

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2025
1:01 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

HOUSE BILL NO. 428, HD1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 428, HD1. This bill establishes the Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State, requires reports to the Legislature and appropriates funds.

The Department of Agriculture **supports** this measure, which will strengthen the connection between local food banks and their partners to provide fresh, local grown produce to families in need while also expanding market opportunities for Hawai'i agricultural producers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



COUNTY COUNCIL

Mel Rapozo, Chair
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
Fern Holland
Arryl Kaneshiro



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk
Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-4188
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Email: cokcouncil@kauai.gov

Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766

March 7, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF ADDISON BULOSAN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
HB 428, HD 1, RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Monday, March 10, 2025
1:01 p.m.
Conference Room 224
Via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 428, HD 1, Relating to Farm to Families. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

I wholeheartedly support the intent of HB 428, HD 1, which would greatly affect the Kaua'i community.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 428, HD 1. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

ADDISON BULOSAN
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AAO:dmc



MAKAKILO/KAPOLEI/HONOKAI HALE NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 34

c/o NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION • 925 DILLINGHAM BLVD SUITE 160 • HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96817
PHONE (808) 768-3710 • FAX (808) 768-3711 • INTERNET: <http://www.honolulu.gov>

RESOLUTION

SUPPORTING THE STRENGTHENING OF FOOD BANKS TO PROVIDE HAWAII-GROWN FOOD TO FOOD-INSECURE COMMUNITIES

Whereas, the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board No. 34 (“Board”) is a citizens’ advisory board whose purpose is to “increase and assure effective citizen participation in the decisions of government” per the City and County of Honolulu’s Neighborhood Plan of 2008; and

Whereas, the Board finds that about one in three households in Hawaii is struggling to secure consistent access to food, highlighting the urgent need to restore basic nourishment and dignity to families across the islands (The State of Food Insecurity in Hawaii, Hawaii Food Bank, 2023); and

Whereas, food insecurity in Hawaii disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, particularly children, with nearly thirty percent of keiki growing up in food-insecure homes, some enduring entire days without a meal, which can lead to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional challenges; and

Whereas, the Board also finds that Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are disproportionately affected, with more than forty percent of households facing hunger, reflecting deep-rooted inequities in access to resources, economic opportunity, and essential services; and

Whereas, the Board also finds that its district hosts the highest concentration of Native Hawaiian homesteads across the state; and

Whereas, the Board recognizes that approximately 400 of our district neighbors are unsheltered, and nearly three thousand individuals across the state face similar hardships, making it exceedingly difficult for them to access nutritious food and essential resources (Point In Time Count 2024); and

Whereas, Hawaii’s food banks have made significant strides in addressing hunger, partnering with over five hundred agencies, including schools, community-based nonprofits, churches, and food pantries, to distribute more than twenty-seven million meals in 2023, collectively serving two hundred forty thousand individuals each month across the State; and

Whereas, the Board expresses its deep gratitude for the three foodbanks within our district—St. Jude’s Catholic Church, the Armed Services YMCA at the Daniel K. Akaka VA Clinic, and Message of Peace Ministry at Kapolei High School—that selflessly serve our neighbors in need; and

Whereas, the support systems that were available during the COVID-19 pandemic have diminished, and it is critical to maintain robust support for food banks to continue addressing the ongoing food insecurity crisis in Hawaii; and

Whereas, the Board expresses its gratitude to the farmers and ranchers in our district, including those at the Pacific Gateway Center, who empower vulnerable populations, provide local produce and goods, and contribute to bolstering Hawaii’s food security; and

Whereas, to strengthen the connection between food banks and local agriculture, Hawaii’s food banks have partnered with over five hundred seventy-five local farms and food hubs, creating a reliable market for Hawaii-grown produce, which has contributed to the local economy, with an

investment of more than \$11,000,000 in local agriculture over the past five years, generating nearly \$19,000,000 in economic impact (Farm to Families, Hawaii Food Bank, 2020); and

Whereas, with rising costs of imported food, increasing the State's reliance on locally grown food is both a sustainable solution and a necessary approach to ensure Hawaii's families have access to fresh, nutritious food while supporting local farmers and ranchers and reducing dependence on imports; and

Whereas, the Board recognizes that strengthening food banks' ability to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food to food-insecure communities is essential in building a more resilient and equitable food system, supporting local agriculture, and ensuring food security for all residents; now, therefore, be it

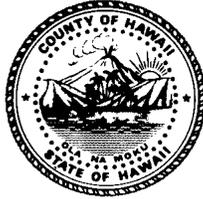
Resolved, that the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board No. 34 supports the strengthening of food banks to provide Hawaii-grown food to food insecure communities; and be it

Resolved, that the board supports the intent of the bills [HB428 \(2025\)](#) and [SB1250 \(2025\)](#) Relating to Farm to Families; and be it

Ordered, that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, Honolulu Council Members, Area Legislators, Hawaii Foodbank, St. Jude Catholic Church, Armed Services YMCA, Message of Peace Ministry, Pacific Gateway Center, and all Neighborhood Boards.

Adopted by the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board No. 34 at its February 26, 2025 Regular Board Meeting, 8-0-0 (**Aye:** Dudley, Ferreira, Khan, Lidstone, Moon, Singleton, Taala, Paris; **Nay:** None; **Abstain:** None)

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



Benson Medina
Director

Dennis Lin
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

25 Aupuni Street, Room 1301 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-4252
(808) 961-8366 • Fax (808) 935-1205
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March 7, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

MONDAY, March 10, 2025
1:01 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

TESTIMONY ON HB 428 HD1
Relating to Farm to Families

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

I am Benson Medina, Director of the Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai'i. One of the agricultural objectives of this department is to "support collaboration, innovation, resource development, and programmatic sustainability throughout the food system to reduce food waste, improve producer viability and resilience, develop workforce development pathways, or increase access to locally produced food among low-income residents."

The County of Hawai'i provides written testimony in **SUPPORT of HB428 HD1**, to establish the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Hawai'i County faces the highest rates of food insecurity in the State, with forty percent of Hawai'i County households reporting food insecurity in a 2023 study commissioned by Hawai'i Foodbank. The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's food bank, is at the forefront of Farm to Family initiatives, pioneering efforts to connect local farmers with communities in need. Through innovative programs, they ensure that fresh, locally-grown food reaches keiki, kūpuna, and families facing food insecurity. As Hawai'i Island's primary food bank, The Food Basket (TFB) partners with over 100 partner agencies to provide emergency food assistance or other direct services to those in need.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, TFB has witnessed an enormous increase in individuals who do not know where their next meal is coming from. During the pandemic, TFB served up to six times more individuals than they did pre-pandemic. Currently they are serving 34% more individuals compared to pre-pandemic numbers, nearly 50,000 people every month. TFB has experienced ongoing cancellations of large quantities of

March 7, 2025

Page 2

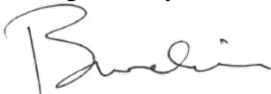
commodity food from breaks in the supply chain due to COVID- 19 and prices have skyrocketed, causing them to increasingly rely on our local food supply.

The Farm to Families program would provide essential funding for food banks to purchase from local farmers and producers, improving emergency food access, boosting local agriculture, and strengthening Hawai'i's food system during the ongoing economic crisis that is affecting so many families across the state.

Additionally, by the State investing in fresh, locally grown produce into food banks, we can provide families with healthier, more sustainable food options while bolstering Hawai'i's agricultural economy. The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce, helping farmers plan for future growth.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of HB428 HD1.**

Respectfully,

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

Benson Medina
Director

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

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 11th FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-2277 • EMAIL: resilientoahu@honolulu.gov • INTERNET: www.resilientoahu.org

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



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

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

MONDAY MARCH 10, 2025, 1:01 P.M.

STATE OF HAWAI'I
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 428, HD1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES**

BY,

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

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

The City and County of Honolulu ("City") Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency ("Resilience Office") **supports** HB428, HD1, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the state.

The Farm to Families Program complements ongoing City efforts to strengthen the local food system in the face of climate change impacts, including the development of O'ahu's first Food Systems Plan and implementation of the O'ahu Good Food Program, which supports institutions committed to purchasing locally grown food. Strengthening food banks' ability to procure local products could catalyze broader institutional shifts across schools, hospitals, hospitality groups, and other private and public institutions to amplify the benefits for Hawai'i's farmers, food system, and communities in need.

This measure would foster greater partnerships between local farms and food assistance programs, strengthening both food security and Hawai'i's agricultural economy. Investing in local procurement ensures that families—particularly in Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino communities facing disproportionate food insecurity—have greater access to fresh, nutritious food while providing a stable, reliable market for local farmers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB428, HD1.

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov

TO: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards III, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

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

DATE: March 9, 2025

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF HB428 HD1, RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

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

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

1. For far to long our communities have been living in a crisis related to food security. Over 30% of Hawai'i is food insecure. That number significantly increases to over 40% when we focus on our most vulnerable and underserved community, kānaka 'ōiwi.
2. There are many negative impacts to our food insecure communities, especially our keiki; ranging from anxiety to depression, to even thoughts of suicide. Investing in our food systems is a must to combat these negative impacts.
3. Reserach shows the significant economic returns on governments investment into our food systems at all levels. Socioeconomically this positions our community to have more robust and consistent markets, creates financial incentives for the next generation of farmers, and overall leads to a more resilient and sustainable Hawai'i.
4. This bill supports farmers, ranchers, and fishermen by expanding their access to new markets. During COVID and following the 2023 Maui fires, some farmers lost over 70% of their market overnight. Farm to Families will help build more consistent markets for

farmers. The bill will also help build resilience by developing sourcing channels that can be scaled up in times of emergency and increase fresh food access for our community during this critical time as we face rising grocery costs.

Mahalo for your consideration.



Date: March 10, 2025

Subject: Hawai'i Foodbank in Strong Support of HB 428 HD1 Relating to Farm to Families

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

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our **STRONG** support for HB428 HD1, Relating to Farm to Families. This bill establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to address food shortages across the state, requires reports to the Legislature before the Regular Sessions of 2026 and 2027, and appropriates funds to support its implementation.

As the state's largest hunger-relief organization, Hawai'i Foodbank has been committed to ensuring no one in Hawai'i goes hungry since 1983. We work with over 225 agency partners on O'ahu and Kaua'i to distribute food, and programs like Food 4 Keiki and 'Ohana Produce Plus provide nutritious meals to children and families. In addition to addressing daily needs, our organization mobilizes during emergencies to provide immediate relief and aid long-term recovery efforts.

In addition, Hawai'i Foodbank's Farm to Families program, launched in 2020, has already demonstrated its impact by investing \$11 million into more than 40 local farms and food hubs, distributing over 9 million pounds of Hawai'i-grown produce and proteins. HB 428 will expand this initiative by strengthening the supply chain, ensuring fresh, Hawai'i-grown food reaches food-insecure households while supporting local agriculture.

This bill is critically needed. The "State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i" report revealed that in 2023, 30% of households in our state experience food insecurity, including 29% of children. In 10% of these households, at least one member went without food for an entire day some or most months of the year. These figures highlight the urgent need for a sustainable solution to hunger in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this vital measure and for your dedication to supporting our communities through initiatives like HB428 HD1.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Monday, March 10, 2025 — 1:01 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports HB 428 HD 1, Relating to Farm to Families

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono supports HB 428 HD 1, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the state.

Over the last few years, one of the most pressing issues for many local families has been food insecurity. With many out of work and surviving on government unemployment support, communities have relied on the efforts of food banks and local food producers to meet their basic need to eat.

In response to the COVID pandemic, federal monies injected into Hawai'i through county initiatives helped grow a local farm-to-food bank effort, in which food banks were able to purchase local products for distribution to needy communities. This effort was a win-win-win, in that local food producers had a market to sell their products when hotels and restaurants shuttered their doors, local families received fresh and nutritious food products made locally island-wide, and food banks that were struggling to purchase shelf-stable food due to nationwide shortages were rescued by Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers who provided local food to their communities.

The Farm to Food Bank efforts across the state led to many important foundational relationships between local farmers, ranchers, and community feeding organizations that helped struggling communities cope with the social and economic consequences of the COVID pandemic. Unfortunately, natural disasters, food supply chain disruptions, and state emergencies have become a harsh, consistent reality for our local communities. Food banks across the state are constantly having to hold food drives to maintain these community lifelines, which have increasingly relied on their assistance and local producers to maintain consistent supply. They will need support to meet these food security challenges, and continuing to strengthen the bonds between farms and food banks is a worthy investment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

March 10, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON HB 428, HD1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:01 PM

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

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 428, HD1, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State while supporting local farmers and ranchers.

Hawai'i faces persistent food security challenges, with many families experiencing limited access to fresh, locally grown food. At the same time, local farmers and ranchers struggle with unpredictable markets and barriers to expanding food distribution. This measure presents a win-win solution by linking local food production with communities in need, ensuring that Hawai'i's agricultural products are used to feed Hawai'i's people.

HB 428, HD1 will provide funds to Hawai'i's food banks, which support non-profit and community feeding programs by providing locally grown or produced foods to communities in need. This will help Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers while providing local nutritional food to those who need it most.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



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Lana'i

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Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

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

The Hawaii Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU strongly supports HB428.**

Building closer relationships between food banks and local farmers helps create a flexible, resilient food supply that can handle both sudden increases in demand and disruptions in imported foods. These strong connections allow food banks to quickly adjust to challenges, ensuring that communities continue to receive fresh produce even if imports are interrupted. In other words, deeper ties with local agriculture not only support local farmers but also diversify the food supply, making the system more reliable and robust against unexpected shocks.

The Hawaii Farm to Families Program, as outlined in this bill, holds immense potential to strengthen our local food systems by fostering direct collaboration between food producers and community-based food distribution networks. By establishing this program, Hawaii can significantly alleviate food shortages while simultaneously bolstering the state's agricultural sector. This approach not only ensures a more consistent supply of nutritious, locally grown food to those in need but also provides a stable market for local farmers, encouraging sustainable agricultural practices and reducing the state's dependency on imported foods.

Moreover, the program's structure, which includes required reports to the Legislature, ensures accountability and continuous improvement. By appropriating funds to support this initiative, Hawaii is investing in a solution that not only addresses immediate food security concerns but also contributes to long-term agricultural sustainability and economic resilience. This strategic investment not only nourishes families but also nurtures the islands' agricultural communities, paving the way for a more self-sufficient and food-secure future for Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawaii Farmers Union



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

March 8, 2025

To: The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

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

Testimony in Strong Support of HB428 HD1, Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Gabbard and Vice Chair Richards,

My name is Kristin Frost Albrecht, and I am the Executive Director of The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank. Our mission is to "End hunger in Hawai'i County". We strongly SUPPORT this bill.

On Hawai'i Island we are experiencing an alarming 40% food insecurity rate with the number of residents in need of food assistance, rapidly surpassing the numbers served during the pandemic. Statewide, food insecurity affects nearly one in three individuals in Hawai'i – a critical level that is only increasing due to escalating living costs. As a food bank that has served our island residents through four federally declared disasters, we have relied heavily on our local producers to provide enough food to respond to the immediacy of dire need due to an often-tenuous supply chain of food that is imported from 2500 miles across the ocean. The Farm to Families program would provide essential funding for food banks to purchase from local farmers and producers, improving emergency food access, boosting local agriculture, and strengthening Hawai'i's food system during the ongoing economic crisis that is affecting so many families across the state.

The Food Basket has a strong history and commitment to supporting local farmers and producers with our upstream approach to ending hunger through innovative programs, including the administration of our statewide DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks program, Ho'olaha Ka Hua DA BOX community supported agriculture program, Kūpuna Fresh, and Poi Joy, to name a few. Each of these programs supports local farmers and producers with the purchase of Hawai'i grown food at a fair and equitable price which in turn helps to feed our struggling families, from keiki to kūpuna, with healthy nutritious food while strengthening and uplifting our local economy.

We respectfully ask your committee to pass this bill to support our most vulnerable residents and improve food security for all in Hawai'i. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.


Kristin Frost Albrecht

Executive Director, The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST ALBRECHT

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WWW.HAWAIIFOODBASKET.ORG

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info@hawaiiifood.com

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Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

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

DATE: March 10, 2025

TIME: 1:01pm

RE: HB428 HD1 Relating to Farm to Families

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA is in support of this measure. Injecting state funding into our local food systems has a range of benefits. First and foremost this measure helps address the growing issue of food insecurity in our state. Far too many Hawaii families are facing food insecurity and they need your support. This measure will help provide healthy fresh food to families who utilize foodbanks in our state.

This measure also provides a consistent buyer to support our local agricultural producers. Having consistent buyers encourages growth in our local agricultural sector and helps make locally grown food more accessible and competitive for us all. This helps diversify our economy, creates agricultural jobs, and ensures that there is more local food for everyone to enjoy. This measure is good for families who will utilize it, it's good for our local farmers, it's good for our food systems, and good for Hawaii.

We believe that in order to improve food security, local food production, and resiliency in Hawaii it's vital for the State to support programs like this which support our food industry. We thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Maui Food Bank
Nourishing Lives. Feeding Futures

March 10, 2025

RE: Support for HB 428 HD1, Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Maui Food Bank, I express our strong support for HB 428 HD1 Relating to Farm to Families which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

For 30 years, Maui Food Bank has provided daily and emergency assistance to those facing food insecurity in Maui County. Maui Food Bank distributes food to families and individuals on Maui, Molokai and Lanai through direct service programs and through our network of 170 agency partners. Last year, we served on average 45,000 people each month, distributing a total of 8.7 million pounds of nutritious food, including 2.3 million pounds of fresh produce. Of those served, 40% are children and youth.

HB 428 HD1 empowers food distribution organizations to forge stronger partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families experiencing food insecurity. These collaborations between local farms and food organizations deliver benefits to both our communities and the economy.

Just last week, a neighbor reached out to us in a desperate situation, in need of fresh produce. She suffers from acute kidney disease and relies solely on fresh fruits and vegetables for her diet. With no funds to buy groceries and unable to consume the canned goods provided by her local pantry, we stepped in to help. We assembled a box filled with locally grown, fresh produce, ensuring she had the nourishment she needed. This is a powerful example of how this Bill can enhance the health and well-being of our community.

As an example, the Maui Food Bank currently purchases from over 30 farmers in Maui County to provide healthy, locally grown produce. Two programs highlighting our purchasing from Maui County farms are listed below:

- **[Fresh 4 All program](#)**: Maui Food Bank purchases and picks up donated fresh produce from local Maui farmers, produce wholesalers, and farmers' markets for distribution to those in need, reducing physical and transportation obstacles.



