



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'ŌIHANA OLAKINO
P.O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 1186, S.D. 1
RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS**

SENATOR DONAVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date: February 12, 2025

Room Number: Conference Room 211
and videoconference

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the Department of Agriculture
2 (DOA) for fiscal implications of implementation.
- 3 **Department Position:** The DOH supports Senate Bill 1186, Senate Draft 1 (S.B. 1186, S.D. 1),
4 which establishes the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the
5 Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the DOA.
- 6 **Department Testimony:** In 2023, 13.5 percent of U.S. households were food insecure at least
7 some time during the year¹, a statistically significant increase from 12.8 percent in 2022. In
8 Hawaii, the situation is particularly dire, with nearly one in three households facing food
9 insecurity, and 29% of households with children struggling to maintain consistent access to
10 adequate nutrition in 2023.² Food insecurity, defined as the lack of consistent access to
11 affordable, nutritious food, is strongly linked to adverse health outcomes and a higher
12 probability of developing chronic disease. Research shows that adults in households with low
13 food security have, on average, 18% more chronic conditions compared to those in food-secure

¹ Rabbitt, M. P., Reed-Jones, M., Hales, L. J., & Burke, M. P. (2024). *Household food security in the United States in 2023* (Report No. ERR-337). U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. <https://doi.org/10.32747/2024.8583175.ers>

² The State of Food Insecurity in Hawaii. (2024). Hawaii Food Bank. https://hawaiifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/HawaiiFoodBank_TheStateOfFoodInsecurityInHawaii_2023.pdf

households.³ This increased disease burden significantly impacts both individual health and community wellbeing.

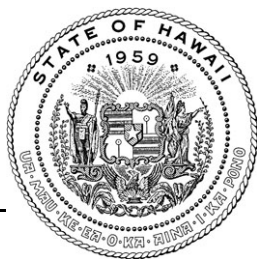
The DOH works closely with the DOA and stakeholders from across the state to build and maintain sustainable food systems and improve healthy food access especially for our most vulnerable communities. For more than five years, the DOH has supported Food Access Coordinators in every county to convene stakeholders, coordinate activities, and develop infrastructure to build community-based food systems across the state. The intention of these collaborative networks is to develop coordinated projects and build capacity within partner organizations and food-insecure populations.

The DOH recognizes that complex food system challenges and ensuring that healthy food access available to all, requires coordinated solutions. The DOH supports S.B. 1186, S.D. 1, is committed to continued collaborate in these efforts, and looks forward to participating in an interagency food systems working group.

Offered Amendments: None

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

³ Gregory, C. A., Coleman-Jensen, A., & United States Department of Agriculture. (2017). Food insecurity, chronic disease, and health among Working-Age adults. In A Report Summary From the Economic Research Service. https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/84467/err-235_summary.pdf?v=7198.5.



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKA'I

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Wednesday, February 12, 2025
10:01 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of
SB 1186, SD 1
RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) supports the intent of SB1186, SD1, and defers to the Department of Agriculture regarding positions and funding considerations related to this measure.

DBEDT has established an internal working group comprising the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD), Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), Department of Agriculture (DOA), University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UHCTAHR), and the Department of Education (DOE). This group focuses on addressing the farm-to-export pipeline, aligning inputs to the Food and Product Innovation Network (value-added production), DOE's regional kitchens (Farm-to-School, Act 175), and Farm-to-State initiatives (Act 176).

These collaborative efforts aim to fulfill the mandate outlined in Act 151 to double local food production and exports by 2030. DBEDT has shared its progress and findings with the interagency food systems working group during the interim, in accordance with SR111, and will continue to engage in these efforts. Our ongoing projects are designed to reduce Hawaii's dependence on imports, strengthen our food security ecosystem, and support the construction of resilient food production facilities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure, and we look forward to continued collaboration to achieve our shared goals of enhancing Hawaii's agricultural capacity and food security.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025
10:01 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 211

SENATE BILL NO. 1186, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the Committee:

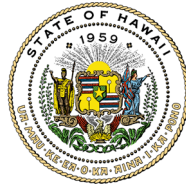
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 1186, Senate Draft 1 that establishes a Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture (Department). The Department supports this measure and includes comments consistent with Department testimony for HB967 where the funding for the working group was retained and for the working group to decide on the composition of the Food System unit. The Department will endeavor to carry forward the work described in our response to Senate Resolution No. 111 that outlines initial priorities for coordinating statewide food systems.

The HDOA is optimistic that the effort of the Working Group will result in a measurable, science-based, and functional Plan that will promote the State's highest priorities of increasing the economic viability of existing agricultural operations and assist in the establishment of new ones in direct support of increasing local food self-sufficiency and exports.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STEPHEN F. LOGAN
MAJOR GENERAL
ADJUTANT GENERAL
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
KAHU HO'OMALU PŌULIA

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
4204 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96816-4420

STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 1186 SD1,
RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FEBRUARY 12, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a testimony to **COMMENT ON** Senate Bill 1186 SD1.

The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency believes in this legislative measure as it aligns with our mission to enhance emergency management preparedness and response throughout the state of Hawai'i. HIEMA endorses any initiative that aims to strengthen and bolster the resilience of communities within the state.

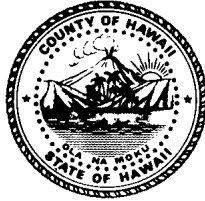
We propose the establishment of an FTE position within HIEMA. This dedicated role would significantly reinforce our operational capacity and facilitate effective coordination among various state agencies involved in food systems management. By having an assigned resource focused on this initiative, HIEMA would support ongoing preparedness efforts related to food distribution.

We appreciate your consideration of this proposal and believe that it will strengthen our collective ability to respond to emergencies and ensure food security for our communities. HIEMA supports this measure, with the understanding that its passage will not negatively impact on the priorities outlined in the Executive Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill SB1186 SD1.

James Barros: james.barros@hawaii.gov; 808-733-4300

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



Benson Medina
Director

Dennis Lin
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
25 Aupuni Street, Room 1301 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-4252
(808) 961-8366 • Fax (808) 935-1205
E-mail: chresdev@co.hawaii.hi.us
February 10, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

WEDNESDAY, February 12, 2025

10:01 AM

CONFERENCE ROOM 211

TESTIMONY ON SB 1186 SD1
Relating to Sustainable Food Systems

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki 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 SB1186 SD1** to establish the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture.

The Agriculture and Food Systems Program in the County of Hawai'i Department of Research and Development has been a longstanding partner with HDOA and supported the development of the Report of the Sustainable Food Systems Working Group in response to SR111, SD1, 2024 Legislature. Our department is in the process of facilitating community-led agriculture and food system planning to outline key strategies to support producers and improve food access. Connecting these community-level planning efforts to the interagency working group proposed in SB1186 SD1 will streamline efforts to address our communities' most urgent and cross-agency issues.

The Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the Interagency Food Systems Working Group proposed in SB1186 SD1 provide crucial coordination functions across all state agencies and counties, increasing communication and efficiency throughout the food system. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of SB1186 SD1**.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B Medina".

Benson Medina
Director

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

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

LATE

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEI'A



AMY ASSELBAYE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PO'O HO'OKO

GAVIN THORNTON
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

February 11, 2025

STATE OF HAWAII
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL NO. 1186
RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS**

BY
AMY ASSELBAYE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee,

The Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) supports SB 1186, Relating to Sustainable Food Systems, which establishes a Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture

This initiative is vitally important in breaking down silos, creating opportunities for collaboration, and avoiding inefficiencies within Hawai'i's food systems. Work on broader food systems issues is being done by each County and these efforts will be bolstered, better supported, and more efficiently coordinated by this Statewide effort. Encouraging collaborative efforts through these bodies will provide the necessary platform for stakeholders to align their resources, share valuable insights, and strategize effectively towards strengthening Hawaii's food infrastructure.

