

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



SARAH ALLEN  
ADMINISTRATOR  
  
BONNIE KAHAKUI  
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

**STATE OF HAWAII  
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE**

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**TESTIMONY  
OF  
SARAH ALLEN, ADMINISTRATOR  
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE**

**TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE  
ON  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
February 5, 2020; 1:15 p.m.**

**SB2709  
RELATING TO BEGINNING FARMER TRAINING**

Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Ruderman, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB2709. The State Procurement Office (SPO) supports any efforts for training opportunities and provides the following comments and recommendations:

Comments:

SB2709, Section 2 (d) on page 4 provides that the department of agriculture may enter into contracts with qualified training providers in accordance with HRS 103D-304."

This language implies that the department of agriculture use the professional services method of procurement, pursuant to HRS 103D-304, to enter into contracts with qualified trainers. Pursuant to HRS 103D-304, "Professional services" means those services within the scope of the practice of architecture, landscape architecture, professional engineering, land surveying, real property appraisal, law, medicine, accounting, dentistry, public finance bond underwriting, public finance bond investment banking, or any other practice defined as professional by the laws of this State or the professional and scientific occupation series contained in the United States Office of Personnel Management's Qualifications Standards Handbook. Qualified farming trainers do not fall under this definition, and thus the use of professional services to obtain agricultural training shall not be used as a procurement method for this requirement. A best-value competitive request for proposal is always recommended for services procurements.

However, in this case, the department may use the exemption, pursuant to section 3-120-4, HAR, that has determined specialized training to be exempt from chapter 103D, HRS:

*Exemption No. 3. Services of lecturers, speakers, trainers, facilitators and scriptwriters, when the provider possess specialized training methods, techniques or expertise in the subject matter, if applicable.*

Recommendation:

The SPO recommends removing the language referencing HRS 103D-304, giving the department the ability to choose the procurement method most suitable. Additionally, SPO requests removing the criteria language on page 5, lines 1 to 11. Criteria for any solicitation should be determined after the department conducts market research and develops an procurement strategy.

**Amend** SECTION 2(d), page 4, line 12 to read: accordance with section 103D-304 to effectuate the purpose

**Remove** SECTION 2(d)(4), page 5 in its entirety.

Thank you.

**DAVID Y. IGE**  
Governor

**JOSH GREEN**  
Lt. Governor



State of Hawaii  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
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Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**MORRIS M. ATTA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

**TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER**  
**CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**FEBRUARY 5, 2020**  
**1:15 P.M.**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2709**  
**RELATING TO BEGINNING FARMER TRAINING**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2709. This measure establishes a 5-year beginning farmer training program to be administered by the Department of Agriculture and appropriates funds. The Department of Agriculture supports the intent of this measure but offers the following comments.

The Department wholeheartedly agrees that support for new farmers is critical to ensuring that Hawaii's agricultural future is sustainable. However, we have not provided any agricultural education or training of the nature contemplated in the measure. Consequently, the Department believes that the University of Hawaii, West Oahu and the Community College system may be better suited to oversee and provide the agriculture education and vocational training to support beginning farmers. The Department lacks the expertise to assess and evaluate the qualifications of qualified farmer training providers to select them for the program. While occasionally, we previously served as a pass through for funding GoFarm and farm mentoring workshops, the Department has not qualified or certified any farm training programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 1/27/2020 7:52:18 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jessi	Testifying for Farmers apprentice mentorship program	Support	Yes

## Comments:

My Name is Jessi Blaylock, I live in the Ahu’pua’a of Hamakualoa in the Moku of Kuiaha. I am fairly new on the islands, this is my second full year of living in Maui. My partner and I are Managers or land tenders of a river valley farm on west Kuiaha. We have 100+ chickens, several grandmother avocado trees, plentiful Citrus and 13 healthy bee hives. When I got to Maui, I had no idea what I was doing. I knew that i wanted to get my hands dirty and be involved in the land. So I started talking, asking questions to the people who took me in and all their friends. They knew enough to get me going. And after awhile introduced me to what I now know as a sprawling community of farmers. People I could talk to about new opportunities, workshops and becoming involved in the farmers union. It was at one of their potlucks that my partner and I learned about the Farmers Apprentice Mentorship program or FAM. We had scraped together a little knowledge about farm life and marketing, but not enough to shape a future or the community to nurture our own ideas. So we applied for FAM, and generously, got in. In the very short time we’ve been a part of this program our idea of farming has morphed into an actuality. We have began to learn the skills and mindset that it takes to be an efficient business here. Efficient in the way that feeds a community and the land that’s being farmed as well. We are being connected with mentors who had began their farms with limited framework and, in that been able to see how we can maneuver thoughtfully and establish quickly. My farm plan is one of regeneration and continuation, involving the upkeep of many well established mango, coffee and avocado trees. While rotating plants such as bananas and dwarf citrus. I have a garden that will supply greens of all kinds, turmeric and ginger. While also specializing in growing ingredients for medicinal tea mixes to accompany our best and most consistent product, honey. I am only one of many aspiring farmers on these islands. And I personally, require a great deal of help on this journey. I could not do it without the community that is being shared with me through FAM and the mentors who volunteer their time to answer my questions. They themselves are working tirelessly to help the islands truly reach the goal of sustainability and in their back pocket, they know that we can not ever reach that without growing and nurturing new farmers. We must continue supporting the growth of a framework for farmers to work through in our ever changing environment. Passing this bill encourages growth of all types of farms, from those who aspire to work hundreds of acres to aunties and uncles with abundance. It helps create an avenue for everyone to learn how to support their community and feed their families. I simply ask that you consider all that

goes into a farm, and if you don't know, seek it out, it's mind blowing. It is mechanics, math, marketing, construction, art, teaching, entrepreneurialism, creativity, determination and thoughtfulness. All things we typically fund specifically. The farmer wears all these hats, day in and day out. And those to come, who aspire to wear them as well, deserve the support that this bill can provide. Those who are teaching us deserve to be paid for their time and commitment. By passing this bill we can provide and perpetuate good things for the agricultural industry of Hawaii. And above that, whatever good comes to the farmers is going back into the land, and from the food, back into the people. Creating a more sustainable Hawaii, one mentor and student at a time. Mahalo for your time.



January 30, 2020

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

**Comments in Support of SB 2709 Relating to Agriculture (Establishes a 5-year beginning farmer training program to be administered by the Department of Agriculture [DOA].)**

**Wednesday, February 5, 2020, at 1:15 p.m., in Conference Room 224**

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers and utility companies. LURF's mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express its **support of SB 2709** and of the various agricultural stakeholder groups who defend the goals of viable agricultural operations and the conservation and protection of agriculture, including important agricultural lands (IAL) in Hawaii. The bill exemplifies the need to support the efforts of beginning farmers and ranchers attempting to start operations in order to improve the economic viability of the State's agricultural industry.