Maui Food Bank
Nourishing Lives. Feeding Futures

- **'Ai Holo program:** Works with 15 local farmers and suppliers to deliver fresh, nutritious food to children from low-income families in Maui County, including rural areas like Hana, Molokai, and Lanai. Over 8 weeks, participants receive weekly boxes containing local produce, dairy, and proteins.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony,

Lisa H. Paulson
CEO, Maui Food Bank



HALE MAHAOLU
WHERE ALOHA LIVES

HALE MAHAOLU EWALU
P: 808-573-5500
88 Ohia Ku Street
Pukalani, HI 96768
WWW.HALEMAHAOLU.ORG

January 15, 2025

Aloha!

My name is Zaesha Gonsalves and I am the Housing Manager at Hale Mahaolu Ewalu and Kulamalu Hale. I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

As someone who has seen firsthand the struggles of local families to access nutritious food, I believe this bill will make a meaningful difference in our fight to end hunger in Hawai'i.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Warm regards,

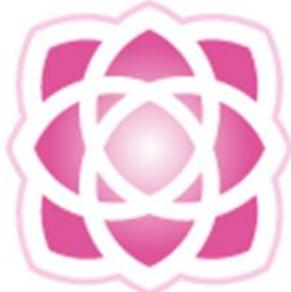
Zaesha Gonsalves, Housing Manager

HI LIC: RS- 83776 | HI LIC RB: 22931

Hale Mahaolu Ewalu | Kulamalu Hale | Hale Mahaolu Property Management LLC

Kulamalu Hale: 65 Ohia Ku St Pukalani | Ph: 808-868-4148 Fax: 808-868-4182

Hale Mahaolu Ewalu: 88 Ohia Ku St Pukalani | Ph: 808-573-5500 Fax: 808-573-5501



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 224
Monday, March 10, 2025, 1:01 P.M.

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Agriculture and Environment

SUPPORT HB428 HD1 RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS HB428 HD1** which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

The Chamber recognizes that Hawai'i faces persistent food security challenges, with many families experiencing limited access to fresh, locally grown food. Concurrently, local farmers and ranchers struggle with unpredictable markets and barriers to expanding food distribution. This measure offers a mutually beneficial solution by connecting local food production with communities in need, ensuring that Hawai'i's agricultural products are utilized to feed Hawai'i's residents.

This bill will allocate funds to Hawai'i's food banks, which support non-profit and community feeding programs by providing locally grown or produced foods to communities in need. This initiative will assist Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers while delivering local, nutritious food to those most vulnerable. We respectfully request that food distribution be expanded to include non-profit organizations that directly provide food to those in need, such as Maui's Feed My Sheep program.

For these reasons we **SUPPORT HB428 HD1** and respectfully request its passage.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.



Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports: HB428 HD1

March 10th, 2025 at 1:01pm; Conference Room 224

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and members of the committee,

As a member of the Hawaii Hunger Action Network, HAPA strongly supports HB428 HD1. According to a recent report by the Hawaii Food Bank, **one in three households in Hawaii has reports being food insecure**¹. Additional reporting from the Aloha United Way, just released in January 2025, further highlights the need for systemic changes to address the struggles of Hawaii's A.L.I.C.E. (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) population. **Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households struggle with consistent food access, compared to 28% statewide.**² Yet too often Food Banks are torn between choosing cheaper, less healthy food to feed more recipients and the ability to provide nutritious, locally grown or produced foods.

Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. For local farmers, accessing new markets can be a challenge. Creating opportunities to connect our most vulnerable communities with locally grown or produced food will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food during times of hardship or crisis.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic challenges or crisis. I urge you to please support HB428 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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

Anne Frederick,
Executive Director

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

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



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 428 HD1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 10, 2025

1:01 PM

Conference Room 224

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

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) strongly supports **House Bill 428, HD1**, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program. This measure seeks to alleviate food insecurity by funding food banks to procure, store, and distribute fresh, locally grown food to food-insecure communities. The impact of this initiative will be particularly significant for Native Hawaiian families, who continue to experience disproportionately high rates of food insecurity, and for Native Hawaiian farmers, who will benefit from greater economic stability and market opportunities.

Food insecurity is a persistent issue in Hawai'i, with over 40% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander households experiencing hunger—a rate far exceeding that of other groups in the state (Hawai'i State Department of Health, 2022). The high cost of imported food, which accounts for nearly 90% of the state's supply, exacerbates this problem, making fresh, nutritious, and culturally significant foods like kalo (taro), 'ulu (breadfruit), and 'uala (sweet potato) difficult to access for many Native Hawaiian families. The establishment of a state-funded supply chain that prioritizes fresh, locally sourced produce for food banks may address this disparity, ensuring that those in need have access to healthy, locally grown food. This approach strengthens Hawai'i's food sovereignty and ensures that food assistance programs are aligned with local dietary traditions, providing not just sustenance but also reinforcing cultural identity. This measure acknowledges the importance of increasing reliance on **Hawai'i-grown produce** and explicitly mentions **kalo (taro), 'ulu (breadfruit), and 'uala Okinawan sweet potato** as examples of the types of food that should be prioritized for distribution through food banks.

Beyond addressing food insecurity, this measure provides much-needed economic support for Native Hawaiian farmers, many of whom face structural barriers that limit their ability to compete with large-scale agricultural producers and imported food. The 2017 Census of Agriculture reported that there were 1,121 farms in Hawai'i operated by Native

Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, representing approximately 15% of all farms in the state. These farms collectively manage over 265,000 acres, yet the market value of products sold remains relatively low, averaging \$77,411 per farm. The Taro Security and Purity Task Force Report (2010)¹ highlighted several obstacles preventing Native Hawaiian taro farmers from achieving economic viability, including land access challenges, inadequate distribution infrastructure, and the lack of direct market pathways for their crops. By creating a stable and reliable market for locally grown food through food banks, this measure directly supports these farmers by ensuring consistent demand for their produce and reducing the financial uncertainty they face.

The inclusion of traditional Hawaiian crops in food assistance programs also aligns with long-standing efforts to revitalize Native Hawaiian agriculture. Taro farmers, for instance, continue to struggle with limited land availability due to high lease costs and zoning restrictions that prioritize other forms of development over traditional farming practices. The Taro Security and Purity Task Force specifically recommended state-level action to support access to agricultural lands for Native Hawaiian farmers, incentivizing traditional farming through subsidies and ensuring that local produce remains at the center of Hawai'i's food system. This bill offers an opportunity to address those recommendations by creating direct purchase programs that benefit small-scale traditional farmers and ensure the preservation of Native Hawaiian agricultural practices.

Investing in local agriculture through this program will have far-reaching benefits for the entire state. Keeping food production within Hawai'i strengthens the local economy by ensuring that dollars spent on food stay within the state rather than being used to import goods. The Hawai'i Foodbank reports that for every dollar spent on local produce, there is a multiplier effect that benefits the broader economy, stimulating related industries such as food processing, transportation, and retail. Additionally, prioritizing locally grown food over imported goods reduces the state's vulnerability to supply chain disruptions, such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, when imported food became scarce and expensive. Supporting local farmers also reduces Hawai'i's reliance on long-distance food shipments, decreasing carbon emissions associated with transportation and promoting environmental sustainability.

While OHA fully supports this bill, we encourage legislators to consider key steps to ensure its effectiveness. Ensuring that funding is equitably distributed across all counties, particularly in rural and neighbor island communities where food insecurity is most severe,

¹ **Taro Security and Purity Task Force**, *E Ola Hou Nā Kalo; Ho'i Hou Ka 'Āina Lē'ia: The Taro Lives* (Honolulu, HI: Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2010)

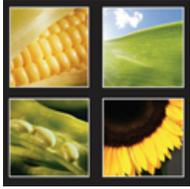
is critical. Transportation logistics must be carefully planned to guarantee that fresh food reaches all areas of the state efficiently, preventing gaps in food distribution.

Additionally, the Department of Agriculture should prioritize procurement from Native Hawaiian farmers and small-scale agricultural producers, many of whom lack access to large-scale distribution channels. Supporting these farmers aligns with the recommendations outlined in the Taro Security and Purity Task Force Report², which emphasized the need for state-level investments in small, community-based farming operations. Further, incorporating accountability measures within the program will ensure that funds are effectively allocated and that the procurement of local food remains the program's top priority.

HB428, HD1 is a transformative measure that will not only combat food insecurity but also revitalize local agriculture, promote food sovereignty, and uplift Native Hawaiian farming communities. By supporting food banks in sourcing local produce, this initiative strengthens Hawai'i's agricultural economy, provides economic security for Native Hawaiian farmers, and ensures that all residents—especially those most vulnerable—have access to nutritious food. This program represents a commitment to a more sustainable, self-sufficient Hawai'i, where the land and its resources are cultivated to feed and support the people who call these islands home.

OHA urges the Legislature to **PASS HB428 HD1** and consider the recommendations outlined above to ensure its success and sustainability. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

² Id.



HAWAII CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

HB428 HD1 – In Support
Relating to Farm to Families
House Committee on Finance

Date: Monday, March 10, 2025

Time: 1:01 PM

Place: Conference Room 224

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

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association (HCIA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony **in support of HB428 HD1**, which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State and requires reports to the Legislature prior to the Regular Sessions of 2026 and 2027.

This bill has the dual benefit of addressing food insecurity and supporting the local agricultural industry. The importance of increasing the availability and access to fresh and nutritious food is clear, especially for the young children who represent our state's most vulnerable populations. To do so, while also creating direct opportunities for local farmers to support their operations during economically challenging times, is a win-win proposition.

With its wide-reaching benefits, we urge you to please pass HB428 HD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support.

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association is a Hawaii-based non-profit organization that promotes modern agriculture to help farmers and communities succeed. Through education, collaboration, and advocacy, we work to ensure a safe and sustainable food supply, support responsible farming practices, and build a healthy economy.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

HB428 HD1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Monday, March 10, 2025, 1:01PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB428 HD1** which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Food security should be a top priority for the state – not just in the broad sense, but ensuring that each person has access to healthy food every day. Today, too many families struggle to put a square meal on the table. This bill will ensure that the DOA is focusing on relieving food shortages. It will help the many food-secure families in Hawaii, as well as support farmers and ranchers providing local, fresh food.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director





March 7, 2025

Subject: **HB428** Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the committee,

The Hawaii Food+ Policy strongly **supports HB428**, which will establish the Farm to Families Program to address food insecurity while strengthening our local food system. This bill is a strategic investment in both Hawaii's families and farmers, ensuring that nutritious, locally grown food reaches those who need it most.

With estimates of 90% of our food being imported, Hawaii's food system is highly vulnerable to disruptions in global supply chains. At the same time, 30% of Hawaii's families struggle with food insecurity, unable to consistently access fresh, healthy meals. **HB428 provides a sustainable, long-term solution by directly supporting local farmers while expanding access to nutritious food for communities in need.**

Why HB428 matters:

- **Strengthens local agriculture** – Provides food banks with funding to purchase fresh produce from Hawaii farmers, creating a stable market for locally grown food.
- **Combats food insecurity** – Ensures keiki, kūpuna, and vulnerable families have access to fresh, healthy meals.
- **Reduces reliance on costly imports** – Keeps more of Hawaii's food dollars in the local economy while increasing food security.
- **Invests in community resilience** – Builds upon successful food access programs that have already redirected millions of dollars into Hawaii's farms and food systems.

Food insecurity is not just a humanitarian issue—it's an economic one. The hidden costs of hunger on health, education, workforce productivity, and overall well-being are too great to ignore. We **urge the committee to pass HB428** and take this critical step toward a healthier, more resilient Hawaii.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
The Food+ Policy Team

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



HIPHI Board

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Humana

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Garret Sugai
HMSA

JoAnn Tsark, MPH
John A. Burns School of Medicine, Native
Hawaiian Research Office

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &
Evaluation

Community Health
Worker Initiatives

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: March 07, 2025

To: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Re: Support for HB 428 HD1, Relating to Farm to Families

Hrg: Monday, March 10, 2025, 1:01pm, Conference Room 224

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating, Active Living² (HEAL) Coalition is in **support of HB 428 HD1**, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to increase locally grown or produced food in our food bank system.

One in three families are food insecure in Hawai'i. This results in over 150,000 people relying on the food bank system for assistance each month. The food bank system provides a very important social service to our community and it's essential that we help fund their efforts.

Increased Demand Requires Increased Investment

The Hawai'i Food Bank's dramatic rise in food distribution – from 12.5 million pounds in 2018 to 21.2 million pounds in 2024 – reflects a growing crisis of food insecurity in our islands.³⁴ This 70% increase represents thousands more local families struggling to put food on their tables. Given our state's high cost of living and dependence on imported food, we must invest in strengthening the food bank system's operations to ensure this essential service can continue supporting our island 'ohana.

A \$2 million state investment through HB 428 HD1 would represent less than 5% of the food bank network's annual operating expenses, yet could significantly

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

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

³ Hawai'i Food Bank Annual Report - 2018.

https://hawaiiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/HawaiiFoodbank_AnnualReport_2018_web.pdf

⁴ Hawai'i Food Bank Annual Report - 2024.

https://hawaiiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HawaiiFoodbank_AnnualReport_2024.pdf



strengthen its ability to serve our communities. This modest initial investment would demonstrate Hawai'i's commitment to addressing food insecurity while helping ensure the sustainability of this vital emergency food network.

Fresh Produce in High Demand

Hawai'i's food banks and pantries face a high demand for fresh produce, but supply falls short due to limited funding and distribution challenges.⁵ Given the limited availability, there are hours-long lines at food distribution sites that offer fresh produce. Investing in farm-to-families programs would help to create a steady local supply of nutritious produce, improving food security and public health across the islands.

Local Investments Help our Economy

A \$2 million investment in Hawai'i's food bank system creates ripple effects throughout our local economy. When we purchase from local farmers and producers, those dollars circulate within our communities rather than flowing to continental suppliers. This strengthens our agricultural sector, creates local jobs, and helps build a more resilient food system for our islands.

When families receive adequate nutrition through the food bank, they can better focus on work, education, and other activities that contribute to our economy, reducing the long-term costs associated with food insecurity.

We urge you to support HB 428 HD1 to strengthen Hawai'i's emergency food network and help more families access the nutritious food they need. This investment in our food banks is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lauren Loor', is positioned below the word 'Mahalo'.

Lauren Loor
Healthy Eating + Active Living Statewide Program Manager

⁵KHON. 12-2-24. "A guide to what Hawai'i's food banks need this season."
<https://www.khon2.com/local-news/a-guide-to-what-hawai%CA%BBis-food-banks-need-this-season/>

Monday, March 10, 2025 at 1:01 PM
Conference Room 224; Via Video Conference

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

To: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards III, Vice Chair

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

Re: **Testimony in Support of HB 428, HD1
Relating To Farm To Families**

My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

HPH writes in SUPPORT of HB 428, HD1 which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to fund food banks and alleviate food shortages in the State.

HPH has long recognized the relationship between healthy outcomes and food security, as well as the strong connection between access to healthy foods with health and wellness. HPH screens our in-patients across our facilities for indications of food insecurity and is acutely aware of the challenge it is for our patients. The link between a healthy diet and healthy living is well established where lower food insecurity is linked to lower risk of obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers. Healthy eating can help people with chronic diseases manage these conditions and avoid complications. The crisis in food security among the most vulnerable population has been reported and has come to light more recently in the Aloha United Way's 2024 ALICE Report. The Report indicated that 28% of households statewide face food insecurity; nearly half (46%) of households below the ALICE Threshold do not have consistent access to food.

Programs that encourage partnerships between farmers and food assistance programs can make a profound impact. By investing in Hawaii-grown agriculture producers, the State can support not only local farmers but also the communities they feed. This approach aligns with the values of mālama 'āina, caring for the land, and ensures that the State honors the deep connection between the land and the people of Hawaii. Uplifting local farmers will also uplift the entire community, fostering a more resilient food system that can withstand future challenges. The Hawai'i Farm to Families Program would support not only families and their food needs, but would also provide Hawaii's agriculture

producers with a market to support their operations, and keep moneys circulating within the State to boost the local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 6:58:43 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
W. Nick Cambra	Testifying for Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is W. Nick Cambra and I am Foodbank Coordinator for Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church and a community farmer.

I am writing to request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

In these trying economic times, families are torn, and need the support of our political leaders. Farmers and families in the community are suffering due to inflation and this bill would be a step to benefit both.

Thank you for allowing me to express my support for this bill and I ask you to consider the health of our community in these hard economic times. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 11:30:37 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kasey Crispin	Testifying for Hawai'i 'Ulu Cooperative	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

On behalf of the **Hawai'i 'Ulu Cooperative**, we strongly support the **Farm to Families bills** as a critical step toward strengthening Hawai'i's local food system while addressing food insecurity across our islands. As a farmer-owned co-op dedicated to revitalizing 'ulu and other canoe crops, we see firsthand the challenges that local farmers face in getting their products to market, as well as the need for greater access to fresh, locally grown food for Hawai'i families.

One in three households in Hawai'i faces food insecurity, yet thousands of pounds of locally grown produce go unsold each year due to barriers in distribution and market access. Farm to Families legislation bridges this gap by creating direct pathways between farmers and families in need, ensuring that fresh, island-grown foods nourish our communities instead of going to waste. By investing in local agriculture, we **strengthen Hawai'i's food security, empower farmers, support our economy, and mālama 'āina**—all while providing nutritious options for our keiki, kūpuna, and those who need it most.

For our 180+ cooperative farmers across the islands, programs like Farm to Families make it possible to continue growing Hawai'i's staple foods—like 'ulu, kalo, and 'uala—on local farms instead of relying on imports. Supporting this legislation is a **direct investment in Hawai'i's future**, ensuring that small farmers can thrive while all families, regardless of income, have access to healthy, locally sourced food.

We urge you to pass the **Farm to Families bills** and take this critical step toward a **more resilient, sustainable, and food-secure Hawai'i**.

Mahalo for your time and leadership,

Kasey Crispin
Hawai'i 'Ulu Cooperative

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 11:38:31 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii STRONGLY SUPPORT!



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for HB 428 – Relating to Farm to Families
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Monday, March 10, 2025, at 1:01pm

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **HB 428**, which would support a Farm to Families program. This bill would appropriate funds to alleviate food shortages in the State by ensuring fresh produce is directed to families in need.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of food equity and resiliency, which is why we support instituting a Farm to Families program at the state level. This legislation would strengthen local food supply chains, from supporting the local agricultural economy to guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, to reducing farm food waste.

