



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

**Date:** 03/13/2025

**Time:** 09:15 AM

**Location:** 325 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**Committee:** House Agriculture & Food Systems

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Bill Title:** SB 0894, SD3 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

**Purpose of Bill:** Appropriates funds to the Department of Education for regional kitchen expansion to fulfill the local farm-to-school meal goal requiring thirty per cent of the food served in public schools to consist of locally sourced products. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD3)

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony in support of SB 894, SD 3.

This bill proposes to appropriate funds to the Department to fulfill the local farm-to-school meal goal requiring thirty percent of the food served in public schools to consist of locally sourced products.

The Department is tasked by Act 175, Session Laws of Hawaii 2021, to meet the goal of having 30 percent of food served in public schools to be from locally sourced products by 2030. We believe that the appropriations provided in SB 894, SD 3 could help us to move in that direction as it is incorporated as part of our larger regional kitchen endeavor.

Facilities at Bethel (Tacoma), Seattle, and Sacramento Unified School districts are examples of regional and central kitchen concepts on the continent that we were able to visit, collaborate with, and learn from, incorporating their successes and adaptations in developing our model.

The regional kitchen model is a scalable solution based on high volume regional kitchens that prepare meals and ingredients for distribution to satellite kitchens that store, heat, and serve meals to customers. The benefits of a regional kitchen include: fresh and healthy school meals; high-quality meals with local products; increased procurement of locally grown agricultural products; lowered risk of service disruption; reduction in food waste; and reduction in future demand for replacement of

current food service equipment at the end of service life.

Transitioning to a regional model will require conducting site feasibility studies looking at space availability, zoning and land entitlements, vehicular access, and utility capacity amongst other factors. Costs in moving to this model are not just in building a regional kitchen, but also in converting existing school kitchens into satellite kitchens that are able to receive the meals or ingredients from the regional kitchen. Kitchen equipment for reheating and finishing meals has already been identified by the Department's School Food Services Branch.

Regional kitchens are a new market opportunity for local farmers. Approximately 90 percent of Hawaii's food is grown, processed, and imported from the mainland, and delivered to school kitchens to serve over 152,000 students a day in this school year. Our efforts are the key beginnings to ensure healthy, locally sourced meals for students are served to improve student nutrition. These beginnings will aid in the vision to achieve a sustainable farm-to-state system that will not only feed our keiki but strengthen the local agricultural industry, and can only be achieved as we work collaboratively with the University of Hawaii, Hawaii State Legislature, Department of Agriculture, Department of Business and Economic Development, Agribusiness Development Corporation, and other agencies and organizations.

We would respectfully request that the appropriations we requested in our previous testimony be amended to be \$55,650,000 for fiscal year 2026 and \$16,500,000 for fiscal year 2027, and broken down as follows:

For fiscal year 2026:

- \$55,000,000 for additional design and construction funds to service central, leeward and windward district complex areas in the city and county of Honolulu through the expansion of the current Phase 1 Whitmore regional kitchen. This expands the facility to 45,000 square feet on approximately four acres to produce 60,000 meals a day at the Whitmore site;
- \$100,000 for a feasibility analysis for a second Oahu site to service Honolulu district complexes in the city and county of Honolulu to produce a minimum of 40,000 meals a day;
- \$250,000 for a feasibility analysis for two sites to service the Hawaii district complex areas in the county of Hawaii; one on the east side to produce a minimum of 12,000 meals a day and one on the west side of the island to produce a minimum of 15,000 meals a day;
- \$150,000 for a feasibility analysis for one site to service the Maui district complex areas in the County of Maui to produce a minimum of 18,000 meals a day (not including Hana, Lanai and Molokai); and
- \$150,000 for a feasibility analysis for one site to service the Kauai district complex areas to produce a minimum of 12,000 meals a day in the County of Kauai.

For fiscal year 2027:

- \$4,500,000 for further due diligence, planning, design and land acquisition for the additional site and assessment of the receiving school kitchens in the city and county of Honolulu. There are 172 kitchens on Oahu (67 percent of the statewide total) which will need to be converted to satellite kitchens, and therefore more sites to assess and plan for than on neighbor islands;

- \$6,000,000 for further due diligence, design and land acquisition for two sites and assessment of the receiving school kitchens to service the Hawaii district complex areas in the County of Hawaii; one on the east side and one on the west side of the island;
- \$3,000,000 for further planning, design and land acquisition for one site and assessment of the receiving school kitchens to service the Maui district complex areas in the County of Maui. This does include the feasibility assessment and analysis of stand-alone equipment for Hana, Lanai, and Molokai to ensure continuity of existing operations; and
- \$3,000,000 for further planning, design and land acquisition for one site and assessment of the receiving school kitchens to service the Kauai district complex areas in the County of Kauai.

The Department wishes to note that these appropriation amounts are just an initial estimate and additional funding will likely be needed, particularly in the districts of Hawaii, Maui, and Kauai, as further scoping and planning is completed following the longer-term vision of regional kitchens across the state.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 894, SD 3.



**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM**

**‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII**

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

---

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems  
March 13, 2025 at 9:15 a.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean  
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience

And

Michael Bruno, Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 894 SD3 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

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

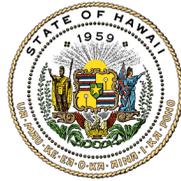
Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 894 SD3 which appropriates funds to the Department of Education for regional kitchen expansion to fulfill the local farm-to-school meal goal requiring thirty per cent of the food served in public schools to consist of locally sourced products.

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) supports the efforts of the Department of Education (HiDOE) to fulfill the local farm-to-school meal goal mandated in Act 175, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2021. The regional kitchens project has the potential to build a strong local food and agricultural ecosystem, increase Hawai'i's food self-sufficiency, and improve the nutritional health of our keiki. CTAHR has developed a new vision and an entrepreneurial and community-engaged operational model to build CATHR's Agricultural research and Extension Stations (CARES) centers as hubs of collaborative innovation and community prosperity and help farmers increase local food production and capture the regional kitchens markets on each island. CTAHR has developed distinct initiatives such as a Controlled Environment Agriculture Innovation Farm which will directly support the regional kitchens project to produce essential food commodities especially leafy greens throughout the year for local farm-to-school meals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2025  
9:15 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

SENATE BILL NO. 894, SENATE DRAFT 3  
RELATING TO EDUCATION.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill No. 894, Senate Draft 3 that appropriates funds to the Department of Education to fulfill the local farm-to-school meal goal requiring thirty percent of the food served in public schools to consist of locally sourced products.

The Department of Agriculture supports this measure and defers to the Department of Education with respect to establishing the proposed statewide system of regional kitchens in each county that will provide an opportunity to create broad market stimulation for local agricultural products. If successful, this will move the State further towards its longstanding objective of meeting institutional demand (public schools, prisons, and hospitals) with locally grown agricultural products.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.





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

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
DIRECTOR

**DANE K. WICKER**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

No. 1 Capitol District Building, 250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804  
Web site: [dbedt.hawaii.gov](http://dbedt.hawaii.gov)

Telephone: (808) 586-2355  
Fax: (808) 586-2377

Statement of  
**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
Director  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**

Thursday, March 13, 2025  
9:15 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of  
**SB 894, SD3**  
**RELATING TO EDUCATION.**

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

I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 894 SD3, which appropriates funds to the Department of Education (DOE) to support the statutory mandate requiring at least thirty percent of school meals to consist of locally sourced products by 2030, as established under Act 175 (2021).

Hawai'i's economy must be diversified to ensure long-term sustainability, and a crucial component of that diversification is strengthening our local agricultural and food production industries. To achieve this, it is imperative that we invest in the necessary infrastructure and facilities that provide certainty to local producers while simultaneously reducing risk and financial burden. Regional kitchens play a pivotal role in anchoring Hawai'i's small farmers by providing them with a consistent and reliable market for their produce, ensuring that more locally grown food is utilized rather than wasted.

