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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 AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2025**  
**9:30 AM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

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

Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 428. This bill seeks to establish the Farm to Families Program to help address food shortages in Hawai'i.

The Department of Agriculture (Department) supports this measure, which aims to 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.

Finally, the Department respectfully requests that the Committee amend this measure, beginning on page 6, line 4, to include "volume and dollar value" in item (3), and revise item 4 to state "Category of food purchased (e.g., beef, pork, spinach, onions, etc.) and their island origin (e.g., Hawai'i, Maui, Molokai, etc.) by volume and dollar value." Last but not the least, we kindly request modifying "Any other findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation." to item 5.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**COUNTY COUNCIL**

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Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

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

February 5, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF ADDISON BULOSAN  
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL  
ON  
HB 428, RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES  
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems  
Friday, February 7, 2025  
9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 325  
Via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee:

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

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

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 428. 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](mailto:cokcouncil@kauai.gov).

Sincerely,

ADDISON BULOSAN  
Councilmember, Kaua'i 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  
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February 5, 2025

#### HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

FRIDAY, February 7, 2025  
9:30 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

TESTIMONY ON HB 428  
Relating to Farm to Families

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch 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**, 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 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.

May 1, 2023

Page 2

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**.

Respectfully,

Benson Medina  
Director, Research and Development  
County of Hawai'i



**2025 Network Members**

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

[hawaiihungeraction.org](http://hawaiihungeraction.org)

House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
February 7, 2025 at 9:30am

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

Dear Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, 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.



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

February 7, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 428**  
RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference  
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



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Kaua'i

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

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

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

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

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawaii Farmers Union



Date: February 7, 2025

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

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

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our **STRONG** support for HB 428, 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 HB 428.

With aloha,

Amy Miller  
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank



**Maui Food Bank**  
Nourishing Lives. Feeding Futures

February 7, 2025

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

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

On behalf of the Maui Food Bank, I express our strong support for HB 428 Relating to Farm to Families which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State. Requires reports to the Legislature prior to the Regular Sessions of 2026 and 2027.

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 an average of 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 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



Date: 02-05-2025

**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 Kahaloa, Chair**  
**Representative Kusch, Vice Chair**  
**Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)**

From: **Hawai'i Youth Food Council**

Re: **SUPPORT for HB428**

Hearing: **02-07-2025, 9:30 am**

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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](http://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](http://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.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:25:19 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kari Hagedorn	Hana Farmers Market	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This legislative session, we're asking our state leaders to strengthen emergency food system by funding a **farm to families program**. This program focuses on supporting Hawai'i's families, especially the extremely rural community of Hāna, 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 our local East Maui farmers, improving emergency food access for 'ohana living in East Maui, and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Mahalo nui for considering this worth while community food access program.



## HIPHI Board

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Department of Pediatrics

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Misty Pacheco, DrPH

University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Justin Puckett, CPA, MBA

Humana

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JoAnn Tsark, MPH

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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 5, 2025

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

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

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

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Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)<sup>1</sup> and the Healthy Eating, Active Living<sup>2</sup> (HEAL) Coalition is in **support of HB 428**, 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.<sup>34</sup> 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 would represent less than 5% of the food bank network's annual operating expenses, yet could significantly

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Hawai'i Food Bank Annual Report - 2018.

[https://hawaiiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/HawaiiFoodbank\\_AnnualReport\\_2018\\_web.pdf](https://hawaiiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/HawaiiFoodbank_AnnualReport_2018_web.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Hawai'i Food Bank Annual Report - 2024.

[https://hawaiiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HawaiiFoodbank\\_AnnualReport\\_2024.pdf](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.<sup>5</sup> 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 to strengthen Hawai'i's emergency food network and help more families access the nutritious food they need. This investment in our food banks is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nate Hix", written in a cursive style.

Nate Hix  
Director of Policy and Advocacy

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<sup>5</sup>KHON. 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/>



# HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
Support for HB 428 – Relating to Farm to Families  
House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
Friday, February 7, 2025, at 9:30am

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Dear Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the Committee:

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

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of food equity and resiliency, which is why we support instituting a Farm to Families program at the state level. This legislation would strengthen local food supply chains, from 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

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

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 5:05:14 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patty Kahanamoku- Teruya	Waianae Coast Community Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

The Waianae Coast Community Foundation (WCCF), is in full support to HB428 relating to Farm to Families. WCCF have continued to support our food industry because of our support to the Hawaii Food Bank in our communities since 2014 to present. Food sustainability is very important to many families that we serve monthly especially to our kupunas who are having such a tough time.

I urge Representative to support this measure.

Mahalo nu'u,

Patty Kahanamoku Teruya

President WCCF



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

**In strong support of HB428**

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and AGR Committee members;

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **strongly supports HB428** 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. 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** 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



Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS  
Friday, February 7, 2025 — 9:30 a.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports HB 428, Relating to Farm to Families**

Dear Chair Kahaloa 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**, 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*

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 7:00:35 AM

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

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

Comments:

This 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



# THE FOOD BASKET

## HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

February 6, 2025

To: The Honorable Representative Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair  
The Honorable Representative Mathias Kusch, Vice Chair  
Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

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

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

Aloha Chair Kahaloa and Vice Chair Kusch,

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  
73-4161 Ulu Wini Place, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740  
808-322-1418 Phone | 808-322-7373 Fax



**Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.**

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair

Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

**HB428**

RELATING TO FARM TO FAMILIES

Friday, February 7, 2025, 9:30 AM

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

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

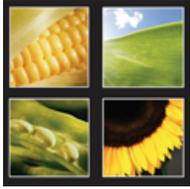
The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB428** which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

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





# HAWAII CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

HB428 – In Support  
Relating to Farm to Families  
House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Date: Friday, February 7, 2025  
Time: 9:30 AM  
Place: Conference Room 325

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association (HCIA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony **in support of HB428**, 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. 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.*

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 4:28:13 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jeannette Gurung	WOCAN	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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, Jeannette

Kailua Kona, Hi

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 9:56:28 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
penny levin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. Hawai'i urgently needs to delink from its dependence on imported food.

As a small farmer, however, there are pieces missing from the program and the equation in two ways. First, we need more of the younger generation to step up into farming. Second, a farmer has to be able to afford to farm. The current high cost of leases, water from private systems such as Molokai Ranch, fuel, soil inputs, and especially quality labor can far exceed crop revenues

Perhaps the blank HB92 Relating to Agriculture bill (a legislative bait and switch trick I thought was no longer allowable, and is certainly not transparent) could be made transparent and pono by being used to create a companion fund to this food purchasing bill specifically to build long term small farm success.

Mahalo,

Penny Levin

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 11:41:50 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch 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.

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

Molly Mamaril

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 12:17:46 PM

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

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

Comments:

Good Morning,

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Salvador S. Bizarra Jr.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 12:28:33 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jeremy Burns	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair,

My name is Jeremy Burns and I am writing to support the "Farm to Families" bill to improve 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.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:04:09 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
kimdonghyeon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:08:41 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lisa Hennessy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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,

Lisa Hennessy, Princeville

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:15:03 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lory Ono	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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 attention.

**HB-428**

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

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:44:06 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Eliel Starbright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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. Eliel ,Kapaa

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:47:10 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kaiakahinalii Kaopua-Canonigo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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. I am again humbly asking you all to please support and pass through HB 428.

Aloha nō,

Kaiakahinali‘i Ka‘ōpua-Canonigo, Mānoa

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:57:35 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.

Thank you for your consideration,

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:59:34 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Noel Shaw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Take care of families. Take care of farmers!!! Locally grown products are shown to have greater health benefits. Further this effort will strengthen our local food system so we can be more self sufficient and sustaining.

Please pass HB428!

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 2:14:43 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Theresa M Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 428 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.

Mahalo,

Theresa Thompson

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 2:40:31 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Sanita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 428**

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

My name is Chris Sanita, and I am a small family farm owner in rural East Maui. Our farm is dedicated to providing fresh, organic, and nutrient-dense food to our local community. I write today in strong support of HB 428, which aims to enhance food security and sustainability for small rural farms like ours.

In East Maui, access to fresh, healthy food is a challenge. Many families rely on store-bought goods that are often expensive, imported, and lacking in nutritional value. Small farms like ours help bridge this gap by raising pastured chickens for eggs and meat, tending sheep and hogs for protein, and cultivating organic vegetables alongside kalo for poi—a traditional and essential staple of our Hawaiian diet.

Our farm prioritizes sustainable, organic practices that not only nourish our ‘ohana but also enrich the land for future generations. By supporting HB 428, you are ensuring that small farmers can continue to feed their communities with fresh, healthy food while maintaining cultural traditions rooted in food sovereignty.

We humbly urge your support for HB 428 to strengthen local food production, improve community health, and sustain the rural way of life in East Maui.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Chris Sanita

Honoma‘ele Ranch

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 2:42:10 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nalani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

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,

nalani from lahaina

**HB-428**

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

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Angelica Melone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I support HB428, which establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to address food shortages in the state.

Food security should be a top priority for Hawaii, ensuring that every person has access to healthy food every day. The rising cost of food should not price people out of healthy options, yet too many families struggle to put a meal on the table.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 3:12:02 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noah Humphrey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Vice Chair,

My name is Noah Humphrey, and I am a volunteer worker who has done extensive work in Kalihi. As someone deeply invested in the well-being of our community, I'm reaching out with an urgent request for your support of the *Farm to Families* bill.

This bill is more than just another piece of legislation; it's a critical opportunity to change the way we approach food security in Hawai'i. It will allow food-distributing organizations to strengthen partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, healthy, and locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

Why does this matter to me, and to all of us? The partnership between our local farms and food organizations is about more than just providing food—it's about revitalizing our community and honoring our connection to the land. This is where land sovereignty comes into play. Helping our land thrive is key, as it supports not only sustainable food systems but also the rights and stewardship of local farmers and communities.

Here's how this bill will help:

- **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our reliance on imported goods and build a more resilient, sustainable food system—one that is rooted in the land we care for and can rely on for generations.
- **Supporting Local Farmers:** This bill supports Hawai'i's agricultural sector by creating a fair, stable market for local produce. Farmers will know that their hard work will directly benefit their communities and the people who live here.
- **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce is vital to ensuring that our neighbors have access to healthier food choices. This bill goes beyond fighting hunger—it promotes long-term wellness by ensuring all families in Hawai'i have the nutrition they need to thrive.

Thank you for your dedication to a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I'm deeply grateful for your time and consideration of this important legislation. I look forward to seeing how this bill will transform our communities and ensure that our land, food, and people are honored for the future.

With gratitude,  
Noah Humphrey

**RE: Support for Bill HB428, Farm to Families.**

To the Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee:

My name is Mark Yen and I am Social Ministry/Food Distribution Coordinator of Our Lady of Sorrows, Wahiawa.

I am submitting my support of the "Farm to Families" bill. Seeing first hand at the number of those in need coming to our food distribution, this bill will allow most food distributing organizations to partner with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity

We need to be prudent in continuing to improve food supply to those in need. Investing in local agriculture is one important avenue in helping. This helps the local farmer by being able to provide for those in need. Fresh produce is always a preferred source of nutrition and providing a health food supply.

Thank you for allowing the opportunity to support this bill

Mark Yen

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 3:15:08 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Paul Strauss	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the point, it is critical that we continuously strive to increase our food security here in Hawai'i and this bill is a significant step in the right direction. It is really scary to think that we import over 85% of our food and only have about two weeks supply of food for the entire state at any given time. All's it would take is some sort of natural or man induced disaster large enough to disrupt shipping for a week or two and all of Hawai'i would be put in peril due to a potential food shortage. I live on the Big Island, where we have thousands of acres of farm land, across a variety of elevations and climate zones, enough land and diversity that we could feed the state if enough were put into production. But every island should be producing as much food as each can to ensure we all have enough to food to ensure each is as food secure as can realistically be achieved.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 3:27:38 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Erin Hagan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.

I urge you to vote yes on HB 428.

Mahalo,

Erin Hagan

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 3:30:54 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing to say that I am absolutely in support of this bill. Our state has so many people who are food insecure, and to me this is a tragedy and unacceptable. I really believe making it more lucrative for our local farmers to subsidize the food that people receive in food banks is awesome so people can have access to fresh, local food regardless of income level. Additionally, I feel this will be a boon to our local producers, which in turn will help us as a state create more food security for ourselves so we are not overly reliant on outside sources for agricultural products. With the astronomical rise of bird flu causing mass culling of livestock, especially on the mainland, the effects of climate change dampening the viability of obtaining produce outside of Hawaii and the attendant costs associated with this, I believe supporting our farmers and ranchers here in any way possible is terrific and to have them be able to feed all of our people here is absolutely imperative, logical and humane. Mahalo for your time on this important issue.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 3:32:48 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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 considering.

Jennifer Lee, Kamuela

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 3:37:13 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Stephanie Kuniyoshi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in strong support of HB428

My name is Stephanie Kuniyoshi and I am a school librarian/public school educator with the Hawaii Department of Education for over 30 years. I currently work at Wahiawa Elementary School. I am writing to you today with an urgent plea to support the proposed bill HB428, supporting the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program. This program is not just a good idea; it is a lifeline for many of the families we serve.

At Wahiawa Elementary School, we see firsthand the effects of food insecurity. Our community is a high-poverty area, and for many of our students, the meals they receive at school are the only nutritious food they can count on. Our school's food pantry, generously supported by community donations, has been a crucial resource for families struggling to put food on the table. However, like so many other vital programs, its continued operation is constantly threatened by lack of funding.

Children who are hungry in school have trouble focusing on their learning. We have broken families; homeless families and many who face a financial struggle daily and need assistance with providing food for the families.

The Hawai'i Farm to Families Program offers a tangible solution to this crisis. By connecting local farms with families in need, this program addresses two critical issues: it supports our local agricultural economy, and it ensures that fresh, healthy food reaches those who need it most. This is a win-win for Hawai'i.

Investing in this program is not just about providing food; it's about investing in our children's future. Children who are well-nourished are healthier, perform better in school, and have a greater chance of success in life. By supporting the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program, you are investing in a stronger, healthier Hawai'i for all.

Please support this vital bill HB428. The future of our community depends on it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Stephanie Kuniyoshi

Wahiawa Elementary School

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 3:44:44 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Pilialoha Callahan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Pilialoha Callahan am in strong support of bill HB428. 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 can not only benefit our local farmers but potentially help the health of our people vs them consuming products loaded with preservatives and additives that are not helping our health. Mahalo for supporting our local farmers and consumers.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 3:46:33 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good for Hawaii's people

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 3:58:43 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kayla Marie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 4:03:30 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jade Santos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Farm to families is an amazing resource to our underprivileged families! It allows them to receive fresh produce that would otherwise cost then more money than afforded! I fully support keeping this program up and running!!

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 4:14:23 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.

Susan Wong

Kailua, HI

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 4:50:51 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Scott Kuwada, MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Agriculture was the foundation for Hawaii's economy and financial success and is now a key to our future as stated in the bill. As a first responder to the Lahaina Fires and a former resident of Lahaina, I quickly saw how the shift from agriculture to travel industry (hotels/resorts) left sugar cane fields to fallow adjacent to residential areas. Thus, we cannot afford to realize how proximate and thus how strongly agriculture affects our environment and safety. Please begin to address these issues by supporting this bill. It is only the start to securing our safety and livelihoods.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 5:40:01 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill.

**HB-428**

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

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carole R. Richelieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 5:43:49 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support. Thank you.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 5:44:07 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kerry A Beane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha -Please support HB 428. It is not acceptable that 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.

Please support the Farm to Families program to 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 effort to improve food security by improving food availability is critical for Hawaiian families. Mahalo,

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 5:49:28 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keila Paahana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 5:57:16 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alice Lina Liu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha ,

My name is Alice Liu, and I strongly support the **Farm to Family** initiative. This program strengthens Hawai'i's food system by directly connecting local farmers with families in need, ensuring access to fresh, nutritious, and culturally relevant foods.

By investing in Farm to Family, we are not only addressing food insecurity but also supporting our local agriculture, keeping dollars in our communities, and building resilience against future disruptions. Programs like this are critical in fostering a healthier, more self-sufficient Hawai'i.

I urge your continued support for Farm to Family to ensure its lasting impact on both our farmers and families. Mahalo for your time and leadership.

Sincerely,

Alice Lina Liu

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 6:11:09 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. My name is Georgia Hoopes and I live in Kalaheo Kaua'i.

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!

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:30:11 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Val Hertzog	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:50:25 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Stayton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Representatives,

I am writing to ask you to 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.

Thank you for your consideration,

Susan, Lawai, Kauai

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 1:12:29 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 2:43:18 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dita Škalic	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 5:01:20 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Please support HB 428 to establish the Hawaii Farms to Families Program.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 6:02:29 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
cheryl hendrickson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 6:38:56 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Miki Wallace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii is one of the most expensive states to live in and many families with keiki and kapuna are not able to afford real food that is not processed and full chemicals instead of nutrition.

Most families are also disconnected from the aina and do not understand how detrimental it is to both our economy and environment to rely on shipped in food and large monocrop, for profit agrigulture.

Please support this bill to make local farming feasible for our communitis & aina.

Protecting our land protects our Hawaiian culture AND our lucrative tourism industry. The tourists want to eat local food, see beautiful beaches and lush tropical landscapes. Keeping our land fertile and ocean healthy is essential to maintain tourist money - and local farming accomplishes that!

Thank you for your support of the community's health, wealth and future!

Miki

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 6:57:24 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 7:08:19 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Yoshida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Kahaloa and members of the committee -

I am writing to urgently ask for your support of HV428, a critical piece of legislation that can potentially transform our state’s food security landscape. This bill will allow food distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

So many members of our community are food insecure or one paycheck away and these critical services will help them with much needed healthy food.

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

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

I have witnessed firsthand how a bag of food can help a family bridge the gap and help them feed their children. Through my community service opportunities, I have seen children living on the beach, sometimes going an entire day without any food, and how that affects their ability to learn in the classroom. The food they are provided not only nourishes their bodies, but also

provides them with an opportunity to learn and grow and develop into productive citizens. I know that there are costs to this program, but without it, we will spend much more in the future.

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

Sincerely,

Laurie Yoshida

Lihu'e, HI

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 7:13:32 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
W. Nick Cambra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a foodbank partner, I see the need for more programs like this one. With the current economic conditions affecting the citizens of Hawai'i, the State needs to help take care of the small businesses and taxpaying citizens.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 9:21:00 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB428. If enacted, this bill will be a win for local farmers as well as for local people with food insecurity.

Jane E Arnold

1763 Iwi Way, Apt D

Honolulu HI. 96816

RE: Support for Bill #HB428

Dear House Agriculture and Food Systems Committee,

My name is Darin Shigeta and I am the Treasurer of the Hawaii Foodbank but submitting testimony as a community member.

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.

One in three households in Hawaii continue to face food insecurity. This bill will help combat hunger on multiple fronts, by empowering locally sourced agriculture, stabilizing our economy, and creating sustainable opportunities for healthy nutrition. In addition, it supports the ability of our local farmers to provide essential jobs.

In conclusion, the role that local agriculture plays in Hawaii's food chain is critical to supporting the needs of various communities within our Ohana. We respectfully request support for this important legislation, which will help stabilize our local community.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration today.

Darin Shigeta

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 9:57:19 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
emily gambino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.

Thank you,

Emily Gambino

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 10:03:40 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 10:23:49 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Emma Broderick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of 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.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Emma

**RE: Support for HB428, which would create and fund a Hawai'i Farm to Families Program**

Dear Chair and Vice chair,

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,  
Leigh Ann Lopez

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 11:34:09 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 11:54:18 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Malia Chun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this no brainer bill that establishes the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State. This is not just a needed measure, it is essential to our keiki's health and survival.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 12:03:20 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Isis Usborne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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,

Isis Usborne (96815)

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 12:05:12 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ann V Saffery	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support HB428.

Mahalo,

Ann V Saffery

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 12:48:22 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keoni DeFranco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Farm to Families program would provide essential funding for food banks to purchase from local farmers, ensuring that families receive fresh, local food while also creating economic opportunities for our farmers, especially in times of economic hardship.

HB 428 is an investment in Hawai'i's future—supporting local agriculture, strengthening food security, and preparing our communities for times of crisis. Please pass this important legislation.

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 1:07:31 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lisa Parker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of this bill to support farmers and families. It is so important especially now to support our local farmers and their ability to market the food they grow. We have such a unique opportunity here in Hawaii to grow food all year around and to provide for all of our ohana. 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 support this bill.

Mahalo nui loa,

Lisa Parker Kapaa resident

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 1:38:09 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joanne Lim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB428

**HB-428**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 2:58:02 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
William Greenleaf	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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