**SB 2709.** The purpose of this bill is to establish the beginning farmer training program to be administered by the DOA to increase farming in the State; ensure the continued use of well-developed farming methods; and provide for the cultivation of new farming methods.

**LURF's Position.** LURF believes that the proposed training program is consistent with the underlying intent and objectives of the IAL laws (Hawaii Revised Statutes [HRS], Sections 205-41 to 52), which were enacted to fulfill the mandate in Article XI, Section 3 of the Hawaii State Constitution, "to conserve and protect agricultural lands, promote diversified agriculture, increase agricultural self-sufficiency and assure the availability of agriculturally suitable lands." As noted in HRS Section 205-41, the intent of Act 183 (2005) was to develop agricultural incentive programs to promote agricultural viability, sustained growth of the agricultural industry, and the long-term use and protection of important agricultural lands for agricultural use.

Passage of the long-awaited IAL legislation would be pointless without implementation of these programs, incentives and inducements which require the cooperation and support of agricultural, business, and educational organizations, as well as government agencies, which this bill is intended to cultivate and promote.

LURF members include property owners, farmers and ranchers who own, maintain, and engage in agricultural enterprises, and who consider programs such as the subject training program significant to the establishment and continued conduct of their operations and to help sustain and preserve their businesses into the future. Regrettably, interest in agriculture continues to decline due to misguided assumptions of the trade as entailing hard work for low pay, and requiring little, if any appreciable skills.

LURF believes efforts like this training program and the appropriation of funds therefor would greatly assist in the perpetuation of the State's agricultural industry by assisting with efforts to help farmers and ranchers start businesses and comply with onerous regulatory requirements, as well as by providing knowledge and inspiring interest in agriculture, which will promote agricultural viability and improve Hawaii's long-term resilience and sustainability.

As the establishment of the proposed training program significantly helps to promote economically viable agriculture and food self-sufficiency in Hawaii, LURF is in **support of SB 2709**.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of this measure.

Vincent Mina  
President  
HFUU-HFUF



Anny Bruch  
VP HFUU-HFUF  
&  
Kaua'i Chapter  
Pres.

P.O. Box 99, Wailuku, HI 96793-0099, (808) 800-3974  
January 30, 2020

David Case  
Secretary

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2709 BEFORE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND  
ENVIRONMENT, WEDNESDAY 1.15PM IN CONFERENCE ROOM 224

Annie Alvarado  
Treasurer

Aloha Chairman Gabbard and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment.

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Christian  
Zuckerman  
Wai'anae,  
O'ahu

HFUU is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy, nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters organized as 13 Chapters in the four Hawai'i Counties. HFUU's Haleakala Chapter originated the very successful Farmer Apprentice Mentoring (FAM) program in 2015-2016 serving Maui County. Now funded with grants through our affiliated 501(c)(3), Hawaii Farmers Union Foundation, the FAM program has mentored and graduated 38 apprentice farmers on Maui. The FAM program has been a success on Maui and SB2709, modelled in part by the FAM program, provides support for beginning farmers training to all of Hawaii's counties through hands-on training on-farms by farmers. As explained in SB2709 legislation, the Beginning Farmer Training program immerses beginning farmers in a "whole farm system" approach to agriculture under the guidance of experienced farmer mentors.

Vincent Kimura  
Waimanalo,  
O'ahu

Brynn Foster  
North Shore,  
O'ahu

As a division of the National Farmers Union (NFU), HFUU supported, at a national level in 2019, a more focused approach to educating interns and apprentices on locally-oriented farms as these educational opportunities results in improved farm viability, a larger pool of skilled agricultural labor, and more beginning farmers. In 2019, NFU established an on-farm labor priority urging Congress to take action to attract U.S. citizens to jobs as agricultural workers and acknowledge the importance of educating interns and apprentices on farms as a pathway to increased availability of skilled agricultural labor.

Kaipo Kekona  
Lahaina, Maui

Bobby Pahia  
Kahalawai,  
Maui

SB2709 notes that the future of the State's farming industry, food supply, and agriculture is reliant upon increasing and diversifying the number of new farmers in the state and introducing regenerative farming methods, statewide. Increasing the number of farmers who grow food is a key component of the long-term solution to the Hawai'i local food production deficit. Growing new farmers is also a key facet of the HFUU statewide strategic plan. Our planning goals are simultaneously aligned with the shared vision of increased food security and agricultural self-sufficiency for all counties and the State of Hawai'i. SB2709 responds to three major priorities for the State's food security needs including growing more farmers, increasing the supply of Hawai'i's skilled agricultural workforce and contributing to increased local food production on small family farms through a hands-on farm immersion component.

John Dobovan  
Haleakala, Maui

Matthew  
Van Paepeghem  
Hana, Maui

Dash Kuhr  
Kohala, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta  
Kona, Hawai'i

HAWAII FARMERS UNION UNITED

Steve Lund  
Puna, Hawai'i

Drake Weinert  
East Hawai'i

Vincent Mina, President

Matt Drayer  
Ka'u, Hawai'i

*The Hawai'i Farmers Union United and its Chapters are a nonprofit corporation formed under Hawai'i law and Section 501(c)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code. HFUU advocates for the sovereign right of farmers to create and sustain vibrant and prosperous agricultural communities for the benefit of all Hawai'i through cooperation, education and legislation. Because HFUU is an agricultural advocacy organization, donations to it are not tax deductible*



**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/1/2020 7:30:28 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By  | Organization                        | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Karen Winslow | Testifying for Hawaii Farmers Union | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/1/2020 9:57:18 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization                                                   | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Harriet Witt | Testifying for Hawaii Farmers Union United - Haleakala Chapter | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

We can move beyond our dangerous dependence on the mainland for food only by training local farmers. This is why this bill is important.

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/2/2020 8:23:44 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By   | Organization                                             | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Sylvia Cenzano | Testifying for<br>Malamalama Farm and<br>Center, 501(c)3 | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

This program is critical to the food stability on the islands...the production of our food being necessary for sustainable foundation of our very lives here.

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 1:29:45 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By             | Organization                                                                   | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Jennifer Azuma Chrupalyk | Testifying for Farmer in Training with FAM Farm, under HI Farmer Union at UHMC | Support            | No                 |

## Comments:

I strongly support this bill because I recognize that 90% of our food and supplies arrives on a barge and Hawai'i has the perfect conditions to represent the standard for ample food growth. I also recognize that most of our farmers are in the ages of 60 or older. I am far younger and I farm with my teenage children and many of their friends. I teach the next generation in my own backyard spaces [other people's farms that we volunteer at, for experience].

Previously unable to afford to start my own farm, as well as unfamiliar with how to go about making it official and operable as a business, I turned to the FAM Farm Program offered at UHMC. Through this program, I am learning how to make this dream a reality. I want to open my farm on Moloka'i to build jobs and productivity to boost the local economy, while offering my farm to extend FAM Farm training on Molokai, to interested individuals. I'd like to build a small education area in the front of my farm to facilitate workshops as well as serve the community as a resource. I've spoken to many local leaders about this and am thankful that there was a program to teach me how to do it.

Once upon a time, Hawai'i was an archipelago that fed well over a million people. The ahupua'a system model well presents the potential that we could build in sustainable productivity. I'd like to model that in the ways that I know how, by cultivating a native nursery, by growing crops that will create new local products while providing garden items to the food bank or community service programs. I'd also like to explore how to provide local organic choices to our daycares and schools.

These farmer training programs teach our young farmers how to achieve this level of sustainability and how to make a profitable business plan to become a part of a larger solution that combats climate change while producing food, lightening the costs or effects of dependency upon social welfare to survive, bring essential skills to our aspiring farmers and create a holistic and family friendly atmosphere that increases our local economy, thus helping our residents to remain residents in Hawai'i. We've got to stop sending our families away, due to lack of sustainability in a place called home. It is time we built our community together, not apart.



**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 7:51:51 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization                      | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Deidra Moore | Testifying for FAM program Hawaii | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Deidra Moore and I am of local Filipino descent. I was born and raised on the island of Maui and my family is from Lahaina and I am a FAM 2019 graduate. I am an archaeologist working in Makena, part of our work entails that we research the history, excavate pieces of ancient Hawaiian history of a time when words like sustainability and self reliance as community appears to be evident. My ancestry links back to the Sakadas during the plantation period. This era in over a hundred years implored deep dredging and vast infrastructure to the land, demolishing communing with the land the way Hawaiians had evolve into ecological efficiency for industrialized Westerned agriculture. My great grandmother and great grandfather possessed what many immigrants longed for, the American dream, an opportunity for a better life. As I see how far some people of my community has gone with this form of agriculture at it's base, I strongly believe that their labor was exploited and many immigrants from that generation returned to their mother countries. My grandfather merely returned to Hawaii by slight chance, he had a conversation with another dock worker on a pier in Phillipines who said, that by virtue of his birth near Kunia plantation he is an American citizen, so he told my grandmother what he learned and they moved back. The rest is history as they say. Three generations later, four since his parents were to step off the ships and work in the sugar cane fields, I am the first college graduate in my family. The privledge of education is why I believe my family slaved tirelessly in the fields during that time. Now over a hundred years later I am to live out their legacy. What I have found is that to become more sustainable and to revitalize ancient Hawaiian practices to be Pono with the land once more, I believe small scale farms are the future of Maui. With Mahi Pono another large agricultural entity repossessing Alex and Baldwin sugar Land. I can envision areas of Maui left undeveloped for conservation and small scale Farmers on Maui. I also think that for those that are up for commercial scale agriculture and wish to practice regenerative practices of land tenureship on previous plantation land that they are best fit to restore the life of the soil. I have seen this in practice after apprenticing with Ryan Eardhart from Oko'a Farms on Maui through the FAM program. He had taught me how to balance the ecology of the soil and farm health through always having diversity in his commercial scale organic farm. Not only did I witness his success

through this methodology but I also experienced it at his farmers markets with the variety and immense returned clientele. My business model is to reflect that of Oko'a farm. Since my family is from the Lahaina area, the FAM program has empowered me through their wealth of knowledge and community alliances with the farmers union on how to make this vision into a goal on the west side of Maui. I am aware of funding and mentorship resources to help start up my small business of aquaponics, tomatoes, peppers, and lei flowers. I know long term, I want to grow tea and spices influenced by the myriad of cultures during those plantations times. I plan on creating an education component to the farm. Where parts of it can practice Hawaiian cultural agriculture techniques through terracing and agroforestry. Overall the FAM program has allowed me to retrace my roots and at this turning point in history with the closing of the last sugar cane mill in Pu'unee, it is time to educate and empower the future generations that Maui can be an independent source of food for the state. FAM gave me the foundation to pursue work and classes in agriculture to build my knowledge. I strongly support SB2709. Mahalo for this opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely

Deidra Moore



2/3/2020

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2709 BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
AND ENVIRONMENT

Aloha Chairman Mike Gabbard and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

Alternative Structures International (dba Kahumana Organic Farms), a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization operating on 50 acres in Lualualei Valley in Waianae. Since its establishment in 1974, Kahumana has integrated social services with training venues and social ventures that work toward three goals: 1. Ending Local Family Homelessness, 2. Providing Services for People With Developmental Disabilities, and 3. Lowering Hawaii's Dependence on Imported Food.

Kahumana Organic Farms used to rely volunteers but in the last seven years has transitioned away from volunteer non-paid labor and has replaced the labor force with apprentices who often become paid staff members upon conclusion of one year period of training.

By focusing on building a more reliable workforce and paying livable wages, the **SB2709** would help to eliminate close to all volunteer positions at Kahumana and replace them with individuals seeking training who could transition over time to paid staff members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "C. Zuckerman", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Christian Zuckerman  
Farm Director  
Kahumana Organic Farms  
86-660 Lualualei Homestead Road  
96792, Waianae HI





Josh Frost - President • Patrick Shea - Treasurer • Kristin Hamada  
Nelson Ho • Summer Starr

Tuesday, February 4, 2020

Relating to Beginning Farmer Training  
Testifying in Support

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

The Pono Hawai'i Initiative (PHI) **supports SB2709 Relating to Beginning Farmer Training**, which establishes a 5-year beginning farmer training program to be administered by the Department of Agriculture. This program will help give new farmers skills regarding cultivation along with production and business knowledge to help them develop achievable farming and business plans.

By creating a training program the State can support future food sustainability goals and help bolster the local agriculture industry, creating jobs and diversifying Hawaii's economy.

For all these reasons, we urge you to move this bill forward.

Mahalo for the opportunity,  
Gary Hooser  
Executive Director  
Pono Hawai'i Initiative



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 5, 2020

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2709**  
RELATING TO BEGINNING FARMER TRAINING

Room 224  
1:15 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Ruderman, and Members of the Committee:

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

**The Hawaii Farm Bureau supports the intent of SB 2709**, which establishes a 5-year beginning farmer training program to be administered by the Department of Agriculture.

Hawaii's farmers and ranchers are aging. The average age exceeds 60 years old and if they were in other professions would be retired. Yet many of these farmers are those that provide to KTA, Safeway, Times, Costco, restaurants, and hotels and truly make a difference in reducing imports. Unfortunately for many, succession plans do not exist and as they retire, the lands go out of agricultural production. To maintain and expand production levels, it's clear that we need a new generation of farmers and ranchers equipped to assume the task of growing crops and livestock. There is an urgent need for interns or apprentices that are willing to not only work on these farms but take over their operations.

We suggest establishing the beginning farmer training within the University of Hawaii's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources instead of the Department of Agriculture or funding the GoFarm Program. GoFarm Hawaii's farmer-training program has been training new farmers since 2012. They have grown to become one of the largest and most successful beginning farmer development programs in the Nation. The GoFarm Hawaii program is helping to address Hawaii's agriculture labor shortage by recruiting and training new farmers

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important subject.



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

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
Wednesday, February 5, 2020 — 1:15 p.m. — Room 224

**Ulupono Initiative supports SB 2709, Relating to Beginning Farmer Training.**

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

My name is Amy Hennessey, and I am the Senior Vice President of Communications & External Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-based impact investment firm that strives to improve our community's quality of life by creating more locally produced food; increasing affordable clean renewable energy and transportation options; and better managing waste and fresh water resources.

**Ulupono supports SB 2709**, which establishes a 5-year beginning farmer training program to be administered by the Department of Agriculture.

Ulupono supports the training of the next generation of local producers in Hawai'i. With the proper tools and knowledge, a well-trained agriculturalist is best situated to succeed and provide a positive impact on the State's economy and local food production goals.

We would like to note that there are various organizations and groups that exist across the state, seeking to accomplish this very goal. Ulupono continues to support such programs like the GoFarm Hawai'i Program (GFH) at the University of Hawai'i. GFH offers the most comprehensive new farmer training program in Hawai'i, including classroom education, hands-on training, business planning, and incubation opportunities. Over the past 3 years, GFH touts a 58% success rate of graduates engaging in agricultural employment in the State. Supporting programs such as this will continue to move the needle toward food security and self-sufficiency.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Amy Hennessey, APR  
Senior Vice President, Communications & External Affairs

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/5/2020 5:49:44 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By  | Organization                 | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Simon Russell | Testifying for Farm Maui LLC | Support            | Yes                |

Comments:

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/5/2020 7:15:33 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization                         | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| NANCY JONES  | Testifying for The Jones Family Farm | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2709**

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Ruderman and Honorable Committee Members:

We submit this testimony in support of SB 2709 to establish a 5-year farmer training program through rural, non-profit food hubs like Kahumana Organic Farm and Ma`o Farms, growing produce out of Wai`anae. We especially support this idea that this program would appropriate funds to the Hawai`i State Department of Agriculture to administer such a program.

For Hawai`i to achieve its desired food security and drastically reduce dependence on imported produce, we desperately need experienced growers like those from Kahumana and Ma`o to lead the way in training new generations of farmers. While these growers/aggregators of produce operate out of O`ahu, there are others that could also assist in this task of implementing one-year farmer-training in neighboring counties. With the backing and support of the Hawai`i Department of Agriculture – when funded – this program has the potential for great success.

Accordingly, there is a definite need to support increased/expanded farmer training and for all of the above reasons, we respectfully urge your committee to pass this bill – with sufficient funding to train farmers on ALL islands. Thank you very much for this opportunity to present this testimony supporting SB 2709 and Hawai`i's small farmers.

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 11:25:37 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization                            | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Kyle Clarkin | Testifying for The Collective Cycle LLC | Support            | Yes                |

## Comments:

One of the most significant challenges facing our great State of Hawaii is food security. This issue is currently being addressed both by local people and by investment groups abroad. They see the impressive opportunities these islands present. Hawaii's GDP ranks as the 39th state economy in the nation. This results from our tourism and military industries with agriculture coming in as the third largest contributor. Back in the days agriculture was in the number one spot, and since that time many innovations have been made in farming and people are looking to traditional methods Hawaii has been utilizing for centuries. Currently the state produces roughly 15% of its own food. I believe that as this number continues to rise by utilizing brilliant and fun ideas and methods, we will provide our people with healthier and inevitably more affordable food options. Indeed, we would be boosting our top two economic branches by self sufficiently supplying the food needs of the military and increasing the already successful agritourism market. Food security, in order to sustain rising populations, is also a matter of our state's security. This is why it is absolutely critical to put bill SB2709 forward. Because the love, the passion, dedication, and craft skills that residents of Hawaii offer to the world is something that can not be achieved anywhere else. Having Mahi Pono, Costco and other large agricultural producers can help us to be where we need to be. However, It may not be special and it won't be even a miniscule amount of what you can insure by choosing to support our local farmers. I have personally gone through two Farming Trade Schools here. These are UH's Gofarm Hawaii and the Farming Apprenticeship mentorship Program. This crucial Bill would support these and other groups that are making effective impacts. The experiences I've gained have shaped and changed my life in astounding ways. I will spend the rest of my life in Hawaii and I will continue to support and engage in my community through farming. The confidence and skill sets that I gained in order to do so, have been catalyzed by programs this bill will support. I want to leave you with this understanding. My classmates and I have experienced life changing knowledge and motivations from these programs. I recently was accepted into the first round of farmers who will be leasing community farm lots from Mahi Pono. Large numbers of people have applied to these schools, yet lacking available funding and therefore space in this class, those seekers have not yet been fortunate enough to experience the same opportunity. The ripple effect that each responsible, well educated local farmer has improves countless lives . Bill SB2709 will increase this great momentum. Please Vote Yes! Thank you! Aloha!





## WAI'ANAE COMMUNITY RE-DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Mala 'Ai 'Opio (MA'O) Community Food Systems Initiative

P.O. Box 441, Wai'anae, Hawai'i 96792 ~ Office Tel/Fax. 808-696-5569

Email: [info@maoorganicfarms.org](mailto:info@maoorganicfarms.org), [www.maoorganicfarms.org](http://www.maoorganicfarms.org)

2/4/2020

### TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2709 BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Aloha Chairman Mike Gabbard and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

In 2001, the Wai'anae Community Re-Development Corporation (WCRC) established the social enterprise MA'O Organic Farms (MA'O), an experiential learning environment that uses real-world work to reconnect the primary assets of the Wai'anae community - youth, land, and rural heritage - and engage them in restoring abundance to the moku (region).

Over the past 19 years, MA'O has scaled and refined this culturally rooted organization to become a nationally and internationally recognized leader in youth leadership, entrepreneurial, and workforce training, and has grown into one of the state's largest diversified organic farm. MA'O currently produces over 80 tons of organic produce per year, and is has recently expanded from its 24 acre core campus, onto 257 newly purchased acres in Lualualei, Wai'anae.

We strongly support the proposed beginning farmer training bill. With the recent expansion on our farm and increase popularity of local and organic foods, we foresee a huge need for skilled employees in agriculture and food systems work. Farms like ours would be an experienced partner in farmer training by providing hands-on training in local agriculture and food systems to supplement the formal agricultural education that students receive at college.

*J. Kukui Maunakea-Forth*

J. Kukui Maunakea-Forth  
Executive & Programs Director  
WCRC-Kauhale & MA'O Organic Farms  
86-148 Puhawaii Road  
Wai'anae, Hawai'i 96792







**MAUI**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
VOICE OF BUSINESS

**LATE**

**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT  
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 224  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2020 AT 1:15 P.M.**

To The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair;  
The Honorable Russell E. Ruderman, Vice Chair; and  
Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Environment,

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2709 RELATING TO  
BEGINNING FARMER TRAINING**

Aloha, my name is Pamela Tumpap and I am the President of the Maui Chamber of Commerce, with approximately 650 members. I am writing share our support of SB2709.

The Maui Chamber of Commerce supports SB2709 to establish a 5-year beginning farmer training program. Being a farmer is one of the most difficult jobs and there is so much to learn from protecting crops from pests, the environment and consumers and meeting the ever increasing food safety regulations. However, we would like to see the bill include language that the Department of Agriculture should make every effort to fund training programs in each county.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this matter and ask that this bill be passed.

Sincerely,

*Pamela Tumpap*

Pamela Tumpap  
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 1/27/2020 8:35:06 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Derek        | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

## Comments:

Hello, I am Derek Barr, from the Ahu'pua'a of Hamakualoa in the Moku of Kuiaha. I grew up spending a majority of my childhood on Lana'i, where I helped my mother tend gardens in the high desert. Her artistry in her oasis was my introduction to the importance of growing and sharing food. I would spearfish and hunt with my dad and his friends to provide protein for our family. When I was little, this is just the way it was. We would share Lobster, Axis and Mahi with our neighbors. Trade for veggies and fruit from Aunties gardens. Everyone pitched in and helped out to stay fed. By living on Lana'i I was shown early on, how futile our food system is. As many ways there are to get and grow food, many people on that island rely on a monthly Maui trip to Costco to fulfil staple foods. They, along with the rest of the islands have become slaves to the barges. This is a problem. 85-90%, if not more of our food is shipped in from the mainland or other countries. A prosperous archipelago that once fed more than our population today, can no longer feed itself. The barge system is more delicate than we believe. It is not a given. It only takes a handful of natural disasters to upset boat travel or upheave the state of a port. And climate change is not in our favor for increased volatile weather. These are things we shy away from thinking about, it's scary. Four weeks. Four weeks of nutritionless, box store food is all we have, if that. These facts are what brought me back to the islands, back to my roots, back to Maui in particular. Food security is something the people of these islands deserve. We should all be able to know that we, as a collective will be safe and fed. But we cannot obtain that without reviving farmers. Without supporting those who might be able to make that security possible and conjure our food from the earth. I have had the pleasure to be accepted into the Farmers Apprentice Mentorship program on Maui. I have began to meet these farmers, my mentors who are working with sustainability in mind. They thrive off of community, support our government provides, off hard work knowing they make a difference in our food history. They are the ones bringing down the average age of farmers in the hawaiian islands, passing on their knowledge to their families and people even younger than them. They are pioneers of the agricultural renaissance we so desperately need to reach food security. Passing this bill means that their knowledge gets to reach a wider audience and, our farmers can be compensated for their time as mentors. It means that farms of all shapes and sizes can be born into our agricultural industries. It means that healthy food reaches our people faster. Passing this bill encourages those who never thought of farming, to have a framework to learn from. For those on Molokai and Lana'i to have the same learning opportunities as we do on Oahu and Maui. To be able to start from scratch and be supported, to have a chance to maneuver through an ever

changing market front and stand a chance. Perhaps even leading to a change in our import and export dynamics. Hawaii has the abundance to be a supplier to the rest of the world. We have top notch Coffee, Avocados and Bananas. By supporting more local regenerative farming we can switch the paradigm we have been trapped in for so long. We can move from scarcity to abundance. We will see our barge reliance fall and the health of the people and the Aina' increase. We simply need more support for these changes to happen. For the interest to fall onto the people rather than off shore economy. We can make it so there is no fear if the barges stop coming, or when mother nature does hit us hard. We will know that our backbone is strong because we supported and nurtured it. We will know our backbone is the farmer we grow and the knowledge we support.

Andre de Almeida  
86-660 Lualualei Homestead RD  
Waianae, HI 96792

Hawaii State Legislature  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania ST  
Honolulu, HI 96813

January 31, 2020

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2709 BEFORE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

As a student of Hawaii Pacific University, I am writing in support of bill SB2709, relating to beginning farmer training. During my academic studies I was drawn to the Waianae region for its agricultural resourcefulness. I was introduced to the Kahumana Organic Farms operation where I saw an opportunity to supplement my higher education degree with hands-on training on sustainable and regenerative agriculture as well as agroforestry. Kahumana's program gave me a chance to access not only land, but tools and expert advice from professionals already working there. The experience of learning about organic food production at Kahumana could not be gained in the classroom, only directly on a commercial farm. Therefore I commend this Bill because it will support programs such as Kahumana Organic Farm's apprenticeship program.

I grew up living a very urban lifestyle and discovered a passion for food in my early 20's. Having no knowledge of working with the land and running my own business I knew there was a big gap before I could start my own farm. After much research of all the possible organizations islandwide I decided it would be best to join Kahumana Organic Farms where a successful organic production operation was already in place and my values were aligned with their mission.

Working and living at Kahumana has allowed me to live the reality of the day to day of a farm. Preparing the land, using the equipment, exchanging with customers and co-workers has been a very valuable experience in my life. Without this opportunity I believe that not only myself but many others would feel lost and make many mistakes along the journey that can be avoided by having experiences such as the one provided by Kahumana Organic Farms.

Sincerely,

Andre de Almeida  
808-670-4804

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/1/2020 5:44:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier<br>Position | Present at<br>Hearing |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Thomas Craig | Individual   | Support               | No                    |

Comments:

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/1/2020 8:00:17 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier<br>Position | Present at<br>Hearing |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Dr. Jana Bogs | Individual   | Support               | No                    |

Comments:

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/1/2020 8:40:11 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier<br/>Position</b> | <b>Present at<br/>Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Raphiell Nolin      | Individual          | Support                       | No                            |

Comments:

I strongly support this bill which will help Hawaii become food secure in these uncertain climate change times.

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/2/2020 5:30:36 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier<br/>Position</b> | <b>Present at<br/>Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Barbara Best        | Individual          | Support                       | No                            |

Comments:



**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/2/2020 8:28:46 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By   | Organization | Testifier<br>Position | Present at<br>Hearing |
|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| C. Kauai Lucas | Individual   | Support               | No                    |

Comments:

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/2/2020 8:45:58 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier<br/>Position</b> | <b>Present at<br/>Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Dennis F Lokmer     | Individual          | Support                       | No                            |

Comments:

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/2/2020 1:45:49 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier<br/>Position</b> | <b>Present at<br/>Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Helmut Klauer       | Individual          | Support                       | No                            |

Comments:

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 6:22:13 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| David Gibbs  | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

## Comments:

Aloha, I and my wife attended the "beginner Farmer Rancher Program" run by the Kohala Center. We plan to become food producers for Hawaii state in order to help Hawaii become more independent and sustainable. This bill will fund a program for more people like us that will continue to put Hawaii on the path to sustainability and resilience. Please pass this bill.

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 7:11:45 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Rena Blumberg | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

## Comments:

I am Rena Blumberg. I live in Honuaula moku and Paeahu ahupua'a. I have lived on Maui 48 years, including Hana where I was a cub scout mother in the 70's. I am an elder who worked as a substitute teacher, grades 6-12.

The FAM program is so necessary in this day and age. Fortunes come and go. Clearly food in the ground is worth more than money in the bank. The FAM program teaches organic farming methods and provides many different kinds of organic mentors. All of a sudden the dream of a food forest on my half acre is becoming a reality.

I have many friends with children who are food insecure. My vision is to create abundance of organic produce both to sell and to give away. In addition, this vision includes community building and education as children and friends learn how to farm sustainably.

I am only an alternate in the FAM program, wishing I were in the full program. We desperately need more funding so all those who want this knowledge have access to it. Others didn't even get their foot in the door due to limited funding. Just like Hawaiian Immersion school programs which have only recently become available to every student who wants to participate, this sacred knowledge of growing our own food organically and sustainably should be available to all who seek it.

As an elder on a limited income, learning the skills to feed myself and my extended family offer me true security.

Thank you.

1/29/2020

Steven Sanborn

1114 Upper Kimo Dr

Kula, Hawaii, 96790

stevensanborn@gmail.com

Dear Honorable Elected Official,

I am writing to you today in support of SB 2702

As an ongoing student of the Farm Apprentice Mentoring (FAM) Program (cohort 5), I am extremely grateful for the education that has been made available to me. Currently I live on 2.5 acres in Kula, Maui, owned by my family. The land is a great responsibility and also holds much possibility. The FAM program is showing me how to unlock these possibilities by providing the knowledge and wisdom of mentors who are deeply experienced in their fields. I have a deep passion and vision to grow food for my family. I also have an interest in growing mushrooms using substrates obtained from invasives and other natural byproducts. Growing food and supporting farmers are important for many reasons. The food produced from farmers can help improve health by providing healthy and fresh produce. Locally grown food reduces imports and thus helps local economies thrive and benefits the environment. As an individual looking to embark on these missions, the challenges are vast: climate, erosion, invasives, pests, and financials are just some. To tackle all these on alone would not only require many years of study, but result in losses of time and money. By connecting with a passionate network in conjunction with knowledge gained from classes and mentors, I have redefined my vision of what is possible now and for the future.

Sincerely,

Steven Sanborn

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

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 9:22:10 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By     | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Melissa Reickert | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

February 2, 2020

Dear Members of the Senate,

My name is Melissa Reickert, I live on the island of Maui, and I am writing in support of SB 2709 to appropriate funds for beginning farmer training programs statewide. I am a current member of the Farm Apprentice Mentor Program Cohort 5. To begin, I must state that it is an incredible honor to participate in this course and I firmly believe that our islands will thrive if more residents have the opportunity to engage in similar programs. Considering our 365 day growing cycle, rich soil and available land, our islands are capable of sustaining us. We desperately need more knowledgeable and well-trained individuals — *farmers*—to do it. Training members of our communities to care for the land and grow food will shift our reliance from outside sources. Hawaii could become a model of sustainability for the world.

After saving for almost 20 years, my family recently purchased 2 acres of Ag designated land in Haiku, Maui. Once pineapple fields, it has been uncultivated for years. There is not a single tree on the land and the soil needs to be reconditioned. Through the FAM Program, I am learning regenerative methods to restore and care for the land. We are beginner farmers, no doubt, but are eager to learn. Our goal is to plant an orchard, grow vegetables, keep bees and to feed ourselves, friends, and the broader community. FAM is equipping me with the necessary skills to do this as I in turn share what I'm learning with my husband and teenagers. The ripple effect of this program is immense.

The FAM Program (and training programs that SB2709 will fund) build and strengthen our communities. They unite people who love the land, nutrient-rich healthy food, and have a vision of a food secure Hawaii. Aspiring farmers are mentored by experienced farmers who enthusiastically share their wisdom. This committed group of people have the potential to shape our islands for a promising future. As Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

I ask you to support SB2709. This budget allocation will enable and equip members of our communities to farm the land, grow food, and contribute to the food security of our islands. Thank you for your commitment to making Hawaii sustainable and self reliant.

Aloha,

Melissa Reickert



**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 9:35:00 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier<br/>Position</b> | <b>Present at<br/>Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Manon Pretre        | Individual          | Support                       | No                            |

Comments:

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 10:08:37 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By     | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Phyllis Robinson | Individual   | Support            | Yes                |

## Comments:

My name is Phyllis Robinson and I come here today from the island of Maui as the Program Director of the Hawaii Farmers Union United, Farm Apprentice Mentoring (FAM). I come in support of SB2709 the Beginning Farmer Training bill.

As of June of last year, our Maui based Beginning Farmer Program has graduated 62 farmer apprentices with Certificates of Professional Development from the University of Hawaii, Maui College, Office of Continuing Education and Training.

A recent survey of the 4 years of our FAM program indicate that 78% of our graduates are still farming – growing locally grown food for their families and their community. There is something about our program that is working. It could be that we operate as a cohort and apprentices feel the support not only of their fellow apprentices, but the support of a huge network including the Hawaii Farmers Union United that has 4 chapters on our island and is also responsible for the founding of FAM in 2015. In the last 2 years we expanded our program to Hana with the help of the HFUU chapter there. Hana former apprentices and the Hana Chapter are teaming together to launch their first farmers market with the support of Hana Ranch this coming Friday.

Our program motto is “It takes a village to grow a farmer”. Well our village consists of a huge network of support that includes not only the college, but also:

- GoFarm who provide our apprentices with farm marketing and business training including a 2 day intensive during our 9th module and one on one coaching as well
- the Maui Food Innovation Center at UH-MC who teach our apprentices about value added product development,
- the Kohala Center for Cooperative Business Development who teach our apprentices about how to participate in a Food Hub, building a successful farming cooperative, lowering operational costs.

Our FAM program consists of a UH-MC approved 10 module curriculum that takes place over 7 months, followed by an additional 5 months of learning the business and marketing side of farming. Part of my job is to teach our apprentices how to make use of this network of support. Now in our 5th cohort of 33 apprentices, we seek to widen our circle of support by duplicating FAM on Moloka'i and Lana'i and eventually statewide.

We would seek the support of the funding provided from this bill to the Hawaii Department of Agriculture for this expansion.

We love that our Governor has made food self-sufficiency an imperative for our islands. We need to grow a new generation of farmers and this committee's ongoing support in funding the Hawaii Department of Agriculture with the funds proposed in this bill will help not only our FAM program, but all the beginning farmer programs across our island chain. Mahalo for your consideration. It takes state support to grow a farmer and it also takes a farmer to feed the people of our state.

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 11:37:51 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Joseph Mella | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

**Aloha to those concerned,**

**My name is Joseph Mella and I am currently renting a home with land in Kula. I am currently enrolled as a student in Cohort 5 of the FAM program. We are starting to build our ideal farm vision. It is through Farm Education programs like the one I am in that foster creativity and learning on multiple levels. It is through knowledge and exposure to different farming styles that I personally find inspiration. The multitude of different ways of caring for the land is inspiring. At the moment my humble goal is to grow food for my family, friends, and neighbors. Through this action I wish to give love and support into the land, regenerating it as best I can. I wish to pay respect to the history held by the land and its peoples. I wish to honor our teachers by supporting an ever growing encouragement for farming literacy. We all need to do our part in however small a plot of land. We need to give back, especially in lands with a history of neglect. Again I have found great inspiration from the program I am attending and I want to make sure that programs like mine thrive throughout the Hawaiian islands.**

**In addition to the thoroughly thought provoking and inspiring aspects of agricultural education I am personally invested into helping to develop food security on our islands. I believe that if each family does it's part to grow food then we build resilience together. The knowledge opens the door for learning and its the collective action which strengthens our food safety. Also some training programs may inspire more people to perhaps build their farm visions into something that can even greater support both economic and food security needs. Although I have not fully realized my farming dream, I often think about what it would take to grow for example large scale acreage of sweet potatoes or rice here on Maui. It is visions like the one I have that I can see again as inspiring and worth supporting. Please support the allocation of funds to develop a host of farming training programs.**

**With love,****Joseph Mella**



Aloha, my name is Adrienne. I live on the island of Maui. Hamakualoa, Pauwela. I am a current FAM program applicant. Since I started this journey, I have already learned so incredibly much. I realize how lucky I, and my children are that I have the opportunity to malama the aina, to feed my ohana, and someday soon to feed my community. The knowledge that I need to sustainably grow food fortunate enough to be raised, would not be available to me if it weren't for the FAM program. Before now, I was not a member of the farming community on Maui. I'm a renting, backyard gardener with dreams of living off my own land. When the weather permitting, we had a garden.

Since moving to the islands almost a decade ago, I have started a family and gotten a sense of the importance of our impact on the land. I have watched so many people come and go. I have heard recounted time and time again that people leave to the mainland because living here is too expensive. In particular, groceries are too expensive. For average families to grow food year-round, our produce is largely brought from seemingly everywhere else in the world, instead of growing it locally. I disconnect there. I believe that the lack of sustainable farming on our islands is because of a lack of knowledge, not believe the lack of knowledge stems from a lack of interest in this instance. I believe that the individuals on our islands sustainably don't have the knowledge they need to feel confident in their abilities to farm sustainably in a financially sound way. I know that passing the Beginning Farmer Training Program Bill and its appropriate monies is a great investment in knowledge. Knowledge is power. Such a powerful thing; to grow your own food. I can go to the store and buy something shipped here from who knows where, or I can learn how to grow that pepper and provide it for a fraction of the cost. I can grow it and then we can all afford to live here, healthily. To keep families here in Hawaii we must educate ourselves. It would be nice if products that are currently being marketed as "Made on Maui" were actually made of things that are "made on Maui" and every ingredient in it was shipped to Costco from somewhere else and a lot of these missteps, we still have a great opportunity here in our islands to change this legacy and to show the rest of the world together to affect positive change for the health of our land, our people, and our visitors. By passing bills for farmland to allow our community to empower ourselves towards a greener, sustainable Hawaii.

We need to implement sustainable values and practices to enrich our community, and the only way to do that is by educating ourselves. I said that in traditional Hawaiian culture, 'the life of the community was predicated on the health of the land.' In our community how to make the land healthy again, so we can sustain ourselves and keep ourselves from crisis. We have a reasonable assessment that we will be able to sustain our families through farming. So we ask you now to pass the bill for proper stewardship of the land to make Hawaii as bountiful and healthy as it ever has been. Mahalo for your knowledge.

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 1:46:48 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier<br/>Position</b> | <b>Present at<br/>Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cindy Evans         | Individual          | Support                       | No                            |

Comments:

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 2:16:41 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| megan powers | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

Considering that we are the most remote land mass in the world, that we get 90% of our food from off-shore, and that we only have approximately a week's supply of food on the islands - the most important long-term solution we can offer to solve this life or death issue, is to fund the cultivation of more farmers. Please support this bill.

Thank you,

Megan Powers



**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 2:37:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By      | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Terry Kristiansen | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

We are Mentors in the FAM program using our farm in East Maui as a training ground for future farmers. My husband has taught in the UCLA horticulture programs for ten years and we are happy to be associated with the UH program that works to make future farmers in Hawaii.

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 3:29:34 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By    | Organization | Testifier<br>Position | Present at<br>Hearing |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| valerie Lasciak | Individual   | Support               | No                    |

Comments:

I support this bill

Katie Romanchuk  
1401 W Kuiaha Rd  
Haiku, HI 96708  
[ohialani@gmail.com](mailto:ohialani@gmail.com)  
Jan. 27, 2020

Testimony to Support SB2709, funding for Beginning Farmer Training state-wide

Dear Senators whom this concerns.

I am writing to you today to offer my SUPPORT for SB 2722, Beginning Farmer Training.

This is Katie Romanchuk from the moku of Hāmākualoa and ahupua'a of Kuiaha. Having worked on my 6 acres of land for almost 19 years in Haiku, Maui I have learned many things through trial and error with some outside help. However, there is nothing like the support and hands on experience that the Farm Apprentice Mentoring (FAM) program offers. I have been selling fruit on a small scale, and working on a native Hawaiian plant restoration/preservation project but mostly have been reclusive and not reaching out to share what I am doing.

The fifth cohort (FAM 2020) of the FAM program is well on its way and I am a grateful and happy participant. I am surprised and pleased way beyond my expectations of what this program would entail and offer, and the degree of depth and expanse of material we are covering. It is unlike any other schooling or education program I have had while obtaining a college degree or other work related trainings.

Phyllis Robinson and Georgia Pinsky have refined this program into something that works, and all of the fellow apprentices I have spoken to comment often on how lucky we are to be learning so much about what we want to do and how much we are all learning from each other and our FAM mentors. They have created the most supportive environment possible for learning how to be a Farmer – to grow and bloom, in a fun way.

In the last 7 weeks we have visited approximately 18 farms, and each one was professional, and informative with practical knowledge and many tips to make our lives as farmers easier. One of the best qualities about the program is that we get to meet the mentors, receive education from them and have ONGOING access to them for any questions we might have, for life; this is incredibly beneficial and I have already used this benefit several times. I can ask my many questions and get knowledgeable answers.

As a native plant conservationist, I was asked to lead a Farm Tour for FAM two days ago. I have had small groups here a few times many years ago, but nothing as formal, meaningful or large as this. I stepped out of my complacent and somewhat shy self and became a Mentor, and was able to share my dream of conservation as well as increasing my farming abilities to feed more people on our increasingly crowded islands.

This was just the push I needed, and feel I will be able to educate more people about Hawaii's flora, watershed and history and culture via native habitat as well as increase my food production significantly, thanks to the venue FAM program has provided. FAM, and other Beginning Farmer Trainings are extremely beneficial to Hawaii residents and the future of Hawaii's sustainability.

I am writing today to offer my SUPPORT SB 2722, and ask for your support as well. Please provide Hawaii's beginning farmers support in the form of Beginning Farmer Training.

I hope these programs can educate many more people like myself!  
Aloha, Katie Romanchuk

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 8:06:26 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Barbara Barry | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

Yes to SB 2709

I support Organic, Regenerative Agriculture.

Chemical Farming is bad for climate change, our environment, our pollinators and humans.

Mahalo,

Ms. Barbara Barry

Ha'ikÅ«

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/3/2020 10:35:52 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Jared Burkett | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

## Comments:

My name is Jared Burkett. I live in Wailuku, HI. I am a graduate of the second cohort of the Farmer Apprentice Mentoring (FAM) program, class of 2017, through the Hawaii Farmers Union United. I am in support of this Bill. As an apprentice in the program, I learned not just how to farm sustainably using natural practices but I also learned about programs I would never have known about that would set me on my future path of operating a sustainable agriculture operation. I am currently in escrow for a lot located in Kula where I will soon be constructing a home and operating a farm. The loan I am receiving is a direct ownership loan through the USDA Farm Service Agency. The loan manager instructed classes, just like many of the FAM instructors have, introducing the students to programs and connections that would set us on a successful path to operating a farming establishment. These classes taught me values that are now guiding principles in my life, such as living and farming using natural methods and in a manner that can be sustainable. I learned natural farming methods, originating from a number of cultures, and bestowed to me ancestral methods as my inheritance to perpetuate and give back to others in a healthy environment and a continued legacy. The farmer apprentice mentoring program is a ray of light highlighting a better path for our future. Please support this Bill and support new generations of farmers that return to traditions, that innovate, and that cultivate our agricultural heritage and sustenance that we all desire to be pure, healthy, and nutritious. Mahalo.

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 9:05:07 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier<br/>Position</b> | <b>Present at<br/>Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| John Douvris        | Individual          | Support                       | No                            |

Comments:

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 11:30:20 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier<br/>Position</b> | <b>Present at<br/>Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Paul Marshall       | Individual          | Support                       | No                            |

Comments:

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 12:18:20 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Ashley Clark | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Ashley Clark. I live on the fertile island of Maui, in the Ahupua'a of Hamakualoa and the Moku of Huelo. I am a current FAM (Farm Apprentice Mentorship) apprentice in cohort 5.

I relocated to Maui just over a year ago to immerse myself in small-scale regenerative agriculture. Nowhere else in the United States have I found such a rich community of land stewards and earth caretakers as here within the farming culture of the Hawaiian islands. This unique climate allows for the cultivation of a broad spectrum of tropical, cultural, and common western fruits and vegetables. As a result, the Hawaiian islands provide ideal growing conditions for the education of current and future farmers.

Throughout my years of education in the public school systems, it was never highlighted to me that agriculture could be a career choice. I grew up feeling very separate from the food systems that provided sustenance to me. As I became an adult and took up a love of gardening I began to see a growing community of small-scale farmers rising up around me. It was still unclear to me how I could earn a living doing what I loved: providing food for my family and my community. Since beginning my apprenticeship with the FAM program I have visited over 20 successful, small-scale family farms operating on Maui. I am amazed at the depth of knowledge my mentors have shared with me, and now more than ever before I can see my path in agriculture more clearly. This would not have been possible without the support and leadership of the FAM program facilitators and mentors.

I wonder how many others share my same story? With most of the federal budget for agriculture going towards the benefit of large industrial farming operations, it is no



wonder that it can sometimes seem impossible to create a thriving business, as a farmer. The national average age of farmers is around 60 years old. Who will grow the food for the next generation if we don't educate young farmers? If it weren't for the FAM program and other agricultural education opportunities, I would have never believed that I could have a successful career, doing what I love. I urge you to consider providing opportunities for young farmers through education and resources. It is we who will inherit this world and we who must feed it! As they say in the USDA, 'Hungry people revolt.

Mahalo nui loa,

Ashley Clark

FAM Cohort 5

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 1:07:00 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By  | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| David S. Case | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

I support SB2709 as a measured way to enable qualified, non-profit organizations to efficiently expand the number of Hawaii farmers through a program to be administered by the Department of Agriculture or any other appropriate state agency. Funding a five-year program to demonstrate the ability of qualified nonprofits to increase the number of Hawaii farmers is a cost-effective way to expand the State's outreach to effect this goal and to increase Hawaii's food supply and food security.

Mahalo,

David S. Case

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 1:12:58 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| Submitted By   | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Robert M Petty | Individual   | Support            | No                 |

## Comments:

Please support S.B # 2709 related to Beginner Farmer Training.

I live in the moku of Lahaina and the ahupuaa of Launiupoko. I have completed the Farm Apprentice Mentoring (FAM) Program through UH-MC and Hawai'i Farmers Union United. I strongly feel that programs like these give opportunities for new farmers to learn how to face the many challenges of farming, including sustainable land practices and business. When done well, new farmers are introduced to successful farmers and can visit existing production farms to learn methods and supply sources that work without the full difficulty of learning and making costly mistakes on one's own.

Please pass this legislation and funding to support future farmers in Hawai'i. Thank you.

**SB-2709**

Submitted on: 2/4/2020 10:13:08 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/5/2020 1:15:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier<br/>Position</b> | <b>Present at<br/>Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Alexandra Kahn      | Individual          | Support                       | No                            |

Comments: