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Date: February 3, 2019

To: Senator Russell Ruderman, Chair  
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair  
Members of the Human Services Committee

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Russell Ruderman, Vice Chair  
Members of the Agriculture and Environment Committee

Re: Strong Support for SB390, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition  
Assistance Program Incentives

Hrg: February 4, 2019 at 1:15pm at Conference Room 224

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The Obesity Prevention Task Force of the Hawai'i Public Health Institute<sup>i</sup> is in **Strong Support of SB390**, which creates a matching incentive program for the beneficiaries of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

### **Creating a dollar-for-dollar matching local produce incentive program is a simple yet powerful policy solution.**

SB390 is modeled after Double Up Food Bucks, a national program started by the Fair Food Network in 2009. Double Up Food Bucks provides a dollar-for-dollar match on the value of SNAP when spent on local fresh fruits and vegetables. Double Up is a win/win/win: low-income families bring home more healthy food, local farmers gain new customers and bring in more income, and more food dollars stay in the local economy. Double Up is a successful model being implemented in more than 20 states and does not violate interstate commerce due to market-participant exception from the law, where state and local government may act as a market participant for the purchase of locally grown foods.

### **Expanding this incentive program will benefit hundreds of families across the State.**

In Hawaii Island, a local pilot program is already being implemented through the Food Basket's *DA BUX: Double Up Food Bucks* program. In partnership with KTA superstores, SNAP customers receive a 50% credit incentive at checkout. Since the pilot began in 2017, there have been close to 3000 individual DA BUX transactions and an average sales increase of nearly 20% on incentivized produce<sup>ii</sup>. DA BUX is

currently being offered one week per month in the Big Island. An expansion of a similar statewide pilot program can improve healthy produce access to SNAP families in other islands and improve local agriculture in those communities. As of December 2018, there were 161,550 individuals or 82,806 households that participated in SNAP.

**An incentive program will improve the health and well-being of Hawai'i families.**

Incentivizing the use of SNAP dollars for fresh fruits and vegetables not only stretches food dollars for families, but it also brings home nutritious food that the entire family can enjoy. Crediting SNAP dollars creates room in the families' budget for other household and healthcare expenses so that food dollars can be spent on locally grown food such as taro, papaya, Hamakua mushrooms, and other produce instead of cheaper, unhealthy alternatives. With more than 25% of children 10-17 years old and 58% of adults in Hawai'i overweight, or obese, HB262 can help to improve healthier dietary behaviors.

SB390 is a powerful and innovative measure that brings together Hawaii families, farmers, and local markets. It is a triple win for health, agriculture, and the local economy. We are in strong support of this measure and respectfully ask you to **pass SB390** out of committee.

Mahalo,



Trish La Chica, MPA  
Policy and Advocacy Director

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<sup>i</sup> Created by the legislature in 2012, the Obesity Prevention Task Force is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations, and 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. The Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) convenes the Task Force and supports and promotes policy efforts to create a healthy Hawai'i.

Hawai'i Public Health Institute is a hub for building healthy communities, providing issue-based advocacy, education, and technical assistance through partnerships with government, academia, foundations, business, and community-based organizations.

<sup>ii</sup> Data collected from September to December 2017, with 2983 individual DA BUX transactions over 4 months (one week per month).

**SB-390**

Submitted on: 2/3/2019 2:43:00 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/4/2019 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Carol R. Ignacio	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Senators,

Mahalo for hearing SB390. Double Bucks makes a difference in the lives of those struggling to make ends meet and at the same times to eat healthy. Please pass this bill and ensure that Double Bucks may be used in grocery stores as well as farmers markets, etc. Hawaii Island has been very successful with the Double Bucks initiative. Please support and pass this measure.

Mahalo nui,

Carol R. Ignacio

District 1 Hawaii Island

**LATE**

**SB-390**

Submitted on: 2/3/2019 7:04:50 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/4/2019 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Genevieve N Neumann	Testifying for Lokoea Farms	Support	No

Comments:

**LATE**

**SB-390**

Submitted on: 2/3/2019 8:16:12 PM  
Testimony for HMS on 2/4/2019 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Anthony Florig	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I've lived in Hawaii since 2012, except in 2016 when I moved back to Ohio for grad school and also got a job facilitating the implementation of a grant funded by this program in Ohio. I moved back to Hawaii at the beginning of 2018, and plan to buy land and stay for good. I have personal experience with this program in another state, and believe it would be a benefit to both the under-privileged and especially the farmers of Hawaii.

**SB-390**

Submitted on: 2/3/2019 10:40:11 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/4/2019 1:15:00 PM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Noa Lincoln	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**LATE**

The Honorable Senators Ruderman and Gabbard  
Senate Committees on Human Services, Agriculture and Environment  
Hearing: February 2, 2019 1:15pm  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 225

Testimony of Kasha Ho'okili Ho, Senate District 23

**In SUPPORT of Senate Bill 390, RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES**

Senate Chairs Ruderman and Gabbard, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Committee Members,

I submit my testimony in strong support for SB390. For that past seven years, I have been working with communities here on O'ahu to develop food systems solutions that address access, affordability of locally grown foods for low-income and mobility challenged community members. Through GreenWheel Food Hub, we established SNAP acceptance at 5 O'ahu farmers markets that sell only locally grown produce. At Kōkua Kalihi Valley, we started SNAP acceptance at two Kalihi farmers markets, one located inside of the Towers at Kalihi Park (KPT) for residents. Currently, with Emergent Island Economies Collective, are working with KEY Project to establish a food hub, where Ko'olau farmers can aggregate and sell local produce to their neighbors. KEY Project's food hub just received SNAP authorization this week, and this bill would provide an important benefit to our community.

As you know, Hawaii imports upwards of 90% of our food from overseas. The high import costs mean that Hawai'i families spend 70% more on groceries than families on the Continental United States.<sup>i</sup> At the same time, Hawai'i has some of the lowest wages and the highest cost of living in the country.<sup>ii</sup> According to the USDA, an average family of four with young children should be able to eat on a "thrifty" food budget of \$562 per month. In Hawai'i, it costs the same family \$1,161 for the same meals.<sup>iii</sup>

We are struggling to survive on both ends of the food system in Hawaii. Farming has always been hard work, and it is particularly difficult to make a living farming in Hawaii with limited access to land, high costs of inputs, infrastructure, and having to compete with imported, industrial agriculture that is heavily subsidized.

The farmers we work with are doing what they do for the love of the land and the health of their communities, but it is not easy to support your family as a small farmer in Hawai'i. We need to invest in these local farmers in order to see a future where we are able to feed ourselves once again in Hawaii. This bill would provide a much-needed infusion into the local food system, allowing those with SNAP benefits to mutually support our local farmers. Over \$40 million comes into Hawaii through SNAP benefits each month.<sup>iv</sup> Shifting SNAP dollars over to local produce would have a huge benefit to local farmers and the local economy.

In my experience running SNAP programs at local farmers markets, the availability of incentives such as the one proposed by this bill has an enormous impact on SNAP customer participation at the market. I strongly support this bill and am available for further questions.

Mahalo,



Kasha Ho'okili Ho

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<sup>i</sup> Murakami, Kery (2013) [Living Hawaii: Why Is the Price of Paradise So High?](#) Civil Beat

<sup>ii</sup> Dill, Kathryn (2014) [The Best And Worst States To Make A Living In 2014](#) Forbes Magazine

<sup>iii</sup> United States Department of Agriculture (2017) [USDA Food Plans: Cost of Food](#) Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion

<sup>iv</sup> SNAP State Activity Report FY 2016

**LATE**

**SB-390**

Submitted on: 2/4/2019 10:03:33 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/4/2019 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Thomas Craig	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Locally grown produce for SNAP recipients makes good nutritionally, economically and carbon footprint wise for the State and our people.



HAWAI'I COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
*Amplify the Power of Giving*

**LATE**

February 3, 2019

To: Hawai'i State Senate, Committee on Human Services & Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Re: S.B. 390

Dear Chairs Ruderman and Gabbard, Vice-Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committees,

In 2016 the Hawai'i Community Foundation commissioned a study of the "State of Hunger" in our State. The findings were appalling: nearly 1 in 7 residents are at-risk of going hungry including more than 20% of our keiki and 10% of seniors. In response HCF organized funding from 9 private donors and foundations to fund a 3-year effort to help reduce hunger in our community.

Over the past year, 13 organizations calling themselves the *Hawai'i Hunger Action Network*: (Blue Zones, Good Food Alliance, Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development, Hawai'i Appleseed, Hawai'i Community Foundation, Hawai'i Foodbank, Hawai'i Food Basket, Kapi'olani Community College, Kōkua Kalihi Valley, Lanakila Pacific, Maui Food Bank, Parents & Children Together and Sustainable Moloka'i) have been meeting to identify the most effective ways to ensure that all people in Hawai'i have enough food to live healthy, dignified and productive lives.

In terms of resources for quality food and nutrition for low-income individuals and families, *Double Up Food Bucks programs* have been shown to:

- **Reduce food insecurity.** Doubles the purchasing power of Hawai'i's low-income families, freeing up room in their budget for other expenditures like housing and healthcare.
- **Improve dietary behaviors among low-income families.** Evaluation data from programs in other states have shown that families eat more fruits and vegetables, eat a larger variety of fruits and vegetables, and eat fewer chips, candy, and cookies.
- **Support farmers.** Nutrition incentives increase sales and farm income and increase farmers' customer base.
- **Boost the local economy.** Is an effective way to keep federal funding circulating in the local economy. Using the USDA's economic multiplier coefficients, the \$1.6 million in SNAP at Hawai'i farmers' markets (2016) generates nearly double the economic impact, by encouraging more consumer spending at local businesses.

On behalf of HCF and our partners at the Hawai'i Hunger Action Networks I wholeheartedly support S.B. 390.

Sincerely,

Micah A. Kāne  
CEO & President

**LATE**

**SB-390**

Submitted on: 2/4/2019 10:29:42 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/4/2019 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Amy Brinker	Individual	Support	No

Comments: