

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2025
2:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 308

HOUSE BILL NO. 428 HD1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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 (Department) 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
Facsimile: (808) 241-6349
Email: cokcouncil@kauai.gov

Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kauai, Hawaii 96766

February 18, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF ADDISON BULOSAN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
HB 110, HD 1, RELATING TO LOCAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS
AND
HB 428, HD 1, RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES
House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 20, 2025
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308
Via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 110, HD 1, Relating to Local Agricultural Products and HB 428, HD 1, Relating to Farm to Families. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kauai County Council.

I wholeheartedly support the intent of HB 110, HD 1 and HB 428, HD 1, which would greatly affect the Kauai community.

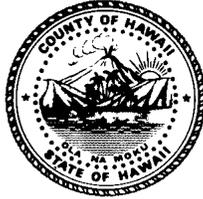
Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 110, HD 1 and HB 428, HD 1. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

ADDISON BULOSAN
Councilmember, Kauai County Council

AAO:ss

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



Benson Medina
Director

Dennis Lin
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

25 Aupuni Street, Room 1301 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-4252
(808) 961-8366 • Fax (808) 935-1205
E-mail: chresdev@co.hawaii.hi.us

February 19, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

THURSDAY, February 20, 2025
2:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 308

TESTIMONY ON HB 428 HD1
Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi 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

February 19, 2025

Page 2

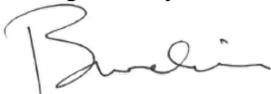
commodity food due to breaks in the supply chain due to COVID- 19 and prices have skyrocketed, causing them to increasingly rely on our local food supply.

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 ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION
KE KE'ENA HO'OMOHALA WAIWAI
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

711 Kapiolani Boulevard, FLOOR 12 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-5764 • FAX: (808) 768-4242 • INTERNET: www.revitalizeoahu.org

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



AMY ASSELBAYE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PO'O HO'OKO

GAVIN THORNTON
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

February 20, 2025

STATE OF HAWAII
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NO. 428
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES**

BY
AMY ASSELBAYE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

Dear Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Committee Members:

The City & County of Honolulu Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) supports HB428, which pertains to farm-to-families. This bill appropriates funds to food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawai'i-grown or produced food, to food-insecure communities.

With nearly one in three O'ahu households facing food insecurity, it is clear that our most vulnerable populations need our support. This bill highlights the House Majority's commitment to Hawai'i-grown food and providing nutritious options for local families while empowering Hawai'i's farmers. Investing in local agriculture boosts our economy, creates a sustainable market, and stewards our land to preserve it for future generations, or mālama 'āina. Hawai'i Foodbank's Farm to Families program, launched in 2020, has already demonstrated its impact by investing \$11 million into over 40 local farms and food hubs. As a result, Hawai'i Foodbank has distributed over 9 million pounds of Hawai'i-grown produce and proteins. Based on a local food economic multiplier, that equates to an investment of nearly \$19,000,000 into our local economy. HB428 also supports the local economy by providing opportunities for small farmers and producers to participate in the emergency food system, supporting Hawai'i's 2050 sustainability plan to double local production by 2030.

OER's Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Program is committed to helping smaller farmers thrive, caring for our place with sustainable farm practices, and creating good jobs for our community. This program provides an opportunity to boost agricultural production to create an economically viable and sustainable local food system. Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.



Date: 02-18-2025

The Hawai'i Youth Food Council

Gigi Kiyabu - Mid-Pacific
Shania Wilson - Mililani High School
Vivienne Hill - Primsa High School
Kaylie Hirayama - Honoka'a High School
Star Woo - Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Campus
Quingqing Quen - 'Iolani School
Maya Gaudino - Punahou
Jaden Tonyokwe - Maui High School
Leilani Moran Hurtt - Mid-Pacific
Alvis Agader - Maui High School
Alliyanah Polido - Maui High School
Chloe Hannsz - Kapaa High School
Audrey Lin - 'Iolani School
Talia David - Lahainalua High School
Mia Nishiguchi - Kalani High School
Erika Tien - Punahou

To: Representative Yamashita, Chair
Representative Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance (FIN)

From: Hawai'i Youth Food Council

Re: SUPPORT for HB428

Hearing: 02-20-2025, 2:00 pm

My name is Vivienne Hill, and I submit this testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Youth Food Council (HYFC) in **strong support** of HB 428, which would establish and fund the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program. This policy is about more than food—it's about ensuring that every keiki in Hawai'i has the nutrition they need to both grow and thrive.

Hunger is not just an abstract issue; it's something we see in our classrooms, in our communities, and sometimes in our own homes. It is not just a statistic—it is a daily reality for one in three households across our islands. For too many families, fresh, local produce is out of reach, leading to poor health outcomes and perpetuating cycles of diet-related illness. The effects are particularly devastating for our keiki, nearly 30% of whom grow up in food-insecure homes.

A child who is hungry cannot focus in school, cannot fully participate in their community, and is at greater risk of experiencing long-term physical and mental health challenges. It's the classmate too embarrassed to admit they skipped breakfast, the friend who eats slowly at lunch to make their meal last, the kid who doesn't know what dinner will look like when they go home. No one, especially not our keiki, should have to carry the weight of food insecurity.

hiphi.org/HYFC • 707 Richards Street, Suite 300 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Hawai'i Youth Food Council is a Hawai'i Farm to School Network program and Hawai'i Public Health Institute program. It includes students from public, charter, and independent high schools across Hawai'i. The council was established in 2020 to engage and empower youth in rewriting the present narrative of Hawai'i's food system. Members identify and address systemic issues throughout various dimensions of the food chain to promote community participation in forming resilient, equitable local food economies.



Through my work volunteering at community events and shelters, I have seen firsthand the overwhelming demand for fresh, healthy food. At food distributions, communities line up around the block and beyond just for the opportunity to take home locally grown produce. It is heartbreaking to know that in a state with such agricultural ability and history, many families cannot afford to put locally grown fruits and vegetables on their table.

At the same time, we know Hawai'i's farmers work tirelessly to grow the food that sustains our community, yet many struggle to make a living. This policy offers a common sense solution; connecting local farms with families in need. By strengthening this relationship, we are not only ensuring local produce gets to those who need it most but also supporting the hardworking people who cultivate and steward our land.

This bill embodies our shared values of mālama 'āina, kuleana, and our need for resilience, helping build localized solutions to food insecurity while reinforcing our collective responsibility to care for one another. It is a vision for Hawai'i that we, as young people, want to live in: one where no family has to stress over where their next meal will come from, and where our food system is built on sustainability, resilience, and care for each other.

We urge the committee to pass HB 428 and invest in a future where every person in our community has access to fresh, locally-grown food.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Vivienne Hill

Representative, Hawai'i Youth Food Council

hiphi.org/HYFC • 707 Richards Street, Suite 300 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The **Hawai'i Youth Food Council** is a Hawai'i Farm to School Network program and Hawai'i Public Health Institute program. It includes students from public, charter, and independent high schools across Hawai'i. The council was established in 2020 to engage and empower youth in rewriting the present narrative of Hawai'i's food system. Members identify and address systemic issues throughout various dimensions of the food chain to promote community participation in forming resilient, equitable local food economies.



Maui Food Bank
Nourishing Lives. Feeding Futures

February 20, 2025

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

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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 by:

Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our reliance on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.

Supporting Local Farmers: This bill directly supports Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a reliable and fair market for local produce. Farmers gain the security of knowing their products will help nourish their neighbors and communities.

Enhancing Nutritional Access: By increasing access to fresh, local produce, this bill helps provide essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise struggle to find healthy food options. This not only addresses hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

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:



Maui Food Bank
Nourishing Lives. Feeding Futures

- **[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.
- **['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

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

February 20, 2025

To: Chair Representative Yamashita, Vice Chair Representative Takenouchi, 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.**

[If you have a STORY about why ending hunger in Hawai'i is important to you, insert it here.]

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: 2/18/2025 2:09:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

February 20, 2025

To: Chair Representative Yamashita, Vice Chair Representative Takenouchi, and members of the committee

My name is Moana M. Lutey, 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,

Moana M. Lutey

Board Member, Maui Food Bank

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 2:39:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I serve as a Board member for the Maui Food Bank; as such, I believe that HB428 would further the Maui Food Bank's mission – to help the hungry in Maui County by collecting and distributing food through community partnerships. As you know, HB428 would allow organizations like MFB and its partner agencies to strengthen our relationships with local farmers and food producers so that fresh, local food can reach those in need in our community. Not only would this bill be a crucial step forward in our ability to expand access to fresh, nutritious, locally-grown/produced foods -- in so doing, it would also invest in local agriculture and the ag sector of our economy, support local farmers and ranchers with steady markets, reduce dependence on imported food, make our food supply systems stronger and more resilient, and promote health and wellness through the food we provide.

Please support this unique and vital opportunity to work toward a food-secure Hawaii and fight hunger. **VOTE YES ON HB428!**

Mahalo for your consideration,

Michele McLean

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 6:17:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alison Pearce	Maui Food Bank Board of Directors	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

February 20, 2025

To: Chair Representative Yamashita, Vice Chair Representative Takenouchi, and members of the committee

My name is Alison Pearce, 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,

**Alison Pearce
Board Member, Maui Food Bank**

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 8:16:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannette Gurung	Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN)	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,
Jeannette Gurung

77-6412 Kepano Place

Kailua Kona, 96740



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

February 20, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 428, HD1
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, 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.



To: The House Committee on Finance
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Thursday, February 20, 2025, 2pm

In strong support of HB428 HD1

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and FIN Committee members;

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

Many families in Hawaii struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. This measure is a wonderful idea that supports our farmers and at the same time helps our families in need by providing local, fresh, healthy options. 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.

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: 2/19/2025 6:32:15 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

February 20, 2025

To: Chair Representative Yamashita, Vice Chair Representative Takenouchi, 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.**

[If you have a STORY about why ending hunger in Hawai'i is important to you, insert it here.]

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**



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

February 19, 2025

To: The Honorable Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
The Committee on Finance

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 Yamashita and Vice Chair Takenouchi,

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

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

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

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

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

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST
ALBRECHT

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

ANN EBESUNO
BOARD CHAIR

MARK
KRZYZANOWSKI
VICE-CHAIR

JASON COHN
TREASURER

JULIA ZEE
SECRETARY

STEPHEN UEDA

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA
COLLINS

CASEY HALPERN

LAUREN ZIRBEL

WWW.HAWAIIFOODBASKET.ORG

Administration and East Hawai'i Warehouse
40 Holomua Street, Hilo, HI 96720
808-933-6030 Phone | 808-934-0701 Fax

West Hawai'i Warehouse
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2025 Network Members

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

hawaiihungeraction.org

House Committee on Finance

February 20, 2025 at 2:00pm

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

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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



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

Executive Officers

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

TO: Committee on Finance
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 20, 2025

TIME: 2pm

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.



February 19, 2025

To: Chair Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and the House Committee on Finance

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

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi and the House Committee on Finance,

The Hawai'i Food+ Policy strongly supports HB428, which will establish the Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the state and appropriate funds.

As you may know, Hawai'i is facing a critical issue in our food systems. Our community members and families continue to struggle with accessing affordable, accessible, and nutritious meals. The Hawai'i Farm to Families Program takes meaningful steps toward addressing food insecurity with a solution that will not only meet the immediate nutritional needs of families but also strengthens our local agricultural systems. Hawai'i's existing food programs have long worked alongside local producers, investing millions into Hawai'i-grown produce. The positive impact of these partnerships clearly supports our local farmers, reduces our reliance on imported food, and reinvest into the communities we serve. This program will amplify these efforts, ensuring that local, fresh, nutritious food is readily available to those who need it most, while also boosting the resilience of our local economy.

It is important to recognize that food insecurity is not just a humanitarian issue; it is an economic one. Allowing hunger to persist in our communities has significant long-term costs, affecting our health, education, work, and quality of life. Nonprofits help fill gaps in our social systems, but food insecurity is a structural issue that requires strategic legislation like HB428 to build stable systems with fewer food access disparities.

We urge the committee to **pass HB428**, an investment that will support our hungry communities and promote long term economic vitality for the state of Hawai'i.

Mahalo,
The Food+ Policy Team
#FixOurFoodSystem

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.



Date: February 20, 2025

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

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our **STRONG** support for HB428, 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.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Thursday, February 20, 2025 — 2:00 p.m.

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

Dear Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mariah Yoshizu, and I am the Government Affairs Associate 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,

Mariah Yoshizu
Government Affairs Associate

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

January 15, 2025

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.

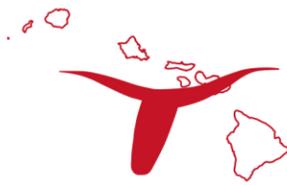
Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of this important legislation. We stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

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.

December 1, 2024

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

November 26, 2024

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 line extending from the end of the name.

Brian Miyamoto
Executive Director, Hawai'i Farm Bureau



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

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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
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The Food Basket
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i
Together
Wai'anae Coast
Comprehensive Health Center

hawaiihungeraction.org

January 15, 2025

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



12/1/2025

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

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

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

HAWAII HEALTH
& HARM REDUCTION
CENTER

677 Ala Moana Blvd.
Suite 226
Honolulu, HI 96813

(808) 521-2437

www.hhhrc.org

December 20, 2024

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



January 15, 2025

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 over a light blue circular stamp or watermark.

Jay Ana



January 15, 2025

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.

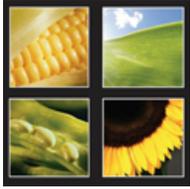
The Farm to Families bill will also strengthen the food supply chain in Hawai'i, and make us less dependent on bringing products into the state from the mainland. Anyone who has been to the grocery store in the past year knows how much food prices have increased, especially imported goods. Investing 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



HAWAII CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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

Date: Thursday, February 20, 2025
Time: 2:00 PM
Place: Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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.



House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

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

February 20th, 2025 at 2:00pm; Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi 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/>

Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 2:00 PM
Conference Room 308; Via Video Conference

House Committee on Finance

To: Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, 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: 2/19/2025 11:27:36 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronald Weidenbach	Hawaii Fish Company Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii Fish Company strongly supports HB428 HD1 which benefits both farmers, ranchers, and Hawaii resident consumers



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

HB428
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Thursday, February 20 2025, 2:00PM
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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





HIPHI Board

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Humana

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Kaiser Permanente

Dina Shek, JD
Medical-Legal Partnership
For Children in Hawai'i

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: February 19, 2025

To: Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

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

Hrg: Wednesday, February 20, 2025, 2:00pm, Conference Room 308

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 that reads 'Nate Hix'.

Nate Hix
Director of Policy and Advocacy

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/>

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Director

Before:
House Committee on Finance
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

February 20, 2025
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308
Via Videoconference

Re: HB 428, HD1 Relating to Farm to Families

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 428, HD1 which appropriates general funds to establish the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i SUPPORTS HB 428, HD1.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i is one of the nation's largest not-for-profit health plans, serving 12.6 million members nationwide, and more than 271,000 members in Hawai'i. In Hawai'i, more than 4,200 dedicated employees and more than 650 Hawai'i Permanente Medical Group physicians and advance practice providers work in our integrated health system to provide our members coordinated care and coverage. Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i has more than 20+ medical facilities, including our award-winning Moanalua Medical Center. We continue to provide high-quality coordinated care for our members and deliver on our commitment to improve the health of our members and the people living in the communities we serve.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i supports policies that ensure all Hawai'i residents have access to affordable, high-quality health care. Further, Kaiser Permanente supports "whole-person care," including the provision of access to services and resources that address beneficiaries' physical health, mental health and social needs. Food security means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy lifestyle.

Nutrition-related chronic diseases disproportionately impact historically underserved populations and communities with high food insecurity. Kaiser Permanente's initiatives are focused on improving health equity in vulnerable communities and populations, including kupuna.

Food is Medicine (FIM) is an emerging movement focused on how we can increase access to fresh, healthy foods that heal, including access to social service programs providing nutrition assistance:

- Support for Food Hubs and Food Banks: Kaiser Permanente grants helped Local Food Banks purchase 125,599 pounds of fresh produce from local farms, to benefit nearly 1,600 low-income seniors with healthy, medically tailored meals and provided fresh produce for the equivalent of nearly 105,000 meals.
- Produce Rx and Medically Tailored Meals: Partnered with organizations to provide 11,250 medically tailored meals and produce prescriptions to pregnant mothers and kupuna in underserved areas.
- Food is Medicine: Driven by the link between poor nutrition, food insecurity, and chronic health conditions, Food is Medicine (FIM) is a spectrum of programs, services, and other interventions that recognize and respond to the critical link between nutrition and health, particularly within healthcare systems.

We support HB 428, HD1 because it will provide necessary funding to enable Hawai'i's food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawai'i-grown or -produced food to continue to meet the food security needs of the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 2:17:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
laurel brier	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: 2/19/2025 3:54:12 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

The Maui County Farm Bureau supports HB428 HD1. Mahalo.



Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: House Committee on Finance
Re: **HB 428 HD1 – Relating to Farm to Families**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
February 20, 2025, 10:00 AM

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB 428 HD1**. This bill establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State, requires reports to the Legislature prior to the Regular Sessions of 2026 and 2027, and appropriates funds.

According to the Hawai'i Food Bank, in 29% of households with children, one or more keiki are food insecure.¹ Especially with the highest cost of living and most expensive groceries in the nation,² it is nearly impossible for the low-income families in Hawai'i to afford to buy healthy food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

In addition, it is well established that the stresses of childhood poverty have both immediate and long-term effects on keiki's physical and mental health, behavioral self-control, academic achievement, and earnings as adults.³

That's why it's so important to support Hawai'i's food banks and farmers by providing state funds to Hawai'i food banks to secure consistent supplies of locally produced or grown food for hungry families.

Food banks and their partner agencies help ensure that struggling families with keiki do not go hungry by distributing millions of pounds of food per year to those in need in our state. The recent years of high inflation, especially for groceries, the devastating wildfires, and the lingering effects of the pandemic have led our state's food banks to struggle with continual rising demand.⁴

This program would have the added plus of supporting our local farms. Farm to families is a win-win, by providing local food to those who need it, supporting local farmers, and strengthening local food systems.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony. Please pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

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

² <https://meric.mo.gov/data/cost-living-data-series>

³ <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/children-families>

⁴ <https://www.khon2.com/local-news/hawai%CA%BBis-foodbanks-see-uptick-in-food-assistance-needs/>

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 8:42:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of Committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, and I am Co-chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i. We are in strong support of HB428 HD1, establishing the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State. Connects food insecure households with locally grown and produced food.

I personally work for a small organic farm in Paauilo and I see the positive impacts of our small farm on our local community.

The Green Party of Hawai'i humbly asks for the Finance Committee to pass HB428 HD1.

Sincerely

Susan RobertsEmery

Co chair GPH

Paauilo



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

Chamber of Commerce HAWAII



**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair**

**Thursday, February 20, 2025, at 2:00PM
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference**

RE: HB428 HD1 Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 428 House Draft 1 (HB428 HD1), which establishes the Hawai'i 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.

HB428 HD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for 21st Century Ag. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

Hawaii faces a growing food insecurity crisis, with one in three households struggling to access consistent nutrition. Children and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are disproportionately affected, leading to long-term health and economic challenges. Local food banks distribute millions of meals annually, but with the end of pandemic-era support and rising food import costs, there is an urgent need to strengthen Hawaii's local food supply and ensure a sustainable solution.

This bill establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to fund food banks in purchasing, storing, and distributing locally grown food. By fostering partnerships with farmers, the program creates a stable market for agriculture while reducing reliance on imports. The Department of Agriculture will oversee implementation, ensuring transparency through annual reports. The Chamber supports this initiative as it strengthens food security, supports local farmers, and boosts Hawaii's economy by keeping resources circulating within the state. Investing in local agriculture and food distribution creates jobs, fosters resilience, and builds a sustainable food system that benefits businesses and communities alike.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill 428 House Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 10:19:19 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Vice Chair Takenouchi and Committee members,

My name is Molly Mamaril and I am a Kaimukī, O‘ahu resident.

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.

Molly Mamaril

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 12:10:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 12:25:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This bill will assist families in dire need of food. Please support.
mahalo

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 12:53:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Greetings Committe 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: 2/18/2025 1:55:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shawn Michelle Wallen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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

This partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits our economy and families in our communities in the following vital ways: **By 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. **By Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in Hawai'i agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i. **By 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. This bill will help non-profits that have a mission to alleviate hunger by providing nutritious meals to the food insecure.

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,

Shawn Michelle Wallen

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 2:12:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

February 20, 2025

To: Chair Representative Yamashita, Vice Chair Representative Takenouchi, and members of the committee

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

I support the "Farm to Families" bill, which 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 \$2million over the next two years of biennium will be a worthwhile investment benefitting Hawaii's farm community and our neediest families and certainly supports the goal of moving Hawaii towards food sustainability.

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,

**Gil Keith-Agaran
Board Member, Maui Food Bank**

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:38:41 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am a Hawaii resident, constituent, and through my professional work and volunteering see the immense food insecurities in our communities first hand. I am writing with an urgent request for your support of the HB428 "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. Please pass this important legislation.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:58:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT! GREAT IDEA! MAHALO!

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 4:07:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Strong support. Farmers have a higher suicide rate than the general population. This bill helps give our farmers what they need to survive: Customers. Thank you.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 4:57:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine L. Andrews, J.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support the substance of HB428 HD1, with objection to the amendment in HD1 of the effective date from July 1, 2025 to July 1, 3000, which I believe was intended to be the year 2030. I support the original effective date of July 1, 2025. I also object to the amendment in HD1 which removed the appropriation of \$2,000,000 for this program. I request that HB428 HD1 be amended to reinstate the appropriation of \$2,000,000.

Mahalo.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 5:02:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Hennessy	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, Lisa Hennessy

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 5:05:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kencho Gurung	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: 2/18/2025 5:08:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 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: 2/18/2025 5:09:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 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: 2/18/2025 5:20:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Siobhan Coad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in **strong support** of **HB428 HD1**. The Farm to Families program will address food insecurity by connecting local families with locally grown food and produced food. Not only does this support families in our community, but it also supports our local farmers and economy. We need to invest in local, sustainable agriculture that our people can count on. As the cost of imports continue to increase, this type of investment will help support food security in the short and long-term.

Thank you for your consideration, and please pass this bill.

Siobhan Coad, Honolulu

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 5:21:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 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. Eliel, Kapaa

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 5:27:36 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Food security fo Hawaii must be a priority. Support!

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 5:30:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Safia Gravel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 428 for all of us that struggle to feed our families and also to encourage sustainable, local food systems.

Mahalo nui

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 5:44:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Jana Bogs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a win-win situation for farmers and families in need. Supports food security in a great way.

Chester Naka DDS
3577-35 Pinao Street
Honolulu, HI 96822

Re: **HB428 HD1**

Dear Sirs and Madams:

Please support HB428 HD1. For many in Hawaii food insecurity is a frightening dilemma. As I understand it, one in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. This bill will increase the ability of food banks to purchase food grown locally. At the same time, this bill will enable local farmers access to markets. This is a win-win situation that will help many people, especially children who should never experience hunger.

Increasing our ability to grow and produce foods locally can only be a positive for Hawaii. Less dependency on mainland and foreign sources, benefitting emergency conditions. We really need to do it. Please support HB428 HD1

Thank you,

Chester Naka

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 6:11:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	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.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 6:29:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are worrisome. 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.

Mahalo,

Kathy Shimata

Honolulu

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 6:31:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Fallbeck	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Food sustainability is a functional method to assure people can perform their civic responsibilities at their optimum level, at whatever level, age, or development. This sustainability comes through each family unit. Those units need support to maintain their function in these days of job loss, inflation, and uncertainty. Please support our local farmers and our families by supporting the Farms to Families Bill!

Dr Patricia Fallbeck

1341 Kapiolani Blvd #18B

Honolulu, HI, 96814

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 6:50:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I urge you to support HB428 HD1. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for food banks to purchase from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. 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.

Help Hawai'i's families in the wake of disaster by helping food banks, which rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants.

Thank you

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 7:07:32 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
emily gambino	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,

Emily Gambino

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 7:28:20 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Hagan	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, 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 support,

Erin Hagan

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 7:29:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joell Edwards	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: 2/18/2025 7:39:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Noel Shaw and I am writing in strong support of HB428 HD1. I've witnessed the power of farm fresh food going to families and to children via a variety of programs (Kaukau4Keiki and Poi for the Pēpē, WIC and SNAP Benefits for Farm raised foods, and farm fresh foods through other food bank and food hub distribution opportunities). I believe making these nutrient dense, high quality, and locally grown products accessible to our families are a wise investment in our communities over all health. I've seen how families and keiki light up in receiving these products and know it as a true marker of care.

For our farmers, it provides them an avenue for making meaningful impact, having promised markets, and ensured revenue streams. For our food banks, it allows them to act within their values of supporting local and providing quality products to those they serve. For our kūpuna crops, like kalo, uala, and 'ulu- it creates another venue for these staples to be restored as important parts of the diets of people who live in Hawaii and where these things have been growing for thousands of generations.

Passing this bill helps move us closer to true safety and security. Farm to family is what aloha demands and I am so looking forward to seeing more of it in Hawaii.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 8:05:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara Luthy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428 HD1.

The statistics on food insecurity in Hawai'i are deeply concerning. One in three households in Hawai'i faces food insecurity, and nearly half (46%) of ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) households do not have consistent access to food. This challenge is especially critical in Hawai'i, where our geographic isolation and dependence on imports leave us vulnerable to global supply chain disruptions, rising costs, and environmental challenges.

Food sovereignty is particularly vital for island ecosystems like Hawai'i's, where the health of our local agriculture and food systems is directly linked to the well-being of our environment. By increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food, we not only address food insecurity but also support our farmers and the resilience of our unique island ecosystem. Local farmers face significant barriers to accessing markets, and programs like this will open those doors, ensuring that we have sustainable, nutritious food for our communities.

As the cost of imported food continues to rise, it becomes even more critical to invest in Hawai'i's local food economy. Supporting local agriculture strengthens our food security and mitigates the environmental toll of long-distance food transport. This is especially important for an island state where the health of our land, air, and waters is inextricably linked to the food we grow and consume. By prioritizing local food production, we also protect our ecosystems, reducing the carbon footprint and supporting practices that restore and sustain the environment.

Moreover, Hawai'i is frequently faced with natural disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires, which can disrupt food access for extended periods. Our food banks, which already play a critical role during such crises, rely heavily on private donations and grants. The **Farm to Families program** would provide much-needed funding to purchase from local farmers, ensuring that food banks have a steady supply of fresh, local produce, especially during times of economic or natural crises. This program not only improves emergency food access but also creates a stable market for our farmers, helping them thrive even when times are tough.

In the face of rising food insecurity and environmental uncertainty, HB428 HD1 is an essential step towards building a more self-reliant and resilient food system for Hawai'i. I urge you to support this bill for the sake of our families, farmers, and the future of our islands.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 9:06:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judie Hoepner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill as win-win for farmers and those experiencing food insecurity.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 9:20:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	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: 2/18/2025 9:40:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lana Bilbo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am born and raised on Kaua'i from parents who got together during the crisis following Iniki. I was raised attending Iniki parties every year, where all the neighbors who supported each other through that catastrophe gather and remember those times and the way our community pulled together. It is a strong reminder that we, our community, is what keeps us safe.

However, our ever increasing reliance on foreign, out of Hawaii imports, is sabotaging our ability to care for ourselves. Our local economy NEEDS to shift to produce more food, and employ and give respect to the people who farm it.

As an adult, I have rearranged my entire life and taken major pay cuts to be able to afford working nonprofits like Mālama Kauai and Aina Hookupu o Kīlauea who are trying to build our local food system while supporting our most vulnerable populations. They are precarious, always overworked and under resourced, and trying to support farmers who are in even more precarious positions.

This legislation could make a big impact for the farmers and community members we serve from organizations like these.

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,
Lana B

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 10:20:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kiana Otsuka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Kiana Otsuka

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 10:27:52 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nalani	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,

Nalani from Lahaina

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 10:58:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Honorable Members,

I am writing to respectfully ask that you support HB428 which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State. This bill would connect food insecure households with locally grown and produced food.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 11:08:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sven Sorge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Sirs and Madams,

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 very much!

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 3:57:23 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noreen Dougherty	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB428 Many families that are food insecure are in need.

Mahalo,

Noreen Dougherty

Kapaa, Kauai

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 4:09:15 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Yamashita, Vice Chair Representative Takenouchi and Members of the Committee on Finance.

Please support HB428 HD 1 to establish the Hawaii Farm to Families Program.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 4:12:37 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edward Halealoha Ayau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.

Therefore I support this legislation HB428. Signed,

Edward Halealoha Ayau

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 6:25:27 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I urge you to support HB428 HD1. The rates of food insecurity in Hawai'i are alarming. A staggering one in three households in the state report struggling with food access. Among ALICE households, nearly half (46%) face challenges in maintaining reliable access to food. By enhancing the capacity of food banks to acquire locally sourced produce, we can create a beneficial scenario for both our communities and local farmers. One significant hurdle that local farmers encounter is their access to markets. This initiative will not only strengthen our local food and agriculture sector but also ensure our communities have access to healthy food options. As the cost of imported goods continues to rise, investing in our local food system will reinforce our production capabilities and improve food security for the future.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 6:35:40 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Graciela Rynn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As the state and federal government have failed the Hawaiian people time and time again, they deserve to be supported at least in this way. The median price for a house is half a million, yet most Hawaiians need 3 jobs to pay rent and have been systemically priced out from owning property. One third of families experience food scarcity and the food that they can afford is nutrient deficient, designed to be addictive, pumped with GMOs, pesticides and preservatives, fostering obesity, diabetes and heart disease. All of these ailments are already a major healthcare issue for the native people of Hawai'i.

Additionally, local farmers already have issues accessing markets. Funding farmer's provision for food banks will increase the food and agriculture economy and also provide nutrient dense foods to families who simply cannot make ends meet, especially in the wake of this economic crisis.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 7:03:08 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support HB428 . This legislation will address food insecurity for many households and support farmers by giving them greater access to local markets. Mahalo nui

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 7:58:07 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debra M Javar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully SUPPORT HB428HD1. We need more access to locally grown food. This helps the local farmers and provides with fresh produce. This is a step towards being more self sufficient.

Mahalo,

Debra M Javar

Kona, Hawai'i

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 8:06:33 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pamela burrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha House members,

Please support HB428!

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 for your concern,

Pamela Burrell, Kalihiwai, Kaua'i, 96754

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 8:22:57 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frederick Kennedy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote in favor of HB 428. THANKS

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 8:25:31 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

One in three households in Hawai'i faces food insecurity, one of the highest levels in ALL of the United States. Cost of living continues to increase for all Hawaii citizens, including for our food producers. This bill represents a win-win for local agriculture and for our most vulnerable populations who need our support, particularly our keiki. With federal aid at risk, it's more important than ever that all legislators join with the House Majority's commitment to providing nutritious options to local families while empowering our farmers.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 8:42:31 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Alapai	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: 2/19/2025 8:43:36 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy Shaver	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: 2/19/2025 8:54:27 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
April Arroyo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of HB428 HD1
Hawaii State Legislature**

To: The Honorable Chair and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture

From: April Arroyo

Date: February 19, 2025

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB428 HD1 - Relating to Farm to Families

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 428 HD1, which seeks to establish the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program, a crucial initiative aimed at alleviating food shortages within our state. The ongoing challenges posed by food insecurity in Hawaii require immediate and proactive solutions, and this bill presents a step in the right direction to address this pressing issue.

Food insecurity in Hawaii is a growing concern, with many residents, especially those in vulnerable communities, struggling to access nutritious, affordable food. By establishing the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program, this bill provides a pathway for our local farmers to supply fresh, healthy produce directly to families who need it most. Supporting local agriculture not only helps to secure a stable food supply but also strengthens our state's resilience against supply chain disruptions, which have become increasingly common.

HB428 HD1 offers a multifaceted approach to tackling food insecurity by promoting collaboration between local farmers, agricultural organizations, and families in need. Additionally, the requirement for reports to the Legislature prior to the regular sessions of 2026 and 2027 ensures that there is transparency and accountability in the program's implementation, allowing lawmakers to make informed decisions about its effectiveness and potential improvements.

Furthermore, the appropriation of funds for the program demonstrates a commitment to meaningful action. It is essential that we allocate the necessary resources to support both local farmers and the families who depend on these resources. This bill not only addresses food shortages but also supports Hawaii's agricultural industry, which is an integral part of our state's economy and cultural heritage.

As Hawaii continues to face economic and environmental challenges, particularly in light of natural disasters and climate-related events, initiatives like the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program are essential to ensure our community's food security and sustainability. This program can play a critical role in improving the health and well-being of our residents by providing access to fresh, locally grown produce while supporting the livelihoods of local farmers.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to pass HB428 HD1 and fully support the establishment of the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program. By investing in local agriculture and addressing food insecurity, we are building a healthier and more self-sufficient Hawaii for future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important matter.

Sincerely,

April Arroyo
86 Poloahilani Street
Makawao, HI 96768
808-757-8176
aearroyo@hawaii.edu

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 8:59:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha All,

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 all you do,

Ann V Saffery

Honolulu, HI

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 9:48:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chloe Amos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Chloe Amos and I strongly support HB428. One of our top priorities as a society should be ensuring all people have access to healthy food. HB428 would do wonders for increasing families' access to healthy foods in our state, as well as supporting farmers and increasing our agricultural resiliency. Thank you for supporting HB428!

Chloe Amos

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 10:28:34 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meredith Buck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Meredith Buck and I 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.

Please pass HB428 HD1.

Mahalo nui loa,
Meredith

February 19, 2025

To:

The Honorable Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

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

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Vice Chair Takenouchi,

I am writing in strong support of **HB428 HD1**. As a Community Engagement Specialist at The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's Food Bank, I see firsthand how access to fresh, locally grown food strengthens our communities. This legislation would provide critical funding to Hawai'i's food banks, allowing us to increase local food purchases to better serve those in need.

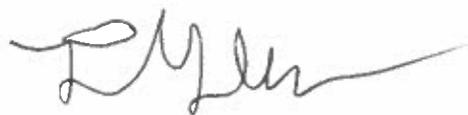
At The Food Basket, we integrate local food into a variety of programs, from emergency food distributions to nutrition education initiatives like *Nā Kuke 'Ōpio*, our youth cooking classes in partnership with community educators throughout the state. By incorporating fresh, Hawai'i-grown ingredients, we not only provide nutritious meals but also support local farmers and food producers who are essential to building a more resilient food system. With additional resources, we can scale up these efforts, ensuring more local food reaches families statewide.

State funding through this bill would enhance the ability of Hawai'i's food banks to source local food for a broad range of distribution efforts and programs, benefiting both those experiencing food insecurity and the agricultural community. I urge you to support HB 428 HD1 to strengthen Hawai'i's food system and increase access to fresh, locally produced food for those who need it most.

Mahalo,

Tyler Ancheta

DA BUX Community Engagement Specialist
The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyler Ancheta', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 10:47:18 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 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: 2/19/2025 10:49:41 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kerri Okamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: The Honorable Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair House Committee on Finance

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

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Vice Chair Takenouchi,

I am writing in strong support of HB428 HD1.

Fresh, locally grown food strengthens our communities. This legislation would provide critical funding to Hawai'i's food banks, increasing local food purchases to better serve those in need.

Mahalo!

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 11:27:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hideki Kimukai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairman Kyle T. Yamashita, V.Chairman Jenna Takenouchi, and committee members.

My name is Hideki Kimukai and **I strongly support HB428 HD1**. Access to growing food and healthy locally grown food are basic human rights of the community.

Sincerely,

Hideki Kimukai

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 11:52:31 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle K.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I strongly support passing this bill to help both local farms and families. Since Hawaii is isolated from the mainland, everyone has to eat, and our high cost of living remains a concern, it makes sense to boost our farms to ensure they are producing sufficient and affordable foods for families. The funds provided will also help local farms compete against outside producers, and perhaps incentivate them to offer foods that local families and distributors could afford to purchase. Thank you for your time and kind consideration!

Mahalo,
Michelle

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 12:18:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Finance Committee Chair and Members,

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: 2/19/2025 12:21:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kekoa Kealoha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of this bill because food security remains a huge issue for families across the islands and access to quality local produce remains somewhat limited. I write this testimony in strong support as someone working in Public Health.

Expanding access for market opportunities and food banks can broadly address nutritional needs across the economic spectrum, making healthier options available to people regardless of means or circumstances. Poverty and poor food access often leads to poorer health experiences, lowered academic achievement, and development of habits that are less healthful. This disproportionately affects children and women who are pregnant, which has a lasting impact throughout the lifecycle.

Agriculture also remains a significant opportunity to diversify our economy, lessening dependence on shipping and tourism. This bill will incentivize people to pursue agriculture as a viable economic option which contributes to our long-term sustainability. Our kupuna understood the importance of subsistence farmin, and this bill provides an opportunit for our people to ho'i i ka piko and to reestablish a reciprocal and respectful relationship with our land.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this bill, and I strongly urge you to vote in support.

Mahalo piha,

Kekoaopololu Kealoha

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 1:12:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
karolle t. bidgood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair and Committee Members.

Thank you for considering this very important bill which I strongly support.

I am very concerned that one third of our Hawaii households reportedly experience food insecurity. In addition, our local farmers apparently have difficulty getting their products to market.

Please support this bill and help both our families and farmers.

Mahalo,

Karolle (Josie) Bidgood

Kahaluu, Hawaii

February 19, 2025

To: The Honorable Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

From: Chelsea Takahashi

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

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Vice Chair Takenouchi,

I am writing in strong support of **HB428 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 HB428 HD1 to invest in Hawai'i's food system and the communities it sustains.

Mahalo,



Chelsea Takahashi

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 2:11:19 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Naia Blasio	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,

Naia, Honolulu

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

RE: Support for HB428, Relating to Farm to Families

Dear Chair and Vice Chair,

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.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Respectfully,
Leigh Ann Lopez

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 3:31:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
SINARLEEN PERES	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support the bill, much mahalo!

Support Local Live Local!

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 4:39:20 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KEALA FUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

Aloha, my name is Keala from Honolulu and i urge you to 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,

Keala Fung, Honolulu

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 5:18:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 7:10:05 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Marrack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support HB428 HD1. 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,

Julia Marrack

Kamuela, HI

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 8:42:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mariana Monasi	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. This isn't some far off planning in case some day this happens, but wise planning to reduce the severity of the impact that we experienced in the beginning of the pandemic. We know it can happen and that the results can be disastrous. So many families live in poverty as costs are at an all time high, the price of poverty here is so much higher than the rest of the United States, families NEED help making ends meet as do local farmers filling the gaps of the vast food imports required to feed our state.

HB-428-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 9:57:22 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha e,

Please support this vital bill! As our food systems are threatened by political instability, it is more important than ever to make sure our keiki have access to high quality local food, as well as make sure our farmers are supported.

Mahalo,

Isis Usborne (96815)