The appropriation of funds and establishment of dedicated positions at the State level demonstrate a commitment to sustaining these efforts for the long term and to Hawai'i's food security and self-sufficiency goals. This financial backing is crucial for successful and timely implementation and for enabling the working group and coordination team to carry out their mandates effectively. OER's Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Program supports this SB 1186 as it paves the way for a more synergized effort in enhancing food security, promoting local agriculture, and ultimately supporting our local farmers and communities in achieving a more sustainable food system for Hawai'i.

Thank you for allowing us to share our testimony and to the committee for considering SB 1186.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Wednesday, February 12, 2025 — 10:01 a.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports SB 1186 SD 1, Relating to Sustainable Food Systems.

Dear Chair Dela Cruz 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 SB 1186 SD 1, which establishes the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture.

This legislation takes crucial steps toward strengthening Hawai'i's food security and resilience by establishing a coordinated, interagency approach to addressing our food system challenges. The creation of the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and Working Group will help break down silos and foster the collaboration needed to achieve the state's food sustainability goals.

The bill thoughtfully brings together key stakeholders from agriculture, education, health, planning, and other sectors to develop coordinated solutions while providing necessary resources through new dedicated positions. By investing in this integrated approach to food systems planning and implementation, we can make meaningful progress toward increasing local food production, improving food access, reducing waste, and building a more sustainable and equitable food system for Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Mariah Yoshizu
Government Affairs Associate

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



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

February 12, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON SB 1186, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
10:01 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committees:

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 SB 1186, SD1, which establishes the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture (DOA). This measure aims to improve coordination among state agencies to strengthen Hawai'i's food system, requires reports to the Legislature, establishes positions, and appropriates funds for its implementation.

A coordinated approach to food system development can help address challenges related to local food production, distribution, procurement, and market access. Farmers and ranchers often face regulatory barriers and logistical challenges that limit their ability to expand local food production. By facilitating collaboration between government agencies and agricultural stakeholders, this initiative has the potential to streamline policies, improve procurement processes, and increase opportunities for farmers to participate in state food programs such as Farm to School and Farm to State.

However, we have concerns regarding the proposed salary amounts for the new positions. Ensuring that salaries align with comparable state positions is necessary to maximize funding efficiency and ensure that resources are directed toward direct support for farmers and food producers rather than administrative overhead.

Additionally, there is uncertainty regarding who the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the Interagency Food Systems Working Group report to and where their authority is derived from. Clarification is needed to define their decision-

making role, ensure accountability, and prevent duplication of efforts with existing programs and agencies already working to improve Hawai'i's food system. Without clear oversight and guidance, the effectiveness of these teams may be limited.

To improve SB 1186, SD1, we recommend:

- Ensuring that farmers and ranchers are actively represented in the working group to provide real-world perspectives on the challenges and opportunities within Hawai'i's food system.
- Ensuring salary levels are consistent with similar positions within the DOA and other state agencies to ensure fiscal responsibility.
- Defining the reporting structure and decision-making authority of the coordination team and working group to ensure clear oversight and prevent redundancy.
- Developing clear performance metrics and accountability measures to assess the effectiveness of the coordination team and working group in improving food system outcomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



February 11 2025

To: Chair Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Sharon Moriwaki and the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Subject: **SB 1186**, Relating to Sustainable Food System.

I am writing in strong **support** of SB 1186. This bill recognizes the critical need for a coordinated, interagency approach to addressing Hawaii's complex food system challenges.

[Senate Resolution 111, SD 1, 2024 Legislature Report of the Sustainable Food Systems Working Group](#) key recommendation is to establish a fully resourced process for statewide food systems coordination that builds equitably from county and moku-based engagement processes.

There are issues in Hawai'i food system and this bill can help enhance our economy, boost local food production, improve access to healthy food, minimize food waste, and reduce food insecurity. They are not isolated, rather they are intrinsically linked. Therefore, a coordinated approach is essential to making meaningful progress in each of these areas.

SB 1186 acknowledges that tackling food system challenges requires a multidisciplinary, collaborative effort that is firmly grounded in empirical data. Numerous studies have demonstrated that food systems are interconnected and multifaceted that requires expertise from various agencies to develop effective strategies and actions. The coordination and collaboration of these various groups and individuals mentioned in SB 1186 will better help state agencies and community organizations to address numerous issues affecting our state's food security, such as sustainability and economic growth. Through the coordination of efforts, and a singular focus amongst these agencies; our state will be better to ensure that resources are properly utilized and that policies are implemented to benefit all communities.

Additionally, the establishment of the food system specialist and policy analyst positions within the Department of Agriculture is another vital component of this bill. These dedicated roles will provide the necessary expertise and capacity to support the interagency working group and ensure its effectiveness. These positions will be instrumental in developing and implementing evidence-based policies that promote local food production, improve access to nutritious food,

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

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



reduce waste, and mitigate the impacts of climate change on our food system. They will also play a key role in coordinating with stakeholders and community members to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered in the decision-making process.

SB 1186 offers a concrete step in the right direction by creating the framework for a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable food system for all of Hawaii's residents. I believe this bill will significantly enhance our ability to achieve our state's sustainability goals and improve the well-being of our communities.

I urge the committee to pass SB 1186. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,
Lea iaea & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

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

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



LATE

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Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports SB1186.**

SB1186 proposes the establishment of the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture. This initiative is vital for fostering a comprehensive and integrated approach to enhancing Hawaii's food systems. By coordinating efforts across various sectors, the bill aims to address inefficiencies and foster collaboration that is essential for developing a resilient and sustainable agricultural environment in Hawaii. Encouraging collaborative efforts through these bodies will provide the necessary platform for stakeholders to align their resources, share valuable insights, and strategize effectively towards strengthening Hawaii's food infrastructure.

The appropriation of funds and establishment of dedicated positions demonstrate a commitment to sustaining these efforts for the long term. This financial backing is crucial for successful implementation and for enabling the working group and coordination team to carry out their mandates effectively. With a structured approach to monitoring and evaluating progress through regular reports to the Legislature, SB1186 ensures that strategic adjustments can be made in a timely manner. Supporting this bill paves the way for a more synergized effort in enhancing food security, promoting local agriculture, and ultimately supporting our local farmers and communities in achieving a more sustainable food system for Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |

Honolulu, HI 96813

P: 808-533-1292 | e:

info@hawaiiifood.com

Executive Officers

Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale Grocer, *Chair*

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Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*

Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*

Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*

Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

LATE

TO: Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 12, 2025

TIME: 10:01am

RE: SB1186 SD1 Relating to Sustainable Food Systems

Position: Support

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

HFIA is in support of this measure. As the measure notes, food insecurity in Hawaii is alarmingly high, and there are many barriers that make it challenging for businesses that want to produce food locally. HFIA has long advocated for initiatives that will reduce food insecurity; supported local food manufacturing and other local businesses; and served as the voice of Hawaii's food and beverage industry. We have high level understanding of Hawaii's food systems and industry expertise.

We are in agreement with this measure that "achieving a sustainable, resilient, and equitable food system requires collaboration across state agencies, producers, retailers, non-governmental organizations, and community members."

Under Section 2 paragraph (c) the measure states that "The co-chairs may invite other representatives of interested organizations with relevant experience and expertise to participate in the interagency food systems working group, as necessary."

We encourage the co-chairs to ensure that when they are inviting representatives of interested organizations that members of the food and beverage industry in general, and HFIA specifically are included. We encourage the Committee to pass this measure, and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

LATE

**BOARD OF
DIRECTORS**

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**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**

Dave Elliott

DATE: 2/12/2025
TIME: 10:01Am
CONFERENCE ROOM : 211

SENATE BILL NO. 1186
RELATING TO RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of SB 1186 establishing a Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture.

The following are just a few of the goals, mandates and visions we have for our local food and agriculture system:

Ensure 50% of foods are local agriculture or valued-added/food products within key state institutions by 2050 (Act 176, SLH 2021).

Farmers, ranchers, aquaculturists, and plant nursery growers experience reduced risk to production, broaden local and export markets, and receive effective support to detect and control pests (Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan, Vision Section 1.1).

Double local food production by 2030 (Act 151, SLH 2019).

How are we currently coordinating a systematic effort to achieve them?

An Interagency Food Systems Working Group with "backbone" support from a coordination team is essential to answer this question.

With high and increasing agricultural production costs – as well as local food costs – effective and coordinated policy and action are critical to strengthening our economy, food system and ensuring no residents face hunger, now or in times of natural disaster.

There are more than 25 similar state-level efforts across the U.S. as well as multiple food systems planning efforts led by our own counties. This bill will enable us to coordinate our local efforts, while drawing lessons from innovations across the country.

Our farmers, food producers, distributors and most importantly, residents, are depending on our efforts.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of this vital measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dave Elliott", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dave Elliott
Executive Director



HAWAII APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

LATE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for SB 1186 SD 1 – Relating to Sustainable Food Systems
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 10:01 AM

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 1186 SD 1, which would establish the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture (DOA).

Ensuring a healthy and sustainable food system requires the work of many stakeholders, including farmers, food retailers, consumers, and community groups. Government agencies also have a critical role to play. They regulate access to land and water, administer state and federal funding, and even procure food for various programs.

It is long past time the state recognize the critical importance of coordinating these activities across the various agencies involved. With every disaster that strikes, we witness the devastation to farmers on the one hand, and are faced with the stark realities of household food insecurity on the other. While the DOA is a critical player, they do not manage all of these roles, nor should they. However, establishing this interagency food systems coordination team will be a huge step in streamlining all fo the various government roles toward achieving the goal of a stronger and more resilient local food system.

This bill is a progressive and forward-thinking proposal that prioritizes government efficiency, public health, and a strong local food economy. Thank you for your consideration.



Food+ Policy Internship 2025

food@purplemaia.org

LATE

February 11, 2025

Subject: S.B. 1186 – Relating to Sustainable Food Systems

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

Hawaii Food+ Policy strongly supports S.B. 1186 because food security is not just a policy issue—it's a lifeline. Right now, one in three households in Hawaii struggles to put food on the table, and in times of crisis, our communities are left vulnerable, with only 12% of households prepared for emergencies. We cannot continue to rely on a fragile, import-dependent system.

S.B. 1186 creates a statewide interagency food systems coordination team to unite state agencies, farmers, and community partners in building a stronger, more resilient local food system. This isn't just about policy—it's about making sure our keiki, kupuna, and families always have access to fresh, local food.

By investing \$944,100 to fund essential positions and coordination efforts, we are making a long-overdue commitment to support local farmers, reduce food waste, and ensure no one in Hawaii goes hungry. This bill is a step toward food independence, economic stability, and a more sustainable future.

We urge you to pass S.B. 1186 and stand with the people of Hawaii in securing a future where no one worries about their next meal.

Mahalo,

The Hawaii Food+ Policy Team

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

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergrads and graduate students from throughout the UH System. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.

LATE

SB-1186-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:58:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronald Weidenbach	Testifying for Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The HAAA supports the intent of SB1186, and if passed we would encourage the Co-Chairs to invite a cross-section of the Hawaii agriculture industry to actively participate in this committee process.

However, we question the listed compensation amounts for the three listed positions of which two appear exceed the compensation of the referenced committee Co-chairs and members, and compensation in the private sector for comparable responsibilities. These excess funds could be better allocated and used to support the participation of industry members for travel, compensation of time, data analyses, and reporting.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the intent of this measure, and to note compensation concerns.

SB-1186-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:54:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Climate Protectors Hawaii **SUPPORTS** this bill.

LATE

SB-1186-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 4:02:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colehour Bondera	Testifying for Kanalani Ohana Farm	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members:

Please support SB1186.

As a long-time small-scale farmer in Honaunau, it is critical from my perspective that Hawaii and especially the HDOA recognize the importance of a sustainable food system and provide the needed policies and mechanisms for support.

The farms in Hawaii historically produced all of the food needed for residents and visitors. There was not a reliance on imported inputs.

Now the focus is on imports and exports and reliance on imported inputs.

Hawaii can and should recognize what worked in the past and what would make our islands sustainable in terms of bypassing imports and instead working for things needed in fertilizer and pest and disease control to be coming from the islands directly (which is viable at this time and simply needs to be emphasized rather than subsidies provided towards un-needed imports.)

Thank you for your attention. Thank you for supporting this important piece of legislation (SB1186).

Yours,

Colehour Bondera

KANALANI OHANA FARM

colemel2@gmail.com

LATE

SB-1186-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 5:26:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Redfeather	Testifying for Ka Ohana O Na Pua	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A Statewide Interagency Food Systems Working Group and an Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team would be excellent next steps that hopefully will gather consensus and create statewide actions that will move policies forward in the real world. Considering how vulnerable Hawai'i is in the current fragile and uncertain system of imported foods, now would be a good time to focus on the realities of Hawaii's community food needs and the needs of Hawaii's farmers and food producers.

SB-1186-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:39:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jayde Addison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure.

SB-1186-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:47:33 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alex Narrajos cORBY	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to support SB 1186, Relating to Sustainable Food Systems, which establishes a Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture

As a professional who has worked in the field of food systems in Hawai‘i for the last 7 years, I understand that this initiative is vitally important in breaking down silos, creating opportunities for collaboration, and avoiding inefficiencies within Hawai‘i's food systems. While a plethora of work is being done in each community and via each County, having statewide coordination is necessary in encouraging collaborative efforts which will provide the necessary platform for stakeholders to align their resources, share valuable insights, and strategize effectively towards strengthening Hawai‘i's food infrastructure.

Thank you for allowing me to share my testimony and to the committee for considering SB 1186.

-Alex Narrajos Corby

Albie Miles, Ph.D.
2943 Kalakaua Ave. #103
Honolulu, HI 96815
310-902-0531

2/11/25

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
Hawai'i State Legislature
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Strong Support for SB 1186 – Relating to Sustainable Food Systems

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

As both a citizen and food system scholar, I am writing in strong support of SB 1186, which advances food system planning as a critical tool for achieving Hawai'i's economic, cultural, public health, and ecological goals. Food system planning is a structured, interdisciplinary approach to developing resilient, equitable, and sustainable food systems that enhance food security, economic development, and climate change adaptation. Given Hawai'i's geographic isolation and dependence on food imports, a well-integrated, locally focused food system is essential for reducing vulnerabilities and ensuring long-term sustainability.

Hawai'i has made important strides in food system planning through the inter-agency Food System Working Group, led by the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development, the Department of Health, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and grower organizations. Their report to the Legislature (available at: [HDOA Report](#)) outlines key policy priorities and systemic challenges. However, additional resources and long-term commitments are needed to implement a comprehensive, statewide food system strategy that meets Hawai'i's economic, environmental, and public health needs.

Investing in food system planning will yield significant benefits for the state. The ongoing challenges of chronic household food insecurity—currently affecting 30% of Hawai'i's residents—and high rates of diet-related illness disproportionately impacting Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities underscore the urgency of action. The externalized costs of the current food system—including healthcare expenditures related to diet-related disease, environmental degradation, and economic losses due to the decline of local agriculture—represent a substantial burden on state resources. Addressing these issues through

coordinated food system planning will create long-term economic efficiencies and improve public health outcomes.

Supporting SB 1186 will also position Hawai‘i as a leader in national food system transformation. Michigan State University’s Center for Regional Food Systems is forming a National Community of Practice for state-level food system planning ([MSU CRFS National CoP](#)), and Hawai‘i has the opportunity to be an active participant in shaping national policy and best practices. By formalizing food system planning efforts, Hawai‘i can strengthen its position as an innovator in sustainable food systems, serving as a model for other states and island nations seeking to enhance food security, climate resilience, and agricultural sustainability.

SB 1186 aligns with existing state mandates related to food and agriculture and will help realize Hawai‘i’s long-term goals of economic self-sufficiency, environmental stewardship, and cultural preservation. I urge you to support this critical legislation and provide the resources needed to advance comprehensive, equity-centered food system planning across the state.

Mahalo for your leadership, time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Albie Miles

Albie Miles, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Sustainable Community Food Systems, University of Hawaii - West Oahu

Co-Director, Ke O Mau Center for Sustainable Island Food Systems, University of Hawaii System

Chief Specialty Editor, Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems, Social Movements Institutions and Governance