 9:13:45 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victoria Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Hon. Chair Kahaloa, Hon. Vice Chair Kusch, and Hon. Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

From: Victoria Anderson

Re: Hearing HB328 RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS, Fri 2/7/25, 9:30 am

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

Please support this valuable bill. Providing plant-based meal options in schools, in addition to the myriad health benefits they provide, will hugely reduce carbon footprints, will take fewer resources from our remaining wildlife and conservation lands, and will be more inclusive of people with religious, ethical, or physical constraints (such as lactose intolerance, or restrictions against eating cows, pigs, chickens, and/or fishes.) On the health benefits front, here are some of the health benefits of plant-based meal options:

1. Fighting obesity, a public health crisis, and in itself a cause of at least 13 different cancers (citation 1)
2. Preventing and reversing Type II Diabetes (citation 2)
3. Preventing and reversing Heart Disease (citation 3)
4. Reducing Cancer Risk (citation 4)
5. Improving acne and asthma (citation 5)
6. Improving Erectile Dysfunction (citation 6)
7. Improving gut microbiome health (citation 7)

In brief, providing plant-based meal options for our keiki will improve their long-term health and the health of the planet.

Please amend the bill in 3 ways: 1) Rather than authorizing DOE to “facilitate complex areas or individual department schools that elect to provide a plant-based meal as an option under the school meals program”, please require the DOE to do this. 2) Remove a potential disincentive to trying a new program where staffing depends on meal counts, so schools can freely experiment with what works during the pilot phase. 3) Explicitly mention that the USDA now accepts some non-dairy milk substitutes like soy-milk for inclusion in a plant based meal option. Mahalo nui loa!

Citations:

1. Pati, S., Irfan, W., Jameel, A., Ahmed, S., & Shahid, R. K. (2023). Obesity and cancer: a current overview of epidemiology, pathogenesis, outcomes, and management. *Cancers*, 15(2), 485
2. Toumpanakis, A., Turnbull, T., & Alba-Barba, I. (2018). Effectiveness of plant-based diets in promoting well-being in the management of type 2 diabetes: a systematic review. *BMJ Open Diabetes Research and Care*, 6(1), e000534.
3. Salehin, S., Rasmussen, P., Mai, S., Mushtaq, M., Agarwal, M., Hasan, S. M., ... & Khalife, W. I. (2023). Plant based diet and its effect on cardiovascular disease. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 20(4), 3337.
4. Godfray, H. C. J., Aveyard, P., Garnett, T., Hall, J. W., Key, T. J., Lorimer, J., ... & Jebb, S. A. (2018). Meat consumption, health, and the environment. *Science*, 361(6399), eaam5324.
5. Fusano, M. (2023). Veganism in acne, atopic dermatitis, and psoriasis: Benefits of a plant-based diet. *Clinics in dermatology*, 41(1), 122-126.
6. Carto, C., Pagalavan, M., Nackeeran, S., Blachman-Braun, R., Kresch, E., Kuchakulla, M., & Ramasamy, R. (2022). Consumption of a healthy plant-based diet is associated with a decreased risk of erectile dysfunction: a cross-sectional study of the national health and nutrition examination survey. *Urology*, 161, 76-82.
7. Sidhu, S. R. K., Kok, C. W., Kunasegaran, T., & Ramadas, A. (2023). Effect of plantbased diets on gut microbiota: a systematic review of interventional studies. *Nutrients*, 15(6), 1510.

Victoria B. Anderson

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 9:57:49 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
emily gambino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai‘i’s farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai‘i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes. Please support HB328.

Thank you,

Emily Gambino

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 10:04:38 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai‘i’s farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai‘i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes. Please support HB328.

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 10:24:42 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Broderick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Emma Broderick

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 11:34:54 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 11:58:40 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Chun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stringly support locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged. HB 328 will address this essential need in our food system.

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 12:04:06 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isis Usborne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai‘i’s farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai‘i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes. Please support HB328.

Mahalo,

Isis Usborne (96815)

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 12:07:23 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann V Saffery	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support HB328 HD1

Mahalo,

Ann V Saffery

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 12:28:49 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

To: Chair Kahaloa and Vice Chair Kusch

Hi, my name is Kate Reynolds and I'm a junior at Kalaheo high school. I support HB328 because I believe if it gets passed it would positively affect Hawaii. It would create more plant based options, more education on farming and agriculture, and would promote a more sustainable lunch system. From the USDA it states that “Providing schools greater access to nutritious, local foods for their meal programs, this funding creates new market opportunities for producers as well as jobs and opportunities in local communities.” and “Farm to school activities – such as serving local foods in school, growing a school garden, tasting new foods and visiting local farms – provide experiential learning for children, support American farmers and producers, boost nutrition in school meals and more.” This demonstrates how HB328 would positively impact students, farmers, cafeteria workers and local production of foods in Hawaii.

Thank you-

Kate Reynolds

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 12:49:39 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni DeFranco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ensuring that school meals feature locally grown food supports Hawai‘i’s farmers while providing students with nutritious, culturally relevant meals. However, progress toward the state’s goal of sourcing 30% locally grown or produced food in school meals by 2023 has fallen behind. Public procurement is a powerful tool that can expand market opportunities for local farmers and food producers, reducing Hawai‘i’s reliance on imported food.

By prioritizing local sourcing, we can strengthen our agricultural economy while making our food system more resilient. This bill also helps increase students’ access to fresh, culturally significant foods like kalo and ‘uala, fostering a deeper connection to Hawai‘i’s food traditions. Better nutrition in schools supports improved learning outcomes, ensuring that students have the nourishment they need to succeed.

HB 328 is a win for Hawai‘i’s keiki and our local farmers. Please support this important step toward a stronger, healthier food system.

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 1:11:18 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Parker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to ask you to please support this bill. It seems like a win win for everybody. In these precarious and uncertain times providing locally grown food and the knowledge of how to grow it seems like a prudent and essential course of action.

Supporting locally sourced food in school meals benefits our local agricultural sector, while providing students with nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Sadly, progress in Hawai‘i’s goals of sourcing 30% locally grown/produced food in school meals by 2023 has lagged.

Leveraging the power of public procurement to increase markets for Hawai‘i’s farmers and producers is one critical way Hawai‘i can support local producers while decreasing dependency on imports.

Additionally, children will have greater access to more culturally appropriate and nutritious foods, such as kalo, sweet potatoes and others while becoming more connected to where their food comes from. Access to more healthy foods will also support better learning outcomes. Please support HB328.

Mahalo nui loa,

Lisa Parker

Kapaa resident

HB-328-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 3:00:37 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/7/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

On Maui, we have 3 Farm Apprentice Mentoring Programs that has graduated a few hundred Mentee's who have prepared power point and resumes. They now need land and a demand. The land can come by using Maui County AgZonedLand requirement of farming 51% of farmable land...

This bill creates demand which is the missing component that would support vibrant growth in growing more food in Maui County