Moreover, regional kitchens serve as a critical component of the State's food security and resiliency efforts, particularly in times of natural disasters. In times of crisis, these facilities can be leveraged to prepare meals for communities in need, ensuring that emergency food assistance is readily available. By building and supporting these centralized food preparation hubs, we not only enhance the nutritional quality of school meals but also create an essential safety net for Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations.

Additionally, the investment in regional kitchens directly supports the goals of Act 176 (2021), which requires state agencies to increase procurement of locally grown and

value-added agricultural products in progressive benchmarks through 2050. By providing DOE with regionalized food preparation facilities, the State will be better positioned to scale up local food purchasing and processing capabilities. This will reduce dependency on imported food products and create an efficient supply chain where locally grown and processed ingredients can be integrated into school meal programs in compliance with Act 176's procurement targets.

The challenges outlined in the 2024 annual report on farm-to-school meals—including invasive species, agricultural theft, labor shortages, inadequate capital, and climate change—demonstrate the urgency of this investment. By allocating funds to regional kitchens and food infrastructure, we empower local farmers, support the DOE in meeting its farm-to-school goals under Act 175, and ensure compliance with the local food procurement mandates outlined in Act 176.

I respectfully urge the Legislature to pass SB894 SD3 to ensure the necessary investments are made in food infrastructure that will benefit Hawai'i's students, farmers, and communities for generations to come.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR



WENDY GADY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
**AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
HUI HO'OU LU AINA MAHIAI

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS  
March 13, 2025  
9:15 A.M.  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

SENATE BILL NO. 894, SD3  
RELATING TO EDUCATION

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of Senate Bill No. 894, SD3, that appropriates funds to the Department of Education (DOE) to fulfill the local farm-to-school meal goal requiring 30% of the food served in public schools to consist of locally sourced products.

Act 175, SLH 2021 had set a goal of sourcing at least 30% of school meals from local producers by 2030. The appropriations considered in this bill would allow DOE to better achieve this goal by upgrading the critical infrastructure, equipment, and facilities needed to provide our keiki with food made from locally sourced produce.

We defer to DOE regarding specific appropriation amounts for the several district complex areas considered in the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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)

March 13, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON SB 894, SD3**  
RELATING TO EDUCATION

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference  
9:15 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 SB 894, SD3**, which provides funding to upgrade school facilities to better support the preparation and service of locally grown food in school meals. Strengthening the infrastructure of Hawai'i's school kitchens and cafeterias is essential for expanding the Farm to School program, increasing local food procurement, and ensuring students have access to fresh, nutritious meals.

Hawai'i has set a goal of sourcing at least 30 percent of school meals from local producers by 2030 under Act 175, SLH 2021. However, one of the significant challenges in meeting this goal is that many schools lack the necessary kitchen facilities to store, prepare, and serve fresh, locally sourced food. Many school kitchens were designed to accommodate pre-packaged, processed meals rather than whole, raw agricultural products. Upgrading these facilities will enable schools to handle fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat, and other local products, making it easier for food service staff to integrate locally grown ingredients into student meals.

Investing in school kitchen infrastructure also supports Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers by increasing demand for local food. The cost of local agricultural production remains higher than imported alternatives due to high land prices, expensive inputs, labor costs, and regulatory challenges. Expanding Farm to School efforts by improving school kitchens will create a more stable and consistent market for Hawai'i farmers, helping them compete with imported food and supporting long-term agricultural viability.

This bill also aligns with the broader goal of import replacement, where local agricultural products substitute for imported equivalents, reducing Hawai'i's dependence on food from outside the state. Strengthening the capacity of schools to prepare and serve fresh,

locally sourced meals will ensure that more food dollars remain within Hawai'i, supporting local agriculture and boosting the economy.

We urge the committee to pass SB 894, SD3, to invest in the necessary infrastructure improvements that will expand the Farm to School program, increase local food procurement, and provide students with fresh, healthy meals.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

**Hawai'i Food + Policy strongly supports SB894 SD3**, which appropriates critical funding to expand regional kitchens and ensure Hawai'i's public schools meet the statutory requirement of sourcing 30% of school meal ingredients locally. This bill is essential in overcoming the existing barriers that prevent schools from increasing their use of fresh, locally grown food, ultimately supporting both students and Hawai'i's agricultural community.

Currently, the Department of Education is far from achieving the 30% local food requirement, with only beef being the primary school meal ingredients sourced from Hawai'i farms. The primary obstacles include **outdated kitchen infrastructure, inadequate processing facilities, and limited supply from local producers**. Without immediate investment, schools will continue to struggle to provide nutritious, locally sourced meals, and farmers will lack the stable contracts necessary to scale operations.

SB894 SD3 presents a comprehensive solution by funding regional kitchen expansion, allowing schools to efficiently prepare fresh, locally sourced meals while also stimulating local agriculture. This initiative creates economic stability for farmers, fosters food security for our islands, and improves student health and academic performance. Beyond students, the benefits of this bill extend to families and communities. As financial strain on households increases, there is growing concern over school meal affordability. SB894 SD3 offers a long-term solution to food insecurity by ensuring a reliable, cost-effective local food supply chain, ultimately reducing reliance on imported food. Additionally, the expansion of regional kitchens will create new jobs in agriculture and food service, revitalizing Hawai'i's farming industry and strengthening our local economy.

**Hawai'i Food + Policy urges the committee to recognize that funding regional kitchens is not just about meeting a mandate—it is about building a more secure, sustainable, and self-sufficient food system.** By supporting this bill, the Legislature has an opportunity to prioritize student nutrition, empower local farmers, and strengthen Hawai'i's food sovereignty for generations to come.

Mahalo,

Hawai'i Food + Policy Team

---

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

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

**SB-894-SD-3**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 1:01:40 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2025 9:15:00 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 this important bill. Mahalo.

**SB-894-SD-3**

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 7:54:45 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2025 9:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT TO HELP LOCAL FARMERS AND FOOD SUSTAINABILITY.

MAHALO!

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair

Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Shaun Kamisato

Thursday, March 13, 2025 at 9:15 AM

Re: Testimony in **support** of SB 894 Relating to Education

Dear Chairperson Kirstin Kahaloa and Members of the Committee,

My name is Shaun Kamisato and I am currently pursuing my post-secondary education at the Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. The views I am expressing in this testimony are my own and do not necessarily reflect my school. I am testifying in **support** of SB 894 which will allow the expansion and implementation of regional kitchens statewide.

With a regional kitchen, schools will effectively be able to handle, prepare, and cook fresh food products. The usage of fresh, local food products support local farmers through increased revenue and increased local job opportunities. In addition to the economic benefits of providing funds for regional kitchens, there are several health and academic benefits for using fresh ingredients in school meals. According to The Lancet Regional Health-Americas (2022), healthy school meals can

- Reduce macronutrient deficiency
- Improve growth

- Promote healthy weight gain
- Improve fruit and vegetable consumption
- Improve cognitive development
- Increase attendance rates and retention in schools

Thus, healthy school meals made with fresh, locally sourced food cannot be made effectively and efficiently without a regional kitchen.

As part of my Master of Social Work curriculum, I work closely with homeless youth every week. For all of these kids and many others, their families are not able to afford these fresh products to make these healthy meals at home. If they were guaranteed a healthy meal due to the local farm-to-school meal initiative as part of the Department of Education and the expansion of a regional kitchen, their physical and cognitive health would improve. Overall, by appropriating funds to expand regional kitchens, our children's wellbeing and future is supported.

In closing, I fully **support** SB 894 Relating to Education. This bill will help to allocate funds to expand regional kitchens in Hawa'i so that students of all economic statuses can benefit from a healthy school meal. With that being said, I urge the committee to support SB 894 to improve the health of our keiki. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Thank you for your consideration,

Shaun Kamisato

Social Work Student

## References

The Lancet Regional Health-Americas (2022). Unhealthy school meals: A solution to hunger or a problem for health?. *Lancet regional health. Americas*, *16*, 100413.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lana.2022.100413>