Fresh, local produce is essential for improving community health, yet is often out of reach for many families struggling to afford life in Hawai‘i. This program would help make healthy, whole foods available to more people, thereby alleviating hunger and preventing long-term health issues like diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and depression.¹

Farm to families not only strengthens Hawai‘i’s food supply chain but also provides a backup, or “safety net” market for local farmers during times of economic crisis or natural disaster. When these events strike, the emergency food system becomes a lifeline both for families seeking food, and for farmers seeking markets when tourism plummets. Most recently, the Maui wildfires contributed to a spike in food insecurity—as many as 49% of Maui’s population.² It was the food banks and distribution partners who stepped in—institutions that historically have relied almost entirely on charitable contributions.

By strengthening the partnerships between local farmers and our food banks, we are setting up a food system that is not as reliant on imports and puts back money in our local economy. Our state has set goals to double our local food production by 2030; passing this bill is one step to getting us there.³

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 428. We are pleased that the Hawai‘i legislature is paying attention to improving food security. By investing in this initiative, we can create a stronger, healthier, and more equitable Hawai‘i for generations to come.

¹ Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), “Hunger & Health: The Impact of Poverty, Food Insecurity, and Poor Nutrition on Health and Well-Being,” FRAC, December 2017, p. 1-2.

² Hawai‘i Foodbank, “The State of Food Insecurity in Hawai‘i,” Hawai‘i Foodbank, May 2024, p. 6.

³ <https://alohachallenge.hawaii.gov/pages/local-food-production-and-consumption>

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 11:42:43 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Larry Smith	Testifying for Kupuna Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Kupuna Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii strongly supports this Bill which will provide food options for seniors and strengthen our farm economy

Larry Smith

Chair

Kupuna Caucus

Democratic Party of Hawaii

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 6:27:40 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karin S. Carlson	Testifying for The Maui Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Chair Representative Gabbard, Vice Chair Representative Richards, and members of the committee

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

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- 1. Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.**
- 2. Supporting Local Farmers: The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.**
- 3. Enhancing Nutritional Access: Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.**

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Karin S. Carlson
Board Member, Maui Food Bank



2025 Network Members

Aloha Harvest
Aloha United Way
Chef Hui
City and County of Honolulu
County of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive
Action (HAPA)
Hawai'i Appleseed
Hawai'i Children's Action
Network
Hawai'i Dept. of Agriculture
Hawai'i Dept. of Health
Hawai'i Food Bank
Hawai'i Food Bank - Kua'i
Branch
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Kōkua Kalihi Valley
Lanakila Pacific
Mālama Kua'i
Maui Department of Agriculture
Maui Food Bank
Parents and Children Together
Supersistence
The Food Basket
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i
Together
Wai'anae Coast
Comprehensive Health Center

hawaiihungeraction.org

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

March 10, 2025 at 1:01pm

RE: Support for HB 428, Relating to Farm to Families

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richard's, and members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, would like to express strong support for HB428. This bill would appropriate funds for the Farm to Families program.

Our network is intimately familiar with the toll disasters can take on communities, and many of our members are at the frontlines of response efforts. Whether it is in response to wildfires, a pandemic, a government shutdown, a hurricane, flood, volcano eruption—or just the day-to-day emergency of needing to put food on the table in an economy when many families are one paycheck away from financial devastation—our emergency food partners are there to respond to the community's needs. And they often do this on very stretched and limited resources.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of resiliency, not just because of its role in a disaster, but also in its potential to strengthen local food supply chains and our island's agricultural economy. This program would be a powerful step toward achieving this outcome, by guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, supporting local farmers, and even reducing farm food waste.

Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of this important legislation.

With aloha,
Hawai'i Hunger Action Network membership

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 10:32:13 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Etheredge	Testifying for Maui Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 428
Relating to Farm to Families**

March 10, 2025

To: Chair Representative Gabbard, Vice Chair Representative Richards, and members of the committee

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

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- 1. Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.**
- 2. Supporting Local Farmers: The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.**
- 3. Enhancing Nutritional Access: Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.**

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

**Brian Etheredge
Board Member, Maui Food Bank**

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 10:30:43 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sylvia Dolena	Testifying for Pele Lani Farm LLC, Kulia I Ka nu'u Outreach Services	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support Bill HB428 for local farmers to bring food to families in need.

Mahalo.

Sylvia Dolena

Pele Lani Farm LLC

Kulia I Ka nu'u outreach services

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 10:10:14 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele McLean	Testifying for Maui Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony in SUPPORT of HB428.

As a member of the Board of the Maui Food Bank, I support the “Farm to Families” bill because it will help us and our partner agencies to provide fresh local produce to those members of our community who are facing food insecurity while also supporting and promoting our local farmers.

This bill is a win-win-win: it strengthens our local food supply chain, providing food security for those who rely on MFB, plus it also has broader implications for all of our residents; it supports our local farmers by providing a steady, reliable market on which they can plan for future growth; and it enhances the nutrition and well-being for those who receive food from MFB by providing fresh, plentiful and culturally-appropriate produce on a regular basis.

Your support is critical – please vote “yes” on HB428.

Mahalo!

-Michele McLean

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 8:12:07 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steve Ulene	Testifying for Maui Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 428
Relating to Farm to Families**

March 10, 2025

To: Chair Representative Gabbard, Vice Chair Representative Richards, and members of the committee

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

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- 1. Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.**
- 2. Supporting Local Farmers: The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.**
- 3. Enhancing Nutritional Access: Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.**

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

**Steve Ulene
Board Member, Maui Food Bank**



To: The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025, 1:01pm

In strong support of HB428 HD1

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the AEN committee,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **strongly supports HB428 HD1** that establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

One in three households in Hawaii faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. This critical measure will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii farm to families program to fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food. By doing so, this program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger.

Many families in Hawaii struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB428 HD1 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Moreover, efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawaii's resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB428 HD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

Please pass **HB428 HD1** so that we all may reap these benefits.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of this important legislation.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 9:18:42 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of Committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery , I am Co-chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i. We would like to offer our strong support for HB428 HD1. As a farm worker in my local community I see the benefits of growing food locally and keeping it in our communities.

Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Please pass HB428 HD1.

Sincerely,

SusanRobertsEmery
Green Party of Hawai'i
Paauilo

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 8:44:40 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

HB428 provides funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Supporting local farmers, those using regenerative practices in particular is good for the environment, good for our local economy and good for the people. Strong support for HB428

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 11:26:37 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marsha Fahir	Testifying for Maui Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 428
Relating to Farm to Families**

To: Chair Representative Gabbard, Vice Chair Representative Richards, and members of the committee

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

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- 1. Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.**
- 2. Supporting Local Farmers: The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.**
- 3. Enhancing Nutritional Access: Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.**

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Marsha Sharpe (nee Fahir)
Board Chair, Maui Food Bank



401 Uluniu St. #311 Kailua, HI 96734 | info@hawaiigoodfoodalliance.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB428 HD1: Farm to Families
House Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Hearing Date: Monday, March 10, 2025, at 1:00 PM

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

My name is Lucas McKinnon, and I serve as the Managing Director of the **Hawai'i Good Food Alliance**. I am writing in **strong support of HB428 HD1, the "Farm to Families" bill**, which will help alleviate food shortages and strengthen Hawai'i's food system by ensuring fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

This bill is a critical investment in both food security and local agriculture, creating pathways for small and mid-sized farmers to supply fresh produce directly to communities in need. Through increased procurement and distribution partnerships, this bill will:

- **Strengthen Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain** – By reducing dependence on imported food, we increase resilience and self-sufficiency within our islands. Investing in local agriculture ensures that communities have reliable access to nutritious food while keeping food dollars circulating in Hawai'i's economy.
- **Support Local Farmers** – The bill provides stable and fair market opportunities for Hawai'i's farmers, allowing them to plan for long-term growth. Many farmers, especially small-scale and regenerative producers, struggle to compete with cheaper imported food. By connecting them to food distribution organizations, this bill ensures their produce feeds local families instead of being lost to market instability.
- **Enhance Nutritional Access** – Families facing food insecurity often lack consistent access to fresh, healthy food. By expanding food distribution programs that prioritize locally grown produce, HB428 HD1 supports better health outcomes, reducing diet-related diseases and strengthening community well-being.

At the Hawai'i Good Food Alliance, we have seen firsthand how farm-to-community food programs work—ensuring that families, kūpuna, and keiki receive healthy, culturally relevant food while simultaneously supporting Hawai'i's agricultural economy. This bill represents a **critical step toward a more just, sustainable, and food-secure Hawai'i**. I strongly urge the Committee to pass HB428 HD1 to ensure that fresh, local food reaches Hawai'i's families while uplifting our agricultural community.

Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to food security and agricultural sustainability.

Respectfully,

Lucas McKinnon
Managing Director
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance



HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 2:06:18 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Salvador Bisarra Jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good Morning,

My name is Salvador Bisarra Jr. and I am writing to share how the Farm to Families program is making a real difference in our communities.

I recently turned 50, and looking back at my youth, I remember a time when fresh, homegrown food was a norm. Almost everyone in my community had gardens and raised livestock. Families gathered and shared with one another, forming a tight knit community. Processed foods were almost nonexistent in our diets. We ate home-cook meals filled with fresh vegetables and locally raised meats, as a result, I grew up healthy and full of energy.

But as I entered adulthood, times changed. Processed foods became more affordable and convenient, and like many others raising a family, they became a staple in our home. Over time, I noticed the impact on my body, my energy levels dropped, my metabolism slowed, and my overall well-being suffered.

Recently, I made a commitment to return to healthier eating. I incorporated more fresh, whole foods into my diet, and the results were undeniable, I lost over 20 pounds and felt a renewed sense of energy and vitality. But I recognize that not everyone has the budget to make these healthier choices.

Through my work assisting families with applying for SNAP benefits, I see firsthand how many struggle to afford fresh, nutritious food. This is why programs like Farm to Families are essential. They bridge the gap, ensuring that families can access the same quality food that I grew up with while supporting Hawai'i's local farmers.

This program isn't just about food, it's about health, sustainability, and community resilience. It provides families with the opportunity to make healthier choices while strengthening our local agricultural economy. I urge you to continue supporting initiatives like Farm to Families, as they are crucial to the well-being of both our people and our farmers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Salvador S. Bisarra Jr.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 2:11:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Committee Members,

My name is Molly Mamaril and I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill (HB428 HD1), a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Molly Mamaril

Kaimukī, O'ahu resident

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 7:30:39 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please provide full support for the the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

As a former agricultural professional in Hawaii, I understand the importance of growing, purchasing and distributing locally grown foods.

Investing in local agriculture reduces the state's dependence on imported food (now estimated at 85% — extraordinarily high).

With a reliable market for their produce, Hawaii's farmers are better able to plan for and supply delicious and nutritious food.

Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options, fighting hunger and promoting long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Please support the "Farm to Families" bill.

Jody Smith 96825

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 7:46:17 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauralee Dice	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support 428 HB RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES. This would help local farmers be sustainable, bring local food to more people who need it and also provide a substantial need to the community.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 12:27:32 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

One in three households in Hawaii faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. I strongly support this critical bill that will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii farm to families program to fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food. This program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger in our state.

-- Many families in Hawaii struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB428 HD1 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Moreover, efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawaii's resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB428 HD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 3:17:18 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert H. Pahia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this Bill because more families are needy and farmers can have a substantial increase to market produce

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 12:13:49 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Strong support. Thank you.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 1:47:44 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg Crawford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 5:27:10 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Ford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

sarah ford/ Waianae

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 5:23:21 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Chair and Members of the AEN Committee:

Please pass HB 428. Supporting local farms in the important effort to convert Hawai'i's dependence on imported food to island self-sufficiency will benefit the farmers; the families needing fresh, locally grown produce and protein for their health; and help to grow a robust economy!

Mahalo!!

Cheryl Ho, Ni'uaniu

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 2:57:47 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support this great program which helps local farmers AND folks who can really use fresh local produce!

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 10:37:58 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

March 10, 2025

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

I am a home visitor working with low-income families to support them as their keiki's first teacher and a master's student in Early Childhood Education. I am compelled to write in support of this bill because it will have a profound impact on these families and the farms in our community.

I strongly support HB 428, Relating To Farm To Families, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Hawai'i is facing a food crisis with one in three households struggling to secure consistent access to food. This hardship disproportionately affects our keiki, leading to increased risks of cognitive delays, behavioral challenges, and long-term health disparities. Through my work with families, I have observed the effects of high-quality nutrition and its positive impact on keiki brain development, attachment, and academic and physical growth.

HB 428 provides a sustainable, community-driven solution by connecting food banks with our local farmers to supply fresh, locally grown produce to families in need. This program extends other successful local projects that not only ensure that vulnerable populations receive nutritious food but also foster economic resilience by investing in our local agriculture sector. This bill aligns with our values of mālama 'āina and kuleana and reinforces the deep connection between food security and community well-being.

Access to fresh, nutritious food is critical for healthy keiki and 'ohana, and this bill would help ensure that families have consistent access to local, healthy options. By supporting this program, we uplift both our farmers and our most vulnerable residents, creating a healthy, strong, resilient Hawai'i.

I urge the committee to pass HB 428.

Mahalo for this opportunity to share my position

Carol Linde

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 4:15:08 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term. Thank You. Eliel, Kapaa

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 7:45:10 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1, which will benefit food banks, local farmers and families in need. The Farm to Families program will help food banks by providing funding so they can make purchases from local farmers. This will help local farmers overcome a major challenge by giving them access to markets. Families will benefit by having a place to get food when there is an emergency. This will also help grow our local food and agriculture economy as well as provide our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Thank you

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 12:06:29 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Honorable Members,

I am writing to ask that you support HB428 HD1 which will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii farm to families program to fund food banks in the State to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food to food insecure communities. By doing so, it will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity. This creates an added win. Supporting local farmers strengthens food resilience and reduces greenhouse gas emissions by minimizing the need for long-distance food transportation, which is a significant source of carbon emissions.

Than kyou for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 3:39:55 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am writing to urge you to support ****HB428 HD1****, a critical piece of legislation that addresses food insecurity in Hawai‘i while strengthening our local food and agriculture economy. The statistics around food insecurity in our state are staggering: ****one in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity****, and nearly half (46%) of ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households lack consistent access to food. This bill presents a meaningful opportunity to address these challenges while supporting our local farmers.

One of the major challenges local farmers face is access to markets. By increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food, HB428 HD1 creates a win-win solution for our communities and farmers. It will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our families with fresh, nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to rise, investing in our local food economy is essential to bolstering local production and ensuring long-term food security for Hawai‘i.

In the wake of disasters, food banks play a vital role in preparing and supporting Hawai‘i’s families. However, they rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments depend heavily on their services during times of crisis. The ****Farm to Families program****, funded through this bill, would provide critical resources for food banks to purchase from local farmers. This not only improves emergency food access for families but also opens up a reliable local market for farmers during economic crises.

I strongly believe that HB428 HD1 is a necessary step toward building a more resilient and sustainable food system in Hawai‘i. By supporting this bill, you will be taking meaningful action to address food insecurity, support local farmers, and strengthen our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope I can count on your support for HB428 HD1. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further.

Mahalo,
Jennifer Lum, ‘Ewa Beach

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 5:24:52 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Greetings Committee Chair and Committee members,

Please support HB 428. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 4:57:46 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noel Shaw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB428 because everyone deserves access to healthy locally grown foods and this is a really positive way to support our farmers. As someone whose served in a food distribution space, I've seen how much joy recipients get when they receive quality locally grown products. Our ability to get closer this kind of quality care is my hope for Hawai'i. Please pass this bill and support Hawai'i's people, agriculture, and futures.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 2:07:52 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Annalise Hart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Aloha,

Annie

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 3:24:16 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Muftiah Martin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support the farm to families bill!

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 11:17:38 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

One in three households in Hawai‘i faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. This bill highlights the House Majority's commitment to supporting Hawai‘i-grown food and providing nutritious options for local families, while empowering Hawai‘i's farmers. When we invest in local agriculture, we boost our economy, create sustainable opportunities, and mālama ‘āina—steward our land to preserve it for future generations. By nourishing our keiki and families, we strengthen and uplift our entire community.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 1:44:08 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 5:50:48 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emelia Briscoe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 4:58:53 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 6:16:56 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

****Testimony in Support of House Bill 428****

Aloha e nā Luna o ka Hale o nā Lunamaka‘āinana,

My name is Tiare Smith, a Native Hawaiian resident of Kahalu‘u, O‘ahu, where I have lived for 45 years. As a daughter of this ‘āina, I have borne witness to its bounty and its burdens, to the resilience of our people, and to the precipitous decline in our ability to sustain ourselves amidst rising economic and environmental pressures. It is with profound conviction that I submit this testimony in unwavering support of House Bill 428, an Act Relating to Farm to Families, which promises to address the unconscionable specter of food insecurity that haunts our communities while honoring the symbiotic relationship between our local farmers and the families they nourish.

The data presented in HB 428 is both sobering and galvanizing: one in three households in Hawaii struggles to secure consistent access to food, with Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander families—my own kith and kin—bearing the brunt of this crisis at a rate exceeding forty percent. This is not merely a statistic; it is a clarion call to rectify longstanding inequities that disenfranchise our most vulnerable, particularly our keiki, nearly thirty percent of whom endure the indignity of hunger. The legislature’s findings illuminate the cascading consequences of such deprivation—cognitive impairment, behavioral challenges, and mental health crises—each a preventable tragedy antithetical to the values of aloha and mālama that define us as a people.

HB 428 proposes a visionary solution: the Hawaii Farm to Families Program, which would empower the Department of Agriculture to fund food banks in purchasing, storing, and transporting fresh, Hawaii-grown produce to those in need. This initiative is a masterstroke of pragmatism and principle. By forging a robust partnership between our local farmers and community food systems, the bill not only alleviates immediate hunger but also fortifies the economic and ecological resilience of our islands. The Hawaii Foodbank’s investment of over \$11,000,000 in local produce over the past five years—yielding a nearly \$19,000,000 boost to our economy—demonstrates the transformative potential of such an approach. HB 428 would amplify this impact, ensuring that crops like kalo, ‘ulu, and Okinawan sweet potato—staples of our cultural and nutritional heritage—reach the tables of those who need them most.

For 45 years, I have watched Kahalu‘u and its surrounding communities grapple with the rising cost of imported goods, a dependency that erodes our self-sufficiency and inflates the suffering

of our families. HB 428 offers a sustainable antidote, reducing our reliance on external supply chains while creating a stable market for Hawaii's 575 local farms and food hubs. This is not merely an economic transaction; it is an act of mālama 'āina, a reaffirmation of our duty to care for the land that sustains us. By channeling state resources into this program, we uplift our agricultural producers, bolster our local economy, and restore dignity to households teetering on the edge of despair.

I urge the legislature to consider the moral and practical imperatives of this bill. To delay or deny its passage is to perpetuate a status quo that is untenable—a disservice to our keiki, our kūpuna, and the generations yet to come. HB 428 is a rare convergence of policy and pono, a chance to weave a stronger, healthier, and more equitable tapestry for Hawaii. I implore you to enact this measure with the urgency it demands, appropriating the necessary funds to bring its promise to fruition.

Me ka ha'aha'a a me ke aloha,

Tiare Smith

Kahalu'u, O'ahu

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 11:54:40 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Farm to family food is humane.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 6:29:07 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support HB428 HD1, which will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii farm-to-families program to fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh food grown or produced in Hawaii. This program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

HB428 HD1 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Moreover, efforts to invest in local agriculture strengthens Hawaii's resiliency, while reducing the costs and the greenhouse gas emissions associated with shipping food to our state. HB428 HD1 supports our families, our farmers, and our climate!

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 1:14:51 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeremy Kalan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this critical bill that will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii farm to families program to fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food. This program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger in our state.

-- Many families in Hawaii struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB428 HD1 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Moreover, efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawaii's resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB428 HD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate



Aloha!

My name is Yoshito L'Hote, Chief executive officer for 'Āina Ho'okupu o Kilauea, a 501c3 non profit entity on the north shore of Kaua'i.

We are developing a 75 acre community ag center where we are exploring and implementing a vertically integrated farm that is increasing food security and resiliency for the island of kaua'i. We are writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local food producers like us, strengthening our community food systems and ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity. We have been distributing food boxes around the island since COVID and feel strongly in finding the mechanisms to continue the program in perpetuity. The 250 boxes a week we produce have helped the farm and retail store reduce waste and provide a healthy alternative to other food bank foods currently available.

One of our biggest challenge is to find long term reliable markets that can support small and medium size farms, and this bill will do just that.

With a growing market share the local production can increase and the reliability and quality can be supported. Our heavy reliance on imports makes us very vulnerable especially in time of crisis and every concrete support will ensure for a more sustainable and resilient for food system. Now we'll diversify the economy allowing more farmers to have ways to bring their product to market and support other added value businesses and restaurants by increasing their production. But this cannot happen without the financial commitment that the state can provide to create a tomorrow where most people eat locally grown produce as we have an incredible ability to grow round the year an incredible variety of fruits and vegetables and protein.

The other added advantages of having a local food system is proper management of our environment is the reduction of carbon footprint and waste generation but most importantly we are what we eat and when we eat fresh vibrant foods our health inevitably gets better we also than to want to be involved at a deeper level when we know where our food come from who the food providers are and how we can help them produce more and better food.

We have been providing and working with the foodbank since covid and we are now providing 65 kupuna boxes every week and the response is fantastic and the kupuna really appreciate that fresh mango or papaya, the salad and the sweet potatoes.

Thank you,

Yoshito L'Hote, CEO for 'Āina Ho'okupu o Kilauea
PO Box 1023, Kilauea HI 96754
Phone: (808) 652-0069

Aloha,

My name is Mahealani Contrades-Brun, and I serve as the Parent Community Networking Center (PCNC) Facilitator at 'Ele'ele Elementary School. I am reaching out with an urgent request for your support of the "*Farm to Families*" bill, a critical piece of legislation that could dramatically enhance food security across our state.

This bill has the potential to strengthen the connections between local farmers, food distributors, and families in need, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches households struggling with food insecurity.

The benefits of this bill extend beyond providing fresh food. It will help our communities and economy in several important ways:

- **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By supporting local agriculture, we reduce our reliance on imported goods and build a more resilient, sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
- **Supporting Local Farmers:** This bill creates a steady and reliable market for locally grown produce, giving our farmers the stability they need to plan, grow, and thrive while directly contributing to the well-being of their neighbors.
- **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** By increasing access to fresh, local produce, we ensure that families have the healthy food they need to thrive, promoting long-term health and wellness, and helping to combat food insecurity.

The partnership we have with our local food bank is essential for some of our families who struggle to afford fresh fruits and vegetables. On our distribution days, it is truly heartwarming to see the faces of our keiki light up when they receive fresh produce.

Your leadership on this issue is vital, and I am deeply grateful for your commitment to building a food-secure Hawai'i. I strongly encourage your support for this legislation and stand ready to collaborate in any way that may help advance this important initiative.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

O wau me ka ha'aha'a,

Mahealani Contrades-Brun

PCNC Facilitator

'Ele'ele Elementary School, Kaua'i, Hawai'i



Aloha!

I am Director of Operations for the Ho`okipa Kauai Food Pantry, which has weekly distributions in four locations on Kauai plus a roving outreach distribution to unsheltered homeless wherever we can find them. We distribute food to nearly 400 families a week.

We strongly support the Farm to Families program, which has completely transformed our ability to serve the undernourished in Kauai. Before this program, there were times each year when we were lucky to provide these families with an apple from Washington. Since the program was implemented, the Hawaii Foodbank has been able to regularly supply us with a selection of nutritious and fresh fruits and vegetables grown by local farmers. This type of support is critical to the health and well-being of many local families who are overwhelmed by the increasing costs of shelter or have been displaced completely.

This program is also critical to our statewide efforts to create a sustainable food supply chain. The Covid-19 pandemic was a wake-up call to the fact that we cannot be totally reliant upon outside sources for food. There will be other disruptions. Government assistance for small local farmers is essential to the continued transformation of Hawaiian land use from plantation-based exporting to self-sustainability.

We are wholly appreciative of your leadership in this effort and strongly urge you to continue this important program.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Best Regards
Ron Garrison
Ho`okipa Kauai Director of Operations

Ho`okipa Kauai, P.O. Box 223154, Princeville, HI 96722

Aloha!

My name is Laurie Yoshida, and I am the chair of the Kauai Advisory Board for the Hawai'i Foodbank.

I am writing to urgently ask for your support of the Farm to Families bill, a critical piece of legislation that can potentially transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity. So many members of our community are food insecure or one paycheck away and these critical services will help them with much needed healthy food.

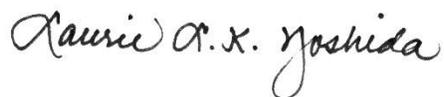
The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
2. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.
3. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.

I have witnessed firsthand how a bag of food can help a family bridge the gap and help them feed their children. Through my community service opportunities, I have seen children living on the beach, sometimes going an entire day without any food, and how that affects their ability to learn in the classroom. The food they are provided not only nourishes their bodies, but also provides them with an opportunity to learn and grow and develop into productive citizens. I know that there are costs to this program, but without it, we will spend much more in the future.

Thank you for your commitment to a food secure Hawai'i. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to working with you to help end hunger in Hawai'i.

Thank you,



Laurie Yoshida
Lihu'e, HI

Aloha!

As a resident of Kaua'i and a member of the Advisory Board for the Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i Branch, I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

By fostering a partnership between local farms and food organizations, families and businesses benefit in a number of ways:

- Reducing our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
- Supporting agriculture by providing a steady and fair market for local produce.
- Getting healthy food into the hands of our families who might not otherwise have access to healthy food options.

I have seen first-hand the incredible work of the Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i Branch and know that the needs are far greater than the available resources. Current uncertainty in the federal funding for assistance programs of all kinds makes the need to create new resource streams even more urgent.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Mahalo,



Beth Amaro
Puhi, Kaua'i, Hawai'i

Aloha!

I'm Josephine Brown, the PCNC (Parent Community Networking Coordinator) at Kalāheo Elementary School. I'm reaching out to urgently request your support for the "Farm to Families" bill. I believe that this vital legislation has the potential to transform Hawai'i's food security and strengthen our local agricultural community.

I have observed firsthand the transformative impact of connecting local farms with our food distribution efforts. The "Farm to Families" bill would allow us to strengthen these vital partnerships, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches our students and their families who face food insecurity.

At Kalāheo Elementary, we've seen impressive benefits from incorporating local produce into our school pantry such as:

- ★ Nourishing our KEIKI, our students now have access to a variety of nutritious, island-grown fruits and vegetables. This not only addresses immediate hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness among our keiki. The excitement on their faces when they receive these fresh goods, is truly heartwarming.
- ★ Supporting our COMMUNITY, it can be seen that by sourcing from local farmers, we're not just feeding our students; we're also supporting our neighbors and strengthening our local economy. This connection has created a sense of pride and community within our school ohana.
- ★ EDUCATIONAL opportunities, the partnership has opened doors for educational initiatives. Our students can learn about agriculture, nutrition, and the importance of supporting local businesses.

I remember just this past week watching the student's relieved faces when they came to the front of the office to collect fresh oranges. Some of them took a whole bunch of oranges, mentioning that they are excited to share these fresh oranges with their families.

The "Farm to Families" bill would allow us to expand these efforts, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i. It would provide a steady market for our local farmers while ensuring that nutritious, fresh produce reaches those who need it most!

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Mahalo nui loa & Fa'afetai tele lava,

Josephine Brown
PCNC, Kalāheo Elementary School
Kalāheo, Kaua'i, Hawai'i



Kapa`a Elementary School
4886 Kawihau Road
Kapa`a, HI 96746

Aloha,

My name is Dayson Souza-Yim and I am the Family Engagement Coordinator at Kapa`a Elementary School on Kaua`i.

On behalf of Kapa`a Elementary School and our families, I am writing to express our support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Dayson Souza-Yim, Family Engagement Coordinator
Kapa`a Elementary School
Kapa`a, Kaua`i, Hawai'i

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays!

My name is Michelle Rapozo, I am the PCNC (Parent Community Network Center) Coordinator and FRC (Family Resource Center) Director at Kapaa Middle School.

I am writing this letter in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. Food distribution organizations building and strengthening partnerships with local farmers and food producers with the ability to distribute fresh vegetables and fruits would greatly benefit our many families and community members who face daily food insecurities.

Benefits of having a partnership with local farmers and producers for our families:

1. Supporting our local farmers by providing them with steady income and fair market prices for their produce. They can plan for the future and further growth in feeding our community.
2. Investing in our local farming community helps to create and build sustainability for our island.
3. Having healthy food options by providing fresh vegetables and fruits to our students and families that do not have access to them is such a needed resource.

Being the Director of our Family Resource Center here at Kapaa Middle School. I see firsthand the heartbreak and hardships that our families struggle with. It saddens me to hear that for some of our students, the food that they get from our school pantry is the only food security they have. I also get to see the smiles, the excitement, the relief on the faces of our students parents, and grandparents. When we can get apples, oranges, sweet potatoes, or whatever produce is available, they are so very appreciative.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to having that vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawaii. I am grateful for your consideration of this important legislation. Please feel free to collaborate in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,
Michelle Rapozo
PCNC/FRC Director
Kapaa Middle School



Aloha, my name is Zongping Huang, the owner of Kauai Glory Farm. I'm writing to support "Farm to families Bill", a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local food producers, strengthening our community food systems and ensuring that fresh locally grown produce reaches families food insecurity.

According to my experience from January to December this year, with a some funding, my farm and Hawaii Food Bank kauai branch partnership, delivered and will be delivered totally 12,800 lbs and 2796 bags fresh farm grown produce to our kauai families in need. As a local farmer , I'm so grateful to have this great opportunity to serve our community with fresh produce. It also empowered me as a local farmer to continue to grow more produce to supply our community. So I feel the partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits for our communities and our economy by:

1. Strengthening Hawaii's food supply chain. With steady market system, will have more and more locally grown produce available form our local food hubs and families
2. Supporting local farmers . The Bill offers a direct benefit to Hawaii agricultural sector , Providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers plan for future growth knowing their products will fit their neighbors in need
3. Enhancing nutritional Access: Fresh , Local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health And wellness in our community

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawaii . I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

Zongping Huang
Owner of Kauai Glory Farm
(808) 258-5037

Aloha,

My name is Kate Veatch, I am the PCNC at Kilauea School on Kaua'i. I help our community outreach and support by providing opportunities out in the real world showing our keiki the fundamentals of giving back and helping people succeed to make us all better as a community. Hawai'i Foodbank, being one of our biggest and most attentive partners, offering amazing local fruits and vegetables with their snack to our families has made such a great impact on our students and community. Showing that there are opportunities within our community to thrive together.

With that being said, I am writing to you with a very important request. Myself and on behalf of students and staff at, Kilauea School, want to show a supporting role for this amazing opportunity; the "**Farm to Families**" bill, which is a pivotal piece of our legislation that has tremendous potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations such as Hawai'i Foodbank to strengthen their community's foundation with local farmers and food processing, these are crucial to ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches every family that may face some kind of food shortages or financial hardship.

The partnership between local farms and food distribution organizations only benefits the families in our communities and our economy by the following advantages:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:**

Staying local and keeping local agriculture, we are working to reduce and can ultimately eliminate our dependence on processed and/or imported goods, this is creating a more sustainable environment and food system for Hawai'i.

2. **Supporting Local Farmers:**

The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their communities in need.

3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:**

Providing fresh, local produce offers better nutrition habits and essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term healthier eating habits and a more balanced lifestyle. I know our local community and visitors can see we are paving the way by willingly being active showing support for this bill.

We can look confidently knowing this "**Farm to Families**" bill, is not a want, but a **need**, so that our keiki and their future 'ohana can thrive when they come to school ready to learn and their parents can get the best product our community can offer. Because there is nothing like aunties fresh cut fruit and vegetables - let's show others that this is the only way to the future and success of every island.

Thank you for committing to our vision and goal, for food-secure on not only Kaua'i, but the hopes of our state, Hawai'i, having the same access and quality building a great way of life worth living.

I'm grateful and excited for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to support and encourage others with you as you take this matter forward.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kate Veatch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning.

Kate Veatch
PCNC
Kilauea School, Kaua'i





Opportunities to Begin Again

To whom it may concern:

I am Wayne P. Law, Kauai County Director of Mental Health Kokua, a Hawaii Foodbank Kauai partner agency. I am writing in support of Hawaii Foodbank's funding request.

Mental Health Kokua has been a partner agency of Foodbank Kauai since 2/14/2020. Hawaii Foodbank Kauai provides the food we distribute to individuals within our 24-hour Transitional Living Program. Mental Health Kokua serves individuals with severe and persistent mental illnesses. Services include transitional housing and case management services. In the 24-hour housing program we have a capacity of 10 individuals at any given time. As they move on to lesser levels of housing care options, new individuals come into the 24-hr. house. As a result, we may serve up to 20 individuals per year. These are some of the most vulnerable individuals in our community, and who need support and skills development to enable them to ultimately live more independently. Many of them come to us from homelessness. Given their very fixed income, the assistance from the Foodbank Kauai helps stretch their food budgets and allows them to have greater access to nutritious choices. We strongly support the Foodbank Kauai's Legislative request, recognizing it to be of great value and assistance to those in our community who otherwise may suffer hunger and less consistent and nutritious meals.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Wayne P. Law'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Wayne P. Law, MSW
Kauai County Director
Mental Health Kokua



Phone (808) 737-2523

A non-profit organization
Main Administrative Office
1221 Kapiolani Boulevard, #345
Honolulu, HI 96814
Fax (808) 734-1208

Kauai Administrative Office
3205 Akahi Street
Lihue, HI 96766
Phone (808) 632-0466



Fax (808) 632-0866

Aloha!

I am writing to submit my support of the Farm to Families bill that will allow food distributing organizations to work alongside local farmers and other food producers to provide fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables for local families.

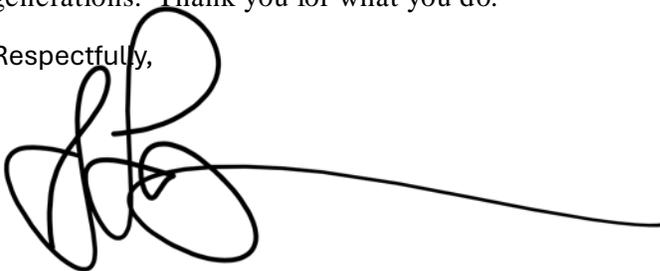
My name is Stephanie Funtanilla. I am the program manager for Nana's House, a family resource center that, among other things, provides a food pantry for families in need on the west side of Kauai. I have watched the needs of families grow despite all the efforts they make to work hard to provide for their families. As prices for food and everything rise, families resort to less nutritious foods just to be able to feed themselves. More time trying to earn a living leaves less time to plan and shop for nutritious foods. Less income means resorting to the least nutritious foods available.

I believe this is a win-win for families and producers.

1. By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

I acknowledge that the jobs that you do are very difficult: balancing the needs of what is right for your constituency and finding a way to be financially responsible in the long run for future generations. Thank you for what you do.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Stephanie Funtanilla
Program Manager
Nana's House, Kauai

St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church

4364 Hardy Street • Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii 96766 • Tel: 808-245-3796 • Fax: 808-245-6173

info@stmichaels-kauai.org • www.stmichaels-kauai.org

Aloha!

My name is Deann Megonnell, I am the Senior Warden for St Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church in Lihue Hawaii. I am also the Co-Chairperson for our Loaves & Fishes food ministry.

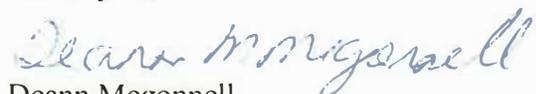
I would like to request your support of the Farm to Families Bill. St Michael & All Angels Episcopal church in Lihue Kauai All Angels Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry relies on the Hawaii Food Bank for our ministry. We have been a source of food for Kauai's Ohana members and our Kupuna for many years. Our pantry has experience firsthand the increase in demand for providing food packages to our community members in need. We currently make 180 bags a month for our two food distributions.

We fill the bags with provisions from the Hawaii Food Bank, Kauai monthly. They are an invaluable asset to our organization and provide us with a variety of canned and fresh items each week to fill our bags.

The Hawaii Food Bank on Kauai is a valuable resource for our program to receive fresh grown produce from local farmers. In addition to the nutrition of these fresh items for our clients, we are also providing support to our local farmers. The more food we can obtain from local sources the less dependent we are on imported food.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,


Deann Megonnell
St. Michael & All Angels Church
Lihue HI





Aloha,

My name is Kurt Rutter and I am a managing partner of Tokabago Farm LLC on Kaua'i. We run an Apiary and a market garden operation supplying fresh produce and honey through Kaua'i Farm Bureau Farmers Markets and local retail outlets and restaurants. I'm writing in support of the Farm to Families legislation that will increase access to fresh local food security for all residents of Kaua'i, and especially those in at greatest risk of food insecurity. Local farmers provide access to food security through supplying local markets and particularly Farm markets where we work with the Kauai Food Bank to provide fresh food in town centers across the island. This has brought us customers who might otherwise be unable to buy locally grown food. We support food security on Kaua'i and the Kaua'i Hawai'i food Bank is a valued partner in that mission.

Sincerely,

Kurt Rutter

Tokabago Farm LLC

464 Molo St.

Kapaa, HI 96746

tokabago@gmail.com

(808) 631-9131

Oscar Harris
Club Director
Boys & Girls Club of Hawaii
91-884 Fort Weaver Road,
Suite A. Ewa Beach, Hawaii 96706
OHarris@bgch.com
808.689.4182
November 17, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

Aloha,

On behalf of the Hale Pono Boys and Girls Club, I am writing to express our strong support for the “Farm to Families” bill, set to be introduced during the 2025 state legislative session. This crucial initiative aligns with our commitment to serving the families and keiki of Hawai‘i by addressing food insecurity while simultaneously supporting local farmers and strengthening our agricultural economy.

As an organization dedicated to fostering the well-being of youth and families in our community, we have seen firsthand the impact that nutritious, locally grown food has on the lives of those we serve. Access to fresh produce not only improves physical health but also enhances emotional and mental well-being, paving the way for stronger, more resilient communities. The “Farm to Families” bill promises to bridge the gap between local farmers and food-insecure families by creating a sustainable solution that benefits all of Hawai‘i.

We urge state legislators to prioritize funding for this initiative. By doing so, they will be making a meaningful investment in Hawai‘i’s future—one that uplifts both our agricultural industry and the families who rely on these essential resources.

Thank you for considering our testimony. We stand ready to support the “Farm to Families” bill in any way we can and look forward to seeing this transformative legislation come to fruition in 2025.

Mahalo nui loa,

Sincerely,
Oscar Harris
Club Director Boys & Girls Club of Hawaii



**Hale Pono Ewa Beach
Clubhouse**

91-884 Fort Weaver Rd. Suite A
Ewa Beach Hawaii 96706
Tel: 808.689.4182
Fax: 808.689.0625
www.bgch.com

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GREAT FUTURES STARTS **HERE.**



Aloha!

My name is Anthony Seyko and I manage the Food for Friends Ohana Distribution at the First Assembly of God Central Oahu Church in Wahiawa. Our church is one of the many agencies supported by the Hawaii Food Bank, Inc.

I am writing this letter to urgently ask for your support of the “Farm to Families” bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state’s food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

Families in our communities and our economy can benefit greatly through the partnership between local farms and food organizations as follows:

1. **Strengthening the Food Supply Chain of the State of Hawaii:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawaii.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawaii’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawaii. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,


Anthony Seyko

First Assembly of God Central Oahu
Food Program Manager



91-1440 Farrington Hwy. Kapolei, HI 96707

Phone: (808) 677-9516 Fax: (808) 677-9202

Aloha!

My Name is James DeJesus III, I am the Sales Director for Fresh Aloha Direct.

I'm writing to support the "Farm to Families" Bill. To help strengthen our community food systems, making a more consistent market for local farmers and food producers.

- **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.
- **Strengthening Hawaii's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawaii.
- **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawaii's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawaii. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,
James DeJesus III
Honolulu, Hawaii
Director of Sales



Aloha:

I am testifying on behalf of Giving Hope Hawaii.

I support the Hawaii farm to food bank program and Hawaii food assistance program special fund to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Without the help and partnership with Hawai'i Foodbank, Giving Hope Hawaii would not be able to feed over 5400 families a month suffering from food insecurity. Since January 2023 we have been able to service families, kupuna's and children with special needs from Waimanalo to Kahuku. Our pantry could not do this without the support from Hawaii Food Bank along with the Hawaii farm to food bank program.

With Hawaii Foodbanks continued support and to get more food we can certainly stomp out food hunger in all our communities.

Our mission is simple: **To give glory to God and to promote human dignity.** Through the tireless efforts of our staff, volunteers, and corporate partners, we provide food and support to the hungry and needy on Oahu's Windward Side especially our Kūpuna and Keiki with special needs.

"For I was hungry and you fed me. For I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. For I was a stranger and you invited me into your home. For I was naked and you clothed me. For I was sick and you cared for me. For I was in prison and you visited me."

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,
Violette Nacapoy
Chief of Operations, Director
Giving Hope Hawaii

Aloha!

My name is Esther Balsamo and I am the lead volunteer for Sunset Beach Christian Church's houseless outreach, Hands of Hope.

I am writing to express my concern for our home. So many are struggling to acquire enough food every day. Even those who have jobs, and homes come by asking for help. Therefore, I am urgently requesting your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to completely transform the lives of the people in my community.

The partnership between farms and food organizations will benefit so many families in our community. It would also strengthen Hawaii's food supply chain, support local farmers, and increase access to nutritional foods. Making our home filled with more healthy and happy individuals.

Ending hunger in Hawai'i is important to me. Because every week for the last four years I have sat and talked with those who do not know when their next meal will be. These people are so kind, and generous even with the little that they have. And I would like nothing more than to see their suffering eased.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

Esther Balsamo

Haleiwa

Hands of Hope Lead Volunteer



REDUCING HARM,
PROMOTING HEALTH,
CREATING WELLNESS,
AND FIGHTING STIGMA
IN HAWAII AND
THE PACIFIC

HAWAII HEALTH
& HARM REDUCTION
CENTER

677 Ala Moana Blvd.
Suite 226
Honolulu, HI 96813

(808) 521-2437

www.hhhrc.org

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

To Whom it May concern:

The Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) strongly supports the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program. This initiative is a vital step toward alleviating food insecurity across our islands while also supporting local agricultural producers.

Food insecurity remains one of Hawai'i's most pressing challenges. The economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic amplified this issue, and while the immediate crisis has passed, many families continue to struggle with access to fresh and healthy foods. This program would ensure a consistent supply of culturally relevant, locally grown food to food banks and communities in need, addressing the dual goals of improving food security and boosting the local economy.

HHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We focus our efforts on communities disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to people living with HIV, hepatitis, and substance use, as well as LGBTQIA+, Native Hawaiian, and houseless populations.

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, HHRC collaborated with the Hawai'i Food Bank to distribute over 500,000 pounds of food to thousands of families. These experiences underscored the urgent need for food banks to have access to fresh, healthy, and locally sourced foods beyond what is provided through donations. This program will empower food banks to meet these needs sustainably while supporting local farmers and food producers.

Hawai'i Farm to Families Program represents an opportunity to create a win-win scenario for Hawai'i: reducing food insecurity, strengthening our local agricultural economy, and ensuring the well-being of our most vulnerable communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this important measure.

Andrew Ogata
Director of Marketing and Development
Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

Aloha!

My name is Damiana Espiritu and I am the Food Pantry coordinator of Immaculate Conception Church in Ewa Beach.

I'm writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. A pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy. We reduce our dependence on imported goods and create a more sustainable food system for Hawai'i by investing in local agriculture. The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector by providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need. Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Thank you,

Damiana Espiritu
Ewa Beach, Oahu



Aloha Hawai'i policy leaders!

My name is Charla Teves, and I am a lifelong resident of Nu'uano. I am currently attending college in New York, which has only heightened my awareness of the intense need for my home state to address the pervasive and persistent need to end hunger. I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT** of the "Farm-to-Families" bill.

This bill will strengthen the Hawai'i food supply chain, reduce the state's dependency on imported goods and create a much more resilient and sustainable food system. Importantly, it will directly benefit farmers, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.

In 2024, I was named one of five national Stephen J. Brady Scholars by the Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation. I was invited to participate in a national conference where I learned about innovative programs across the country to help end hunger. Supporting the distribution of fresh local produce will help ensure that essential nutrients are available to children and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

One in five Hawaii children struggle with hunger, according to Feeding America. At more than 55,000 children, they would fill the Stan Sheriff Center four times over and still overflow into the parking lot. I have volunteered with many food drives and in other ways to help end hunger. Based on these experiences, I know for sure that your support of food banks in Hawai'i will make a difference.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you my support and please pass the Farm-to-Families bill.

Mahalo,

Charla Teves

Charlene Hosenfeld, Ph.D.

604 N. KALAHEO AVE., UNIT A, KAILUA, HI 96734

TEL 808 261 4305



Aloha,

I am a long-time resident of Kailua, O'ahu, and am writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. As a psychologist I am aware of the importance of good nutrition for both physical and psychological well-being.

This legislation would have a positive impact on multiple crucial areas in Hawai'i by:

- providing fresh and nutritional food to individuals and families who lack financial resources to access healthy food;
- supporting our local farmers; &
- decreasing our State's dependence on imported food.

The is a Win - Win - Win.

Mahalo nui loa for your leadership and efforts to create a more food secure, nutrition equatable, farmer supportive and thriving Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Charlene Hosenfeld PhD". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Charlene Hosenfeld

Aloha!

My name is Curstyn Yoshimoto and I am a Communications Coordinator at Hawai'i Foodbank. I am writing with an urgent request for support of the "Farm to Families" Bill, which will allow more local produce into the hands of families in need, facilitated by organizations like Hawai'i Foodbank.

In a state so heavily reliant on imports, this bill will allow us to be more self-sufficient through supporting local farmers, while also moving us toward a more sustainable local food system. With these fresh fruits and vegetables coming from local farmers, recipients of these items will receive them at their freshest and most nutritious – when they would otherwise lose out on access to healthier options due to their circumstances. With this Farm to Families program available, families in need will be able to break the cycle of depending on unhealthy and processed food, leading to better health and wellness in the long run.

I grew up fortunate to have a roof over my head and food on my plate, but I know that far too many of my neighbors and friends can't say the same. After I started to work at Hawai'i Foodbank, I realized that the need is even greater than I could've imagined, and many of those who are struggling to make ends meet are those you'd least expect.

Hawai'i's geographical isolation makes it impossible to for imported produce to reach us at peak freshness. We must inspect produce in grocery stores carefully – because they often almost go bad by the time they reach our shelves. Nutritious foods should not be a luxury, and I believe we can and should become more self-sustaining in our food system, especially in a place that has historically been a bounty of fresh local food.

I believe that funding Farm to Families will allow us to not only uplift and support our local farms and allow for those in need to be properly fed, but also allow us to become more connected to the food we eat – linking us more to those who cared for and nurtured this land for centuries. In a place that has in many ways been stripped of its culture, I believe that doing our kuleana to feed those in need with food grown in our own backyard is a step in the right direction of reclaiming what has been lost.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Mahalo,

Curstyn Yoshimoto

'Ewa Beach, Hawai'i

Greetings!

My name is Edward Van Houten and I am a retired IT Specialist from Wahiawa.

Living in an economy that is consistently ranked as the most expensive state in the United States due in part to high food costs can be challenging for the vast majority of us here in Hawaii. It is for this reason that I'm reaching out to vehemently urge you to support the "Farm to Families" bill, a crucial piece of legislation with the power to significantly improve food security across our state.

Families in need in our communities, as well as our economy, benefit by an effective partnership between local farms and food organizations in a number of ways:

1. **Enhancing Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** Investing in local agriculture reduces reliance on imported goods, fostering a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** This bill directly benefits Hawai'i's agricultural sector by ensuring a stable and fair market for local produce. It empowers farmers to plan for growth, knowing their harvests will nourish neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Providing fresh, local produce ensures individuals and families have access to essential nutrients, combating hunger while fostering long-term health and wellness in our communities.

My wife and I have known families with children, as well as Kapuna in our community that have been forced out of their homes due to the rising cost of living here in Hawaii. We are volunteers in our community to share out food in anyway we can receive it, from food distribution outreaches to near-expiration/at-expiration food from local grocery stores. The need is always there, as well as the expressed appreciation from those who receive the food.

Mahalo nui loa for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edward Van Houten".

Aloha!

My name is Gail McElrath. I was born and raised on Oahu and appreciate the Ohana that this Island signifies. It is a beautiful place to call home, but the cost of living has skyrocketed over the last decade making fresh, healthy food harder to obtain for many families. Because of this, I am writing with an “urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill –a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state’s food security landscape.” This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

This partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy. By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.

The bill also offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. The support of Local Farmers allows them to plan for future growth knowing their products are needed and can be available to feed their neighbors in need.

With so many people living on unhealthy, processed fast foods, the availability of fresh, local produce will help to provide essential nutrients to those individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthier food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

I volunteer at the Hawai‘i Foodbank because I believe that this is a fundamental need for the people on this Island. Working side by side with the numerous volunteers, who share in this cause, is a wonderful experience. Seeing the very generous donations of food arriving daily at this facility, and everyone working so diligently to ensure that this food gets to where it is needed most puts a smile on my face every time. No one should go hungry.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

Gail McElrath
Waikele, Hawai‘i

SUBJECT: Support “Farm to Families” Bill

Aloha!

My name is Jody Smith. I am a retiree with 18 years of experience with the sustainable agriculture program at UH Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. I regularly donate to and volunteer with the Hawai'i Food Bank. I help out with the Food 4 Keiki Program, the CSFP Kupuna Food Box Program, and the food distribution program operated by Kings Cathedral in Aina Haina.

As a HFB volunteer, I unpack boxes and boxes of beautiful fruits and produce grown by our local farmers. I help fill and hand out bags of vegetables. I enjoy watching our local clients growing excited by the variety and selection of popular vegetables (like bok choy, daikon, bitter melon) and local tropical fruits (papaya, pineapple) — the flavors of our islands. The partnership between the Hawaii Food Bank and the Hawaii Farm Bureau has allowed us to distribute this delicious and nourishing fresh produce.

Continuation and expansion of this program via the "Farm to Families" bill will bring multiple benefits to our state.

Please provide full support for the the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

As a former agricultural professional in Hawaii, I understand the importance of growing, purchasing and distributing locally grown foods.

Investing in local agriculture reduces the state's dependence on imported food (now estimated at 85% — extraordinarily high).

With a reliable market for their produce, Hawaii's farmers are better able to plan for and supply delicious and nutritious food.

Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options, fighting hunger and promoting long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Please support the "Farm to Families" bill.

Mahalo nui loa

Jody Smith
Honolulu 96825

My name is John Heidel and I am a retired Christian minister and a 50 year resident of Kailua; coming to Hawai'i in 1962 I served as the Minister of Youth at Central Union Church for 5 years and Chaplain at Punahou School for 32 years until retirement in 2001. In addition, I helped John Whitek start the Hawai'i People's Fund in 1968 and Kent Coarsey start Family Promise Hawai'i in 2004. I also helped start The Interfaith Alliance Hawai'i in 2002 (serving as President from 2004-2012) and founded Religious Leaders for Assisted Dying in 2002. I'm closely affiliated with Christ Church, Uniting Disciples of Christ and Presbyterians in Kailua. In retirement I have continued my advocacy for interfaith cooperation and social justice activism.

I am writing this letter because of my support for the Hawai'i Food Bank's proposed bill for the 2025 Legislative session - "Farm to Families". Being raised on an organic farm in Southern Idaho, I know from experience (and healthy eating) exactly what it means to have nutritious food available. This legislation if enacted, will not only strengthen the food supply chain in Hawai'i but will contribute greatly to the improvement of the essential nutritional quality of the food provided to all island residents; plus, it will assist our local farmers immensely,

I'm grateful for all the good work you do as our elected officials but am particularly thankful for the consideration you'll give to this legislation. Please call me if you have any questions. Mahalo nui loa!!

Aloha no,
Rev. Dr. John R. Heidel
1341 Manu Mele Street
Kailua, HI 96734
808-261-4585

Joseph Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula, PhD
Clinical Health Psychologist, Health Equity Scientist, & Academician



555 South Street, Unit 1205
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813
808-221-2481
kaholoku@hawaii.edu

Re: Support for the "Farm to Families" bill

Aloha nui,

I am Dr. Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula, a Hawai‘i licensed clinical psychologist and professor and chair of Native Hawaiian Health at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

As a health disparities researcher, I know firsthand the negative impact food insecurity has on the health and well-being of people in Hawai‘i, especially among Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and other medically underserved populations. This is why I am writing with **an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state’s food security landscape.** This bill will allow food-distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy in several ways. First, it **strengthens Hawai‘i’s food supply chain** by investing in local agriculture thereby reducing our dependence on imported goods and creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i. Second, by **supporting local farmers** there can be a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need. Finally, by **enhancing nutritional access**, fresh, local produce will provide essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This bill will help fight hunger and promote long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Mahalo nui for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a thin black rectangular box. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Joseph K. Kaholokula".

Joseph Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula, Ph.D.

Aloha,

I hope you are well! My name is Molly Mamaril and I am a Kaimuki resident and I work for a local nonprofit that supports community-based economic development for Hawaii.

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape.

This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

Collaboration between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy in several ways, including:

- **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only prevents hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.
- **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain** by investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system.
- **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.

Over the past few years, I have volunteered with the Hawaii Foodbank several times in order to support food access for those who are in greater need. It is incredibly powerful to see the strong ecosystem of volunteers and staff that the Hawaii Foodbank has grown over time. There are so many kind and enthusiastic people who want to help support other residents in having their basic needs met, allowing everyone to pursue their higher purpose because they're not stuck in the cycle of trying to survive.

Mahalo nui for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

Molly Mamaril

Aloha,

I am writing with an urgent request for the Farm to Families bill to be passed. While I'm in my late 40s and no longer facing an income or food shortage, I grew up on welfare and was reliant upon food banks and other community resources. I never learned the value of eating/cooking fresh fruits and vegetables, because we survived on canned or boxed goods (processed foods). Those in poverty shouldn't be lacking healthy food choices. Food is healing and if they have more healthy options available, it will in turn prevent many chronic diseases which cost the state lots of money.

Because we live in Hawaii, it's even more important that we not only provide healthy food options for lower income families, it's also important to support local farmers. Local farmers make very little money and most of their produce goes to waste. This is really unfortunate. I would love to support local farmers, who work hard at providing healthy food for us. We should be moving toward Hawaii becoming more sustainable and independent. It would be wonderful if: (1) those in poverty were healthy, saving the state costly medical expenses, (2) Hawaii was sustainable and didn't need imported food, and (3) we supported our hard-working local farmers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nicky B.

Mililani

Aloha!

My name is Pamela Clifford and I am a lifelong resident on O'ahu. I also work at a ranch in Waialua and support farmers on the ranch who are struggling to survive. Food security is something that is so critical for our community. We are isolated in the middle of the Pacific ocean and import a tremendous amount of food for our families. I would like this letter to show support of the "Farm to Families" bill. We need to help secure consistent markets for local food producers. We need to ensure that fresh, locally grown produce can reach families across the island. There are too many families that are struggling with food insecurity and we need to do our part. It is critical that we invest in our local agriculture! We need to not be so reliant on importing food when it can be grown here! Our farmers need our support! Our families need our support! Children are unable to think, process, and mature without the nutrients needed. I have seen first hand (as a former elementary teacher) how children who haven't had enough food struggle in school. Also, I have seen how when they are able to grow the food, they are more willing and open to try different types of food. Having school gardens is one way to increase the variety of healthy foods the kids eat as well as teach them about where their food comes from.

It is vital that we take care of our families and communities. Farmers need more support. We need to prioritize our self sustainability by growing our own food and getting it to our communities!

Thank you for considering the piece of legislation that could have a positive impact on our community.

Mahalo
Pam Clifford

Aloha,

My name is Samlynn Moore and I'm a mom of three, a volunteer in my church and worked most of my adult life. I'm writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. One of our ministries is providing both hot meals and canned goods and perishables that we receive through the Hawaii Food Bank. We prepare, through our certified kitchen, meals that we deliver to the homes of families who struggle to put food on their table. The joy and smiles on the keikis facing each time we arrive is heartfelt.

This past Saturday we delivered to a home in Waianae and the mother of the home said, "If it weren't for you folks we wouldn't have a Christmas. "

I worked as a Cadre with the Hawaii Youth Challenge Academy and have seen a male cadet cry because he received 3 square meals a day knowing his family at home was struggling. Many cadets stated they had never eaten so much until attending the academy. I've had three cadets ask me privately if our church could deliver to their families.

Our opio will never show it or talk about how hungry they are or how their families are struggling. This bill will help ensure families are fed and their children won't have to go to school hungry. They won't have to worry how they will eat over the weekend when school is not in session. This bill is vital to Hawaii's food insecurities.

Mahalo

Samlynn Moore

Aloha!

My name is Timothy Blaisdell, and I am an Investment Services professional who works in downtown Honolulu.

In these challenging times I have decided to step forward and request your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. I believe this bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy in many ways:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy Blaisdell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Timothy Blaisdell
Aiea, Hawai'i



Aloha,

I am writing to express my strong support for the “Farm to Families” bill, a crucial piece of legislation that will transform our local food ecosystem. As the Executive Director of Alternative Structures International dba Kahumana, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact this bill could have on our community.

This legislation represents a strategic approach to addressing food security and agricultural sustainability in Hawai'i. By creating a direct connection between local farmers and families in need, the bill offers multiple significant benefits:

1. **Local Food System Resilience:** The bill will dramatically reduce Hawai'i's reliance on imported food by investing in our local agricultural infrastructure. This approach creates a more stable and sustainable food supply that can better withstand external disruptions.
2. **Economic Support for Local Agriculture:** By establishing a consistent market for local produce, the bill provides farmers with economic stability and predictability. This support allows agricultural businesses to plan for growth and invest in their operations, knowing they have a reliable outlet for their products.
3. **Nutritional Equity and Community Health:** The legislation ensures that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity. By prioritizing access to high-quality, nutrient-rich foods, we are not just addressing hunger but actively promoting long-term community wellness.

Your leadership in considering this bill demonstrates a commitment to Hawai'i's future. I am deeply appreciative of your efforts to create a more food-secure, economically robust, and healthy community for all residents.

Mahalo,

Avary Maunakea
Executive Director
Alternative Structures International
dba Kahumana

Greetings,

My name is Roy Nakamura and I lead the Food Distribution at Kalihi Union Church.

I am very concerned about the need to provide healthy food options for the families in our community. Nutritious foods are not always available for many of our recipients due to multiple reasons but I basically think it is due to the cost. Many families are not eating healthy which allow them to keep and stay.

We ask for your support for the "Farm to Family's" legislation. This support will to provide produce for these families that will in turn provide support that to the farmers and families allowing them both to thrive.

Local farms and food organizations, can work together to provide a necessary source of produce to those in need.

We need farms. They are essential a resource that assist with the food insecurities and a healthy community.

Whenever we distribute goods to our recipients, they are very grateful to receive produce and tell us about what they plan to make using the produce provided. Please support the legislation and make a difference!

Thank you,
Roy Nakamura
Lead- Kalihi Union Church(Manna Program)



KOBAYASHI SUGITA & GODA, LLP
Attorneys at Law

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Alan M. Goda*

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Robert K. Ichikawa*
Christopher T. Kobayashi*
Jan M. L. Y. Kutsunai*
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Travis Y. Kuwahara
Ryan D. Louie
Zachary K. Shikada
Timothy T. Silvester
Reece Y. Tanaka

Aloha!

My name is Craig Shikuma, and I am a partner at the law firm of Kobayashi Sugita & Goda. I am writing today with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill—a crucial piece of legislation that can reshape Hawai‘i’s food security and foster a healthier, more self-reliant future for our state.

This bill is pivotal in creating stronger connections between food distribution organizations and local farmers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families who are struggling with food insecurity. Its impact extends beyond providing nourishment; it strengthens our communities and bolsters our local economy.

The partnerships fostered by this bill have the potential to bring immense benefits to Hawai‘i, including:

- 1. Reinforcing Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain:** Investing in local agriculture reduces reliance on imported goods, making our food system more resilient to external disruptions while supporting sustainability.
- 2. Empowering Local Farmers:** By establishing a reliable and fair market for their produce, this bill offers farmers the security to plan and grow their operations, directly benefiting our agricultural sector and ensuring their hard work feeds their fellow residents.
- 3. Improving Access to Nutritious Food:** Fresh, local fruits and vegetables play a critical role in combating hunger and promoting long-term health. The benefits of a diet that

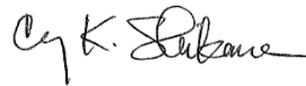
includes fresh food, rather than only processed or canned items, are invaluable to everyone, especially Hawaii's underserved population. Those benefits extend to all facets of a person's well-being, not just combating hunger.

Food insecurity, including not being able to afford fresh vegetables and fruits, impacts every aspect of a person's life, from physical health to emotional well-being. Every Hawaii resident should have access to enough healthy food. By addressing hunger, we strengthen the foundation of our communities and ensure that all families have the opportunity to thrive.

I urge you to join me in supporting this transformative initiative. Together, we can help create a Hawai'i where no one has to go hungry, and where our local farmers thrive in a resilient, sustainable food system.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig K. Shikuma". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Craig Shikuma



**KROC
CENTER**

HAWAII

KrocCenterHawaii.org

**THE SALVATION ARMY RAY & JOAN
KROC CORPS COMMUNITY CENTER**

91-3257 Kualakai Parkway
Ewa Beach, HI 96706
Main: (808) 682-5505
Fax: (808) 682-5501

To whom it may concern,

Re: Support for the Farm to Families Bill

My name is Leslie Moody, and I am the Family Services Manager at The Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center in Hawaii. I am writing to express my staunch support for the proposed Farm to Families legislative bill, which seeks to strengthen the connection between local farmers and families in need by providing greater access to fresh, healthy, and locally grown foods. We desperately need to strengthen the food supply chain for our individuals and families facing food insecurity.

As the Family Services Manager, I have witnessed firsthand the critical importance of fostering a sustainable and equitable food system. The Farm to Families initiative would not only support local agriculture by creating reliable markets for small- and mid-sized farms, but it would also ensure that underserved communities have access to nutritious and affordable food options.

The cost of living in Hawaii is above most of the nation and the increase in food prices since the pandemic has created an added financial strain on many households. One out of every three families are struggling to keep food on the table. The children and the elderly are suffering the most.

Hawaii is one of the most isolated places on the planet. Having so many of our food sources imported places us in a very vulnerable position. Should there be a natural disaster or another pandemic this could be catastrophic. In addition to addressing food insecurity, this legislation promotes environmental sustainability and economic development by reducing food miles and supporting local economies. These benefits align with the values of health, community resilience, and environmental stewardship that we all strive to uphold.

I urge you and your colleagues to prioritize the passage of this critical bill. It is imperative to so many and represents an opportunity to invest in the well-being of families and farmers alike while advancing a more equitable food system.

RECREATION | EDUCATION | CELEBRATION | INSPIRATION

General William Booth, Founder • General Brian Peddle, General • Commissioner Douglas Riley, Territorial Commander
Major Troy Trimmer, Divisional Commander • Major Osei Stewart, Corps Officer & Hawaii State Capitol Liaison • Major Lynn A. Stewart, Corps Officer

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. I would be happy to discuss this matter further or provide additional information about the impact of this initiative.

Sincerely,

Leslie Moody

Family Services Manager/Kroc Cares Dept.

The Salvation Army Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center

91-3257 Kualaka'i Parkway

Ewa Beach, Hawaii 96706

Direct Line: 693-8307 | Fax 693-8407

Leslie.Moody@usw.salvationarmy.org

www.KrocCenterHawaii.org

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General William Booth, Founder • General Brian Peddle, General • Commissioner Douglas Riley, Territorial Commander

Major Phil Lum, Divisional Commander • Major Osei Stewart, Corps Officer & Hawaii State Capitol Liaison • Major Lynn A. Stewart, Corps Officer



PO Box 474
Haleiwa HI, 96712
808-228-8865
info@lokoeafarms.com
www.lokoeafarms.com

Aloha! My name is Noe Neumann and I am the owner/operator at Lokoea Farms. We are a second generation family farm in Haleiwa and we grow citrus and tropical fruit for local consumption.

My family and I are writing to support the "Farm to Families" bill, a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local food producers, strengthening our community food systems and ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

As a small family farm, we rely on the Hawaii Food Bank every year during our heaviest harvest season for our Haleiwa Gold Hawaiian Oranges. We sell oranges and other tropical fruit throughout the year through other channels such as Farm Link Hawaii, but during the fall/winter months we have a huge amount of oranges that our normal buyers can't handle. The Hawaii Food Bank has been stepping in every year since 2020 to purchase and distribute these delicious locally grown oranges to local families.

The partnership between our local farm and food organizations such as the Food Bank benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in our small family farm, the Food Bank helps reduce Hawaii's dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, which will help the Food Bank continue providing a steady and fair market for our local oranges. Knowing that we have a market for our larger harvests allows us to plan for future growth knowing our fruit will feed our neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities. You can't get better oranges than our fresh, juicy, sweet Haleiwa Gold Hawaiian Oranges!

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Noe Neumann". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a distinct loop for the 'G' and a long, sweeping tail for the 'M'.

G. Noe Neumann

808-228-8865

info@lokoeafarms.com

To: Hawaii State House of Representatives

RE: Farm to Family Bill: (HB2137 from the 2024 session)

For the reestablishment and funding to pass this bill in 2025

Dear Representatives of the State of Hawaii House of Representatives,

My name is Laverne Suster and I am the coordinator and point of contact for the OLPH Church Pantry in Ewa Beach, Hawaii. Our pantry serves about 720 people each month with food collected by the Church community, as well as food from Hawaii Food Bank.

Food security has long been recognized as a major issue in Hawaii because Hawaii relies on shipments of food from the mainland. Anything we can do to become more reliant on our own farms for food will go a long way to establish this self-reliance. As we all know, shipping in food from outside the state drives up the cost of food for the people of Hawaii. As a result, many of our people are experiencing **food insecurity**. With this bill, **food security** becomes a little more of a reality.

Many aspects of the Farm to Families program promise benefits for our economy and our people. Our people will enjoy healthier choices of fresh food grown right here in Hawaii. Local farmers benefit as we put our money into their farms, securing their jobs and livelihood. Full circle farming adds to the benefits and the symbiotic relationship from farmers to food bank, back to farmers; from the growing of food to the composting of food materials the food bank cannot use. All of these benefits make this program a moral choice because excess food is not wasted; it's *ethically and morally sound*.

Food security is a huge issue, especially in these uncertain times. This bill will go a long way to helping the people of this state, your constituents, make sure they will always have a "next meal". Please re-establish and vote for this bill.

Laverne Suster

OLPH Food Ministry Pantry



Our Lady of Sorrows Church

1403-A California Ave.
Wahiawa, HI 96786

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is being submitted to support the “Farms to Families” bill for 2025 state legislative session.

At Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Wahiawa, our food pantry relies on the Hawaii Foodbank for well over 90% of the food distributed each month to those in need. We also are a distribution center for the CSFP (Senior Food Box) distribution program.

As an agency partner of Hawaii Foodbank, we are committed to working alongside them to fight food insecurity our community. We appreciate Hawaii Foodbank’s efforts to provide healthy, local foods to those we serve. We strongly support this proposal and look forward to collaborating with them to distribute fresh, locally grown food to those most in need.

If additional information or clarification is needed, please feel free to reach out to us.

Sincerely,

Mark Yen
Our Lady of Sorrows
Social Ministry – Food Distribution

Owen K. Kaneshiro Farms LLC

95-935 Paikauhale St. Mililani, HI 96789

Tel: (808) 625-1275 Fax: (808) 627-9552

Aloha!

My name is Owen K. Kaneshiro, owner and farmer of Owen K. Kaneshiro Farms, LLC. I own a vegetable farm in Waianae. I am writing this letter in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. I feel that all families in Hawaii should have access to fresh produce. The Hawaii Food Bank has been a great partner in helping to bridge that gap between my farm and the community. Before this partnership, I was throwing away a surplus of produce. The Hawaii Food Bank has helped me run a more efficient farm with less waste. It's nice to know that my farm is helping to provide fresh produce to the people who need it the most, thus keeping the community healthy and happy. The "Farm to Families" bill will provide people with consistent access to local produce and foster food sustainability within the Hawaiian Islands.

Thank You,



Owen K. Kaneshiro
Waianae, Hawaii



Super Utilizer ■ Ke Ku'una Na'au

1301 Punchbowl Street ■ Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 ■ Phone: (808) 691-1000 ■ Fax: (808) 691-4016

To our Legislators:

I am writing to you in support of: “Farm to Families” bill for 2025. We are a team that works with at-risk homeless and housed persons with medical needs. We see on a daily basis the struggle our people have getting healthy foods and know this bill can make a difference in their long-term health. Most of our people know what is healthy for them and do their best. We understand that it is not just a matter of choice but of access, cost, and convenience that influence their diet.

The Hawai'i Foodbank's programs and methods always put people first and offer solid solutions that can help get food to those who need it. The fact that “Farm to Families” also supports local farmers makes this a win-win for our community.

Please pass and fund the “Farm to Families” bill for 2025 and any other support for the Hawai'i Foodbank.

Sincerely,

Anne Chamness

Anne Chamness
Patient Community Navigator
The Queen's Care Coalition



in Manoa Valley

SAINT PIUS X CHURCH

2821 Lowrey Avenue

Honolulu, Hawaii

Phone (808) 988-3308

96822-1644

December 1, 2024

Aloha,

My name is Willa Papandrew and I am the volunteer coordinator of the Social Justice and Outreach Ministry of St. Pius X Catholic Church in Manoa on the Island of Oahu. I have worked in this ministry for over 20 years while working with the Hawaii Foodbank in feeding the poor of our island.

We have a Food Pantry at our church that has been serving families, who count on us, to provide both perishable and non-perishable food to feed their children. We fully support the Farm to Families legislation that would provide the nutrition these families need in their daily lives.

By working with local farmers and fresh food distributors here in Hawaii, we can best serve the poor in our communities. We need to work with them to build a more sustainable food system in Hawaii and not depend on mainland producers.

Fresh papayas, eggplant, sweet potatoes, breadfruit, corn, avocados, and bananas are some of our foods grown by our local farmers that our people love. They are a source of nutrition that our families need on their tables that will promote wellness in their household and throughout their community.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of the Farm to Families legislation that would support local farmers in supplying the nutrition and well being so needed for our poor families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Willa Papandrew".

Willa Papandrew
Social Justice and Outreach Ministry
St. Pius X Catholic Church
Honolulu, Hawaii

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Thao Nguyen and I am the coordinator for the Olakino Produce Program at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church. We truly believe that ‘access to healthy food is a basic human right no matter your age’. We are thankful to be in partnership with the Hawaii Food Bank to be able to serve our community.

We fully support the ‘Farm to Families’ bill as most of the people we serve in our community are kupuna. We have been consistently serving more than 400 households each month and over 90% of those we served are retired and in need of fresh fruits, vegetables, and eggs. This bill will help secure our community with fresh locally grown produces.

Being on an island, we should never depend on imported goods or food supplies from the mainland or other countries. It is neither efficient nor affordable, especially when it comes to fresh produces. The health benefits of those produce would decrease and costs will continue to increase. It is proven that fruits and vegetables begin to lose their nutrients within 24 hours after it is picked. We need to create sustainable food systems for Hawai’i.

We, as a community, needs to invest and support our local farmers. Investing in our local farmers will only strengthen our resources and secure Hawaii’s future. Land in Hawaii is a premium but the health of all those who lives in Hawaii is priceless. We need to support and invest in our ‘aina, our ‘ohana, our kupuna, and our keiki because no one else will!

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai’i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

Thao Nguyen



Aloha!

My name is Chelsea Tamanaha, and I am the sales and marketing director of Sugarland Growers.

I am writing to fully support the “Farm to Families” bill, an essential piece of legislation designed to create a stable market for local food producers. This initiative will enhance our community food systems and guarantee that fresh, locally sourced produce is made available to all residents of the ‘āina.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy in several ways.

Firstly, the bill directly supports Hawai’i’s agricultural sector by ensuring a stable and equitable market for local produce, enabling farmers to confidently plan for future growth while providing nourishment to their communities.

Secondly, as an island, we must all unite for the future generations. The Foodbank continues to support all local communities, and we must all continue to support and rally together for them.

As the Foodbank continues to prioritize nourishing the bodies of our island residents, they lay the foundation for thriving communities, cultivating connections, sustainability and resilience.

Mahalo,

Chelsea Tamanaha

Honolulu, Hawai’i

Sales and Marketing Director

Aloha!

As a dedicated school librarian at Wahiawa Elementary School, I have had the privilege of serving Hawai'i's keiki for over 30 years in the Hawaii Department of Education.

By supporting the *Farm to Families* bill, we can strengthen our local food system, boost our economy, and improve the health of our local community. This legislation will help to connect our farmers with families in need, creating a more sustainable and equitable future for Hawai'i. Please support the *Farm to Families* bill.

The benefits of this partnership are far-reaching and impactful:

- **Nourish Our Community:** By increasing access to fresh, locally grown produce, we can improve the health and well-being of our community members, especially those facing food insecurity.
- **Build a Stronger Food System:** Investing in local agriculture strengthens our food supply chain, reduces our reliance on imported goods, and creates a more sustainable and resilient food system for Hawai'i.
- **Support Local Farmers and Economy:** This bill provides a stable market for our local farmers, empowering them to continue producing high-quality, nutritious food and contributing to our state's economy.

Studies have shown that access to healthy foods can significantly improve students' academic performance, behavior, and overall well-being. As an educator, I've seen excited kids when provided with fresh, healthy snacks instead of their usual sugary, processed foods, which negatively impact their focus and energy. Every child deserves access to nutritious food. By supporting the *Farm to Families* bill, you can ensure that all our keiki have the opportunity to thrive and be healthy!

Thank you for your support of our *Farm to Families* bill.

Stephanie Kuniyoshi
School Librarian
Wahiawa Elementary School
1402 Glen Ave.
Wahiawa, HI 96786

Dear Honorable Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Hawai'i Foodbank's Farm to Families program. This vital initiative has made a significant impact on our community, providing healthy, fresh, locally-sourced food to families and children in need while simultaneously supporting our local farmers.

Through the Farm to Families program, we have invested over \$11 million in local food purchases and distributed more than 9 million pounds of nutritious produce. Last year alone, 88% of the \$1.3 million spent on produce directly supported our local agricultural sector.

We believe that this program is essential to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i for all of our 'ohana. By providing consistent access to fresh, nutritious food, we can improve the health and well-being of our community members, especially our keiki.

We urge you to support our efforts to secure long-term state funding for the Farm to Families program during the 2025 state legislative session. By investing in this program, we can continue to:

- **Support local farmers and agriculture:** Strengthen our local food economy and reduce our reliance on imported food.
- **Combat food insecurity:** Provide nutritious food to families and children in need.
- **Improve public health:** Promote healthy eating habits and reduce diet-related diseases.

We thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working with you to ensure a brighter future for Hawai'i.

Sincerely,
Jade Santos
Wahiawa Elementary School
Student Services Coordinator
808-307-6020

"Do everything you can, with all that you have, wherever you are!" ~ Theodore Roosevelt

To whom it may concern,

Aloha!

My name is Fuli Soa and I am the Family Resource Center Director at Waimānalo Elementary & Intermediate school on the island of Oahu in the state of Hawai'i. I am writing in support of the "Farm to Families" bill. Our school is a Title 1 school and all of our students qualify for free school meals. Many of our families are disadvantaged and fall in the lower socio income range. Through our Family Resource Center we distribute food weekly to our school families and wider community. It is essential that the food that we are serving our students and the food that we are distributing to our families every week is fresh and nutritional. The passing of the "Farms to Families" bill is a crucial step forward for our state to support the health and well being of our students and their families. At the same time we will continue to support our local farmers and food producers through strengthening our partnerships with them.

This can only be a win/win situation for our local farms, all the community food partners and especially our families in our communities. There will be less dependence on imported goods and there will be a more sustainable food system for our state as a whole. Our local farmers will be supported too and will be able to be part of a steady and fair market for their produce. At the same time they will be feeding the most needy in our community.

The more fresh and organic the produce, the better health-wise for our whole community. Our weekly food distribution provides our school families and wider community with an essential resource. Many of the families that we serve are houseless and struggle immensely with providing basic needs for themselves.

I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,

Fuli Soa
Waimānalo Elementary & Intermediate
FRC Director

Subject: Support for the "Farm to Families" Bill

To Whom It May Concern,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Tiffani Pacapac, and I am a special education teacher at Waipahu Elementary School. I am reaching out with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, which has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape.

This legislation will empower the Hawai'i Food Bank and other distributing organizations to collaborate more effectively with local farmers and food producers. By supporting this bill, we can ensure that our community members facing food insecurity receive fresh, locally grown produce. It will also strengthen our food supply chain, reduce our dependence on imported goods, and create a more resilient and sustainable food system in Hawaii. Additionally, it provides local farmers with a steady and fair market, allowing them to plan for future growth while nourishing our immediate community.

In December 2019, my students engaged in a Project Based Learning (PBL) initiative focused on the question, "How can we impact hunger in Waipahu?" Since partnering with the Hawai'i Food Bank 5 years ago, we have made significant strides in providing food to families experiencing food insecurity. In November 2024, we began distributing fresh fruits, and in just two distributions, we provided over 1,000 lbs of fresh produce. This initiative has led to increased participation in our weekly food pantry, providing essential nutrients our students need to thrive, and it alleviates the burden on teachers who previously used their own funds to supply food for students in need.

Your support of the "Farm to Families" bill is crucial in promoting long-term health and wellness for our community. Thank you for considering this important issue.

Best regards,
Tiffani Pacapac

WONG HON HIN Inc.

Address: 85-1330 Waianae Valley Road #C Waianae, HI 96792
Mailing Address: P.O. BOX 1978 Waianae Hawaii 96792
Phone: 808-386-6898
Fax: 808-696-9099
Email: huangsbasil@gmail.com

Aloha, my name is Hong Fang Gan, my husband and I are co-owners of Wong Hon Hin Inc *dba Huang's Green Leaf Products*. We have been local farmers in the State of Hawaii for the last 25 years and manage over 60 acres of land in West Oahu.

I am writing **in support of the** "Farm to Families Bill" a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local food producers, strengthening our community food systems and ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

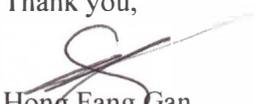
1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Our partnership with the Hawaii Food Bank and the Farm to Families program was critical to our survival during the Covid pandemic. With tourism coming to a halt during the pandemic we were left with a severe surplus of products that could not sell in the marketplace due to severely low demand. We got connected to the Hawaii Food Bank and they were able to keep us farming our fields and producing local agriculture with funding from the Farm to Families program. We are grateful for this program because we did not need to furlough any of our forty employees and continued our operation.

Since then, this partnership has grown and the support we have gotten from the Hawaii Foodbank has helped us increase our production of local produce and increase the amount of products we can harvest for our local food supply chain.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Thank you,


Hong Fang Gan
Waianae, Hawaii
Vice President, Wong Hon Hin, Inc



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

RE: Support for “Farm to Family” legislation

Dear legislators,

Hawai‘i Appleseed is a local policy institute committed to advancing social and economic justice, ensuring the people of Hawai‘i have access to the resources they need to thrive. An equitable food system—one in which all residents have the opportunity to grow and eat healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant food—is core to our vision.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of food equity and resiliency, which is why we support instituting a “Farm to Family” program at the state level. This legislation would strengthen local food supply chains, from guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, to supporting the local agricultural economy, to reducing farm food waste.

Fresh, local produce is essential for improving community health, yet is often out of reach for many families struggling to afford life in Hawai‘i. This program would help make healthy, whole foods available to more people, thereby alleviating hunger and preventing long-term health issues like diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and depression.¹

“Farm to family” not only strengthens Hawai‘i’s food supply chain but also provides a backup, or “safety net” market for local farmers during times of economic crisis or natural disaster. When these events strike, the emergency food system becomes a lifeline not just for families seeking food, but also for farmers seeking markets when tourism plummets. Most recently, the Maui wildfires contributed to a spike in food insecurity—as many as 49% of Maui’s population.² It was the food banks and distribution partners who stepped in—institutions that historically have relied almost entirely on charitable contributions.

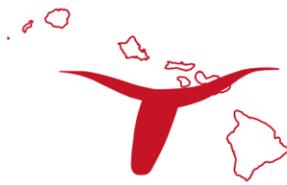
Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of this important legislation. We stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

Daniela Spoto
Director of Food Equity
Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

¹ Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), “Hunger & Health: The Impact of Poverty, Food Insecurity, and Poor Nutrition on Health and Well-Being,” FRAC, December 2017, p. 1-2.

² Hawai‘i Foodbank, “The State of Food Insecurity in Hawai‘i,” Hawai‘i Foodbank, May 2024, p. 6.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

Aloha,

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 approximately 25% of the State's total land mass.

HCC supports the "Farm to Families" bill, which will help to create a consistent market for local food producers and benefit community health and local agricultural production while addressing the growing issue of food security in Hawaii.

Securing a consistent, reliable market for local produce and proteins will benefit both the consumer and the producer. We need to reduce our reliance on imports and focus on building up our agricultural producers. Our farmers and ranchers want to provide local products for our community, and the Farm to Families program will strengthen our food supply chain to be better able to service everyone in times of crisis, support local farmers and ranchers to give them the confidence to continue to increase and improve production, and increase the access to nutritional food products that feed growing minds and bodies. Long-term funding for this program will result in beneficial outcomes for everyone.

The Hawaii Foodbank is a trusted, competent organization to carry out this mission. Ensuring our community gets basic nutritional needs should be a root issue that we all need to address as a cohesive team. Our farmers and ranchers are ready to step up to produce the food that is needed, and the Hawaii Foodbank is well equipped to facilitate this.

Thank you for your commitment to fighting food insecurity and supporting Hawaii's farmers and ranchers. Please support this important legislation.

Aloha,

Nicole Galase
Hilo, Hawaii
Managing Director





P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759

Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921

e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

Aloha:

Since 1948, the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB) has served as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural members who produce food, flowers, energy, and more, for Hawai'i's communities.

As the largest agricultural organization in Hawai'i representing nearly 1,800 farm family members statewide, it is my pleasure to support the "Farm to Families" bill, a critical piece of legislation that will help secure a consistent market for local farmers, strengthening our community food systems and increasing access to fresh, locally sourced food for communities in need while strengthening our local food system and enhancing food security.

The partnership between local farms and food banks benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

Building a Stronger Food Supply Chain for Hawai'i: Investing in local agriculture reduces our reliance on imports and fosters a robust, self-reliant food system. This approach enhances the sustainability and resilience of Hawai'i's food supply.

Empowering Local Farmers: The proposed legislation directly benefits Hawai'i's farmers by ensuring a reliable and equitable market for their produce. This stability enables farmers to confidently grow their operations, knowing their efforts will nourish their communities.

Improving Access to Nutritious Food: Locally grown, fresh produce provides vital nutrients to individuals and families who might otherwise face barriers to healthy eating. This initiative addresses hunger while supporting the overall health and well-being of Hawai'i's residents.

Since 2020, the Hawai'i Farm Bureau has partnered with Hawai'i food banks to source fresh, local foods for community feeding programs. Together, the Hawai'i Foodbank, Maui Food Bank, and The Food Basket work with nearly 500 agency partners to distribute safe and healthy food to food-insecure individuals and families in our communities. They provide an invaluable service to our community, and we are committed to continuing to work closely with them to supply fresh, local food products for their distribution programs.



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759

Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921

e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

We recognize the importance of ensuring that our local agricultural products reach those most in need, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration with our food banks in support of their shared mission to end hunger in Hawai'i. We are confident this program will positively impact our community by improving food access while supporting Hawai'i's local food systems. We are happy to work with the food banks on this vital work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Miyamoto". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brian Miyamoto
Executive Director, Hawai'i Farm Bureau



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

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Andrea Drayer
Ka'u, Hawaii

Kona, Hawaii

Fawn Helekahi-Burns
Hana, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahalawai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Rufina Kaauwai
Molokai

Negus Manna
Lana'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kauai

Aloha,

On behalf of the Hawaii Farmers Union (HFU), I am writing to express our strong support for Farm to Families legislation. As a statewide organization dedicated to supporting family farmers, ranchers, and fishers, HFU embraces legislation that cultivates resilient local food systems and strengthens the bonds between our farmers and the communities they feed.

The challenges highlighted in this bill—widespread food insecurity and the need for greater access to fresh, nutritious produce—are persistent and pressing. One in three households in Hawaii struggles to secure consistent access to food, and, alarmingly, nearly thirty percent of our keiki face hunger. These sobering statistics point to the urgent need for a solution that is both compassionate and sustainable.

This legislation directly addresses these concerns by investing in the Hawaii Farm to Families Program, which will fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, locally grown and produced foods. This support will not only provide greater food security for our most vulnerable populations but also promote the economic well-being of our local farmers and food producers. By creating reliable demand and fair compensation for their products and services, the program allows Hawaii's growers to focus on quality, diversify crops, and increase production, ensuring that healthy, culturally relevant foods—from kalo and breadfruit to choy sum and long beans—are readily available to families across the state.

Our farmers are prepared to rise to the occasion. They have long partnered with community organizations, food hubs, and food banks, demonstrating that small-scale, regenerative agriculture can be a linchpin in feeding Hawaii's ohana. The Hawaii Farm to Families Program will help scale these efforts to meet the reality of our current hunger crisis, ensuring that local, nutritious, and culturally familiar foods fill the tables of those who need it most.

In short, HFU believes this bill embodies a holistic, community-centered approach to combating food insecurity: it empowers farmers, strengthens local economies, uplifts cultural traditions, and ensures healthy meals for our keiki, kupuna, and neighbors in need. We urge you to pass this bill to help secure Hawaii's food future and nourish the health and well-being of all our residents.

Mahalo,

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF



2025 Network Members

Aloha Harvest
Aloha United Way
Chef Hui
City and County of Honolulu
County of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Alliance for
Progressive Action (HAPA)
Hawai'i Appleseed
Hawai'i Children's Action
Network
Hawai'i Dept. of Agriculture
Hawai'i Dept. of Health
Hawai'i Food Bank
Hawai'i Food Bank - Kaua'i
Branch
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Kōkua Kalihi Valley
Lanakila Pacific
Mālama Kaua'i
Maui Department of
Agriculture
Maui Food Bank
Parents and Children Together
Supersistence
The Food Basket
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i
Together
Wai'anae Coast
Comprehensive Health Center

hawaiihungeraction.org

RE: Support for “Farm to Family” legislation

Dear legislators,

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, would like to express strong support for the proposed “Farm to Family” program.

Our network is intimately familiar with the toll disasters can take on communities, and many of our members are at the frontlines of response efforts. Whether it is in response to wildfires, a pandemic, a government shutdown, a hurricane, flood, volcano eruption—or just the day-to-day emergency of needing to put food on the table in an economy when many families are one paycheck away from financial devastation—our emergency food partners are there to respond to the community's needs. And they often do this on very stretched and limited resources.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of resiliency, not just because of its role in a disaster, but also in its potential to strengthen local food supply chains and our island's agricultural economy. This program would be a powerful step toward achieving this outcome, by guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, supporting local farmers, and even reducing farm food waste.

Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of this important legislation.

With aloha,

Hawai'i Hunger Action Network membership



REDUCING HARM,
PROMOTING HEALTH,
CREATING WELLNESS,
AND FIGHTING STIGMA
IN HAWAII AND
THE PACIFIC

HAWAII HEALTH
& HARM REDUCTION
CENTER

677 Ala Moana Blvd.
Suite 226
Honolulu, HI 96813

(808) 521-2437

www.hhhrc.org

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

To Whom it May concern:

The Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) strongly supports the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program. This initiative is a vital step toward alleviating food insecurity across our islands while also supporting local agricultural producers.

Food insecurity remains one of Hawai'i's most pressing challenges. The economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic amplified this issue, and while the immediate crisis has passed, many families continue to struggle with access to fresh and healthy foods. This program would ensure a consistent supply of culturally relevant, locally grown food to food banks and communities in need, addressing the dual goals of improving food security and boosting the local economy.

HHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We focus our efforts on communities disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to people living with HIV, hepatitis, and substance use, as well as LGBTQIA+, Native Hawaiian, and houseless populations.

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, HHRC collaborated with the Hawai'i Food Bank to distribute over 500,000 pounds of food to thousands of families. These experiences underscored the urgent need for food banks to have access to fresh, healthy, and locally sourced foods beyond what is provided through donations. This program will empower food banks to meet these needs sustainably while supporting local farmers and food producers.

Hawai'i Farm to Families Program represents an opportunity to create a win-win scenario for Hawai'i: reducing food insecurity, strengthening our local agricultural economy, and ensuring the well-being of our most vulnerable communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this important measure.

Andrew Ogata
Director of Marketing and Development
Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

Aloha,

I'm Nate Hix, the Policy and Advocacy Director with the Hawai'i Public Health Institute. I am asking for your support for the "Farm to Families" initiative, which would increase access to local produce for families in need while also supporting Hawai'i's agricultural community.

In 2023, 30% of local households experienced food insecurity—a sobering reminder that far too many in our community worry about where their next meal will come from. Our food banks have been a lifeline, providing over 1.2 million monthly meals to more than 120,000 families. However, these meals often lack the fresh produce necessary for balanced nutrition.

Improving Community Health

Access to fresh produce helps prevent chronic diseases, reduce stress, and promote overall well-being. By purchasing local fruits and vegetables, food banks can offer more nutritious options to families struggling to afford or transport fresh foods.

Economic Support for Local Families

Consistent access to fresh, affordable produce alleviates financial pressure on households. With nutritious foods readily available through food banks, families can redirect limited resources toward other essentials like housing, healthcare, and education. This economic relief contributes to improved overall stability and a more equitable distribution of resources in our community.

Building a Resilient Economy

By increasing demand for local produce, food banks strengthen our agricultural economy and reduce reliance on imports. Reliable food bank purchases provide a stable income source for local farmers, keeping funds circulating within the state. This collaboration among farmers, food banks, and communities fosters self-sufficiency and creates a more sustainable food system for everyone.

Investing in the "Farm to Families" program tackles food insecurity and builds stronger, healthier, and more equitable communities. By addressing immediate needs and fostering long-term solutions, we can make meaningful progress in the fight against poverty and hunger.

Mahalo for your continued commitment to supporting local families. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Mahalo,

Nate Hix

Director of Policy and Advocacy
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
808.469.8740
nate@hiphi.org



Aloha,

My name is Jay Ana, and I am writing in strong support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

This critical partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits local families in our communities, and our economy, by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Ana", is written above the printed name "Jay Ana".

Jay Ana



Aloha kākou,

My name is Keola Siauafu and I'm the vice president of Enterprise Operations Services at Hawaiian Electric. I'm writing today on behalf of Hawaiian Electric to urge you to support the Farm to Families bill, legislation that can help make a difference for the many local families that don't have access to fresh, healthy food.

Hawaiian Electric has been a long-time champion of the important mission carried out by local food distributing organizations, whether it's providing support through charitable donations, organizing food drives at our base yards and offices, or rallying employees to volunteer time in the food warehouses.

As someone with deep roots in Hawai'i, it concerns me that more than 40% of native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are food insecure. We live on an island with rich soil and our local farmers are experts at cultivating the land. Our keiki and kupuna should never go hungry. No one should need to choose between buying food or paying rent. The Farm to Families bill will help ensure that local food producers can strengthen their partnerships with distributors so that fresh fruit and vegetables can reach those who need it the most.

Making healthy food available is especially critical for our native Hawaiian population, which still struggles with proper nutrition. Fresh, local produce can help improve the long-term health of our kama'āina.

The Farm to Families bill will also strengthen the food supply chain in Hawai'i, and make us less dependent on bringing products into the state from the mainland. Anyone who has been to the grocery store in the past year knows how much food prices have increased, especially imported goods. Investing in local agriculture will allow us to create a more sustainable and resilient food system here, reducing our dependence on imports and insulating us from unstable shipping costs.

Mahalo for your consideration of this important legislation, as well as for your commitment to our shared vision of a healthy and sustainable Hawai'i, in which our children and grandchildren can thrive for generations to come.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Keola Siauafu', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Keola Siauafu

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 9:59:49 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Senator Gabbard, Chair

Senator Richards, Vice Chair

Committee on Agriculture & Environment

FROM: Lehua Rowland, Ka’iulani Fernandez, Carol Linde, Caitlin Poe & Jennifer Luong

Date: March 9, 2025

Support for HB 428.

We are master’s students in Early Childhood Education, committed to serving young children and their families throughout Hawai‘i. Together, we work as Parent/Child Educators, in Public Pre-K programs, and in a private preschool serving Native Hawaiian children, each of us supporting vulnerable communities that are impacted by economic and food insecurity.

Every day, we witness the impact that food insecurity has on the health, development, and well-being of the children and families we serve. We are compelled to voice our strong support for this bill, as it offers a meaningful solution to the food shortages affecting our communities. By ensuring greater access to fresh, locally grown food, this bill has the power to uplift not only our keiki ,but also their families and the farmers who nourish them.

We strongly support HB 428, Relating To Farm To Families, which establishes the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the state.

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

HB 428 provides a sustainable community-driven solution by connecting food banks with our local farmers to supply fresh, locally grown produce to families in need. This program not only ensures that vulnerable populations receive nutritious food, but also fosters economic resilience by investing in our local agriculture sector, by providing them access to local families who need healthy produce and other food products, and a regular and predictable way to distribute their goods. This bill aligns with our values of mālama ‘āina, caring for the land, and reinforces the deep connection between food security and community well-being and has broad support from local farmers on all islands.

Access to fresh, nutritious food is critical for healthy keiki and ‘ohana, and this bill would help ensure that families have consistent access to local, healthy options. By supporting this program, we uplift both our farmers and our most vulnerable residents, creating a healthy, strong, and resilient Hawai‘i.

We urge the committee to pass HB 428.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our position.

References

Gallegos, D., Eivers, A., Sondergeld, P., & Pattinson, C. (2021). Food Insecurity and Child Development: A State-of-the-Art Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(17), 8990. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18178990>

Hawai‘i Foodbank. (2024). The State of food insecurity in Hawaii 2023.

https://hawaiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/HawaiiFoodbank_TheStateOfFoodInsecurityInHawaii_2023.pdf

U.S. Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2025, February 12). Consumer Price Index, Honolulu area — January 2025 [Press release]. https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/consumerpriceindex_honolulu.htm

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 7:55:21 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Jorgensen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This crucial bill has my **STRONG SUPPORT**. Mahalo for your kind consideration to pass it.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 8:30:19 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Nihipali	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 10:09:43 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dan Gardner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Gabbard and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee. My wife Deborah and I are in strong support of HB428 HD1. Over one in three families in Hawaii are living with food insecurity. This legislation will significantly help to reduce this shameful situation. Additional support for the Farm to Families program will relieve food shortages by providing funds to food banks and aid in providing a consistent supply of fresh, Hawaii-grown or Hawaii-produced food to food-insecure communities. Thank you for your continued support of this very valuable initiative.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 11:25:07 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I strongly support HB428 HD1. I believe doing what we can to adequately and nutritionally feed all people here in Hawaii, regardless of financial status and to support our local farmers, ranchers and other food suppliers can only be a winning deal for everyone. I believe the provisions in this bill is a means to that end. Please pass this bill. Mahalo.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 11:30:10 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marc-Anthony Gamboa	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 428
Relating to Farm to Families**

March 10, 2025

To: Chair Representative Gabbard, Vice Chair Representative Richards, and members of the committee

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

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- 1. Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.**
- 2. Supporting Local Farmers: The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.**
- 3. Enhancing Nutritional Access: Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.**

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

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

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 9:42:03 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Thank you for your consideration,

Susan, Lawai, Kauai

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 9:14:36 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Garland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Mahalo,

Emily

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 8:50:41 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

My name is Kathy Shimata & I live in Honolulu.

I know that many families in Hawaii struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB428 HD1 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Moreover, efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawaii's resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB428 HD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

Mahalo,

Kathy Shimata

Honolulu. 96822

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 5:04:22 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara Luthy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 7:53:56 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Denise Boisvert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully SUPPORT this much needed bill!

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 10:32:37 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lana Brodziak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators Gabbard and Richards,

I encourage you to support this program to help Hawaii families and farmers become more food secure in an increasingly insecure world.

Many families and small farmers survive on thin margins, with many families struggling with hunger. Creating and supporting a program to help encourage more local produce being grown and eaten by our local populations will provide many benefits to the community. I believe that eating food grown locally, enhances our health, develops an appreciation for the land that our food is grown on, a deeper appreciation for the farmers who grow our local produce and a larger sense of a connected community.

HB428 HD1 is an important step towards reducing hunger in our islands.

Mahalo for supporting this type of program.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 8:48:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Heithaus	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1. These kinds of programs are some of the best possible ways to start pivoting in the right direction of food sovereignty, security and sustainability in our state! Let's "feed two birds with one scone" here by doing that AND helping fund food security for our hard working families!

The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai'i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 11:15:46 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Acasio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this measure as it helps both our farmers with dedicated markets as well as increase wellness in our communities. This is an opportunity to reduce our reliance on imported foods and increase jobs in local agriculture for local consumption.

Mahalo!

Laura Acasio, Hilo

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 11:41:34 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lehua Rowland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

AEN

Senator Gabbard, Chair

Senator Richards, Vice Chair

Committee on Agriculture & Environment

FROM: Lehua J. Rowland

Date: March 9, 2025

Support for HB 428, Relating to Farm to Families.

Aloha nō,

I am a Native Hawaiian woman who grew up in poverty. I grew up in a large family where my parents struggled to “make ends meet.” As an adult and mother, I too went through the same struggle. The high cost of living in Hawai’i has caused stress, depression, and a sense of defeat at times. Programs like Farm to Families will significantly impact Hawai’i’s families. Not only financially, but a major contribution to the health and well-being of families. Families throughout our state are struggling at some capacity; it doesn’t matter what part of the island they are from.

I strongly support HB 428, Relating To Farm To Families, which establishes the Hawai’i Farm to Families Program.

My parents and I always worked and sometimes sought out SNAP benefits to make it through until we got “back on our feet.” I have received food from the foodbanks in my community and it was a tremendous blessing to receive a loaf of bread, canned goods, hamburger helper and other food items. This program will provide healthy and nutritious food options for families; for

the young to have nutritious food to help with brain development, focus, and energy, then for our kupuna to help with bone density, memory, and energy too.

You've read and heard the research regarding the statistics of food security, costs and the disparities in neighborhoods across the pae 'āina (state).

I urge the committee to pass HB 428.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my position.

Lehua J. Rowland

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 12:20:02 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Faccenda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure

RE: Support for HB 428, RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES.

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

My name is Christine Andrews and I am from Wailuku, Maui.

I am writing with an urgent request for your support of HB 428, the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.

Supporting Local Farmers: The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.

Enhancing Nutritional Access: Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Christine L. Andrews, J.D.
Wailuku, Maui

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 9:07:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pamela burrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I'll be brief.

I strongly support this bill. We need to depend on ourselves to feed ourselves and take care of our selves.

its simple really.

mahalo for taking care of Hawai'i

pamela Burrell's, Kalihiwai , Kaua'i 96754

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 6:00:39 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

My name is Nanea Lo, and **I am writing in strong support of HB428 HD1**, which will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program.

One in three households in Hawai‘i faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. This critical bill will provide essential funding for food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, locally grown or produced food. By ensuring that families facing food insecurity have access to healthy, locally sourced produce, this bill addresses immediate hunger needs while simultaneously supporting our local farmers.

Many families in Hawai‘i struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB428 HD1 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Investing in local agriculture strengthens Hawai‘i’s food systems, builds community resilience, and reduces our carbon footprint by cutting down on imported food shipments.

This bill is a triple win — for our families, our farmers, and our climate. I strongly urge you to pass HB428 HD1 to ensure that fresh, local food reaches those who need it most while also empowering our agricultural community.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo

Mō‘ili‘ili, HI 96826

Sierra Club of Hawai‘i Executive Committee Member

Board Member, Hawai‘i Workers Center

Kanaka Maoli/Lineal Descendant of the Hawaiian Kingdom

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 6:46:07 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sally Lambert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a constituent in Kailua-Kona, HI. I am writing in support of HB428 HD1. This bill is an important way for produce and other food goods to reach families in need. With the recent Federal freeze on funding for local assistance to the Hawaii Island Food Basket, this bill is especially timely. All of the islands need to be more food sustainable and this bill is a good start. Too much food goes to waste and COVID taught us that we need to be more self-sufficient and have methods of bringing food to food insecure areas. Mahalo for the for your foresight in approving this funding.

March 10, 2025

To: The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

From: Chelsea Takahashi

Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of HB 428, HD1, Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Gabbard and Vice Chair Richards,

I am writing in strong support of **HB 428, HD1**. I have worked for The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's food bank, for the last 9 years and can attest to the deep commitment of the organization to ending hunger through a holistic approach that strengthens our local food system.

When I returned home in 2016 after completing my education on the mainland, I found few job opportunities within my career interest of food system development. The Food Basket was one of the few organizations leading this critical work and had available job openings. My time at The Food Basket has since been filled with meaningful service to the Hawai'i Island community, including piloting and scaling the statewide *DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks* program in partnership with the Hawai'i Good Food Alliance, and most recently, establishing the *Mālama Da Farmer Grant* program in partnership with the County of Hawai'i.

State funding received through this legislation will further amplify the local food system work that The Food Basket has been leading for over a decade. Specifically, State funding will be used to purchase local food directly from Hawai'i Island food producers, including farmers, ranchers, and value-added producers. The Food Basket is also committed to purchasing these food products at market value to ensure our farmers can support economically viable businesses, grow the island's local food production, and create greater food access for our low-income community members who are most vulnerable to food insecurity.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my testimony. I urge you to support SB1250 to invest in Hawai'i's food system and the communities it sustains.

Mahalo,



Chelsea Takahashi

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 4:25:20 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

Please support HB428 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. This is so important to our small, rural community.

Much mahalo,

Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros

(808)866-7409

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 8:54:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jeanne wheeler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is a win-win for our island & community - please pass it! Mahalo

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 3:03:14 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha! My name is Stephanie Kuniyoshi and I am the school librarian at Wahiawa Elementary School.

I urge you to support of the "Farm to Families", HB428. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

Many families rely on receiving this additional help to provide for their families. At Wahiawa Elementary School, our students benefit from having food distribution approximately every other week, along with fresh, locally grown produce periodically throughout the year. We want to educate the children to choose healthy fruits and vegetables, and feel so grateful when we can provide them with it. Families have told me that this supplement helps them "to put food on the table" for their growing children.

Please support HB428, Farm to Families, so that the children in any community that faces food insecurity can focus on school and not worry about their next meal.

Thank you very much,

Stephanie Kuniyoshi

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 1:11:22 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
robin knox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Food security for Hawaii has never been more important. We need to support our agricultural producers

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 8:35:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen M Kimbrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will assist Hawaii citizens in multiple ways, including increasing our local food supplies, decreasing our costs by lowering dependence upon food that has traveled to us and uplifting the health of our citizens.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 7:41:17 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaiulani Fernandez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senator Gabbard, Chair

Senator Richards, Vice Chair

Committee on Agriculture & Environment

FROM: Lehua Rowland, Ka'iulani Fernandez, Carol Linde, Caitlin Poe & Jennifer Luong

Date: March 9, 2025

Support for HB 428.

We are master's students in Early Childhood Education, committed to serving young children and their families throughout Hawai'i. Together, we work as Parent/Child Educators, in Public Pre-K programs, and in a private preschool serving Native Hawaiian children, each of us supporting vulnerable communities that are impacted by economic and food insecurity.

We strongly support HB 428, Relating To Farm To Families, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Every day, we witness the impact that food insecurity has on the health, development, and well-being of the children and families we serve. We are compelled to voice our strong support for

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

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

HB 428 provides a sustainable community-driven solution by connecting food banks with our local farmers to supply fresh, locally grown produce to families in need. This program not only ensures that vulnerable populations receive nutritious food, but also fosters economic resilience by investing in our local agriculture sector, by providing them access to local families who need healthy produce and other food products, and a regular and predictable way to distribute their goods. This bill aligns with our values of mālama ‘āina, caring for the land, and reinforces the deep connection between food security and community well-being and has broad support from local farmers on all islands.

Access to fresh, nutritious food is critical for healthy keiki and ‘ohana, and this bill would help ensure that families have consistent access to local, healthy options. By supporting this program, we uplift both our farmers and our most vulnerable residents, creating a healthy, strong, and resilient Hawai‘i.

We urge the committee to pass HB 428.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our position.

Gallegos, D., Eivers, A., Sondergeld, P., & Pattinson, C. (2021). Food Insecurity and Child Development: A State-of-the-Art Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(17), 8990. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18178990>

Hawai'i Foodbank. (2024). The State of food insecurity in Hawaii 2023.

https://hawaiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/HawaiiFoodbank_TheStateOfFoodInsecurityInHawaii_2023.pdf

U.S. Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2025, February 12). Consumer Price Index, Honolulu area — January 2025 [Press release]. https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/consumerpriceindex_honolulu.htm

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 10:17:12 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelcy Durbin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB428 HD1 to establish the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 12:51:12 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vivien Lee and Charlie Reppun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As farmers we strongly support this bill which will help support local agriculture, bring fresh local produce to families in need, and reduce Hawaii's dependency on imported food. Farming is very hard work and does not generate much income. Supporting local farmers is key to making Hawaii more self-sufficient. The Legislature must do whatever it can to make farming in Hawaii more attractive to the younger generations.

sincerely,

Vivien Lee and Charles Reppun

Waiahole, Oahu

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 2:14:00 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jotis Russell-Christian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

-- One in three households in Hawaii faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. I strongly support this critical bill that will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii farm to families program to fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food. This program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger in our state.

-- Many families in Hawaii struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB428 HD1 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Moreover, efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawaii's resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB428 HD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 12:48:10 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rita Massey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1. This will be win-win for Hawaii families and farmers. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai'i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai'i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Rita Massey, Kihei

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 12:57:19 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tepua Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

-- One in three households in Hawai‘i faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. I strongly support this critical bill that will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawai‘i farm to families program to fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawai‘i-grown or -produced food. This program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger in our state.

-- Many families in Hawai‘i struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB428 HD1 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Moreover, efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawai‘i’s resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB428 HD1 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 6:23:37 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Crawford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Urge support for this bill.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 7:45:27 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Thank you,
Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 8:55:57 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caitlin Poe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

AEN

Senator Gabbard, Chair

Senator Richards, Vice Chair

Committee on Agriculture & Environment

FROM: Caitlin Poe

Date: March 10, 2025

Support for HB 428.

I strongly support HB 428, Relating To Farm To Families, which establishes the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

I am a master’s students in Early Childhood Education, committed to serving young children and their families throughout Hawai‘i. I work as an educator in a Pre-K program serving Native Hawaiian children. As educators, we serve a variety of vulnerable communities that are impacted by economic and food insecurity.

Every day, we witness the impact that food insecurity has on the health, development, and well-being of the children and families we serve. We are compelled to voice our strong support for this bill, as it offers a meaningful solution to the food shortages affecting our communities. By ensuring greater access to fresh, locally grown food, this bill has the power to uplift not only our keiki, but also their families and the farmers who nourish them.

According to a 2024 report by the Hawai‘i Foodbank, our state is facing a growing food crisis, 30% of households are struggling to maintain consistent access to food. Rising food costs are putting even more strain on Hawai‘i’s families. From November 2024 to January 2025, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2025) reported a 1.9 percent increase in food prices in urban Hawai‘i, while four of the six major grocery stores reported an even steeper increase of 3.4 percent. This crisis affects our keiki the hardest, placing them at increased risk for cognitive delays, behavioral

challenges, and long-term health disparities (Gallegos et al., 2021). No child should have to face these obstacles simply because their family cannot afford nutritious food.

HB 428 provides a sustainable community-driven solution by connecting food banks with our local farmers to supply fresh, locally grown produce to families in need. This program not only ensures that vulnerable populations receive nutritious food, but also fosters economic resilience by investing in our local agriculture sector, by providing them access to local families who need healthy produce and other food products, and a regular and predictable way to distribute their goods. This bill aligns with my values of mālama ‘āina, caring for the land, and reinforces the deep connection between food security and community well-being and has broad support from local farmers on all islands.

Access to fresh, nutritious food is critical for healthy keiki and ‘ohana, and this bill would help ensure that families have consistent access to local, healthy options. By supporting this program, we uplift both our farmers and our most vulnerable residents, creating a healthy, strong, and resilient Hawai‘i.

I urge the committee to pass HB 428.

Mahalo for this opportunity to share my position.

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