



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/07/2022

Time: 03:20 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

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

Title of Bill: SB 2545 RELATING TO COMPOSTING GRANT PROGRAM.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes permanent school composting grant program within the Department of Education.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully provides comments on SB 2545, which establishes a permanent school composting grant program. The bill currently does not provide the necessary funding for the composting grant program.

To date, fifteen schools have expressed an interest in establishing composting programs. The approximate startup cost is \$25,000 with a \$1,000 recurring cost. A statewide grant program could amount to \$6,450,000 in startup costs and \$258,000 in recurring costs.

Pursuant to Act 207, Session Laws of Hawaii 2018, the Department established a basic framework for composting programs to comply with the Department of Health rules and regulations. School pilot programs are following appropriate guidelines for health and safety pursuant to Title 11, Chapter 58-1, Hawaii Administrative Rules, on Hazardous Solid Waste Management Control.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



Date: February 5, 2022

To: Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Education

From: Lydi Bernal, Hawai'i Farm to School Hui Coordinator

Re: SUPPORT for SB2545, Relating to Composting Grant Program

Hearing: February 7, 2022 at 3:20pm Via Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawai'i Farm to School Hui, thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of SB2545**, which establishes a permanent school composting grant program within the Department of Education (HIDOE).

School composting programs are an integral part of farm to school programming in that they address each of the three core elements of farm to school:

- **Education:** Providing hands-on experiential learning for students about the importance of waste reduction and nutrient cycling as a component of sustainable food production and food systems.
- **School Food:** Recycling of pre and post consumer food wastes and other organic materials on school campuses for waste reduction and nutrient cycling.
- **School Gardens & Farms:** Turning waste into a resource by generating important soil amendments for school garden and farm programs.

This bill directs HIDOE's Hawai'i Farm to School Program to provide oversight of the Composting Grant Program, which is appropriate and may require additional staffing support. Sustained funding for the composting grants and additional program staffing could be generated by a sugar-sweetened beverage fee, which the legislature is also considering this session.

The **Hawai'i Farm to School Hui** is a statewide network comprising five Island Networks and over forty public-private entities with a collective mission to strengthen Hawaii's farm to school movement. The three pillars of successful farm to school programs are: 1) school gardens and on-campus farms, 2) food education, and 3) school food improvements through local procurement. The Hui formed in 2010 and is a program of Hawai'i Public Health Institute.

The Hawai'i Farm to School Hui appreciates this Committee's strong support of providing engaging and relevant learning opportunities for Hawaii's students through farm to school, and respectfully requests that the Committee continue this support by passing SB2545.

Me Ke Aloha,
Lydi Bernal
Hawai'i Farm to School Hui Coordinator



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FEBRUARY 7, 2022

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

TESTIMONY ON SB 2545
RELATING TO COMPOSTING GRANT PROGRAM

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
3:00 PM

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice-Chair Kim, 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 SB 2545, which establishes a permanent school composting grant program within the Department of Education.

HFB recognizes and supports the diversion of discarded food and other useful wastes away from landfills. We support well-managed composting efforts at on-site school campuses. The benefits of compost are well-known; among other things, it can improve soil health, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, recycle nutrients, and mitigate the impact of droughts.

While we support composting, we defer to the expertise of the Hawaii Department of Health and Department of Agriculture regarding the appropriate level of oversight necessary for composting in schools because of potential hazards and threats to public health, the environment, agriculture, and our rural communities from *unregulated* composting operations,

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

SB-2545

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 9:46:22 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/7/2022 3:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Sam Kakazu	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha

I support this critical piece of legislation for the following reasons:

1. The City & County of Honolulu Environmental Services leadership has expressed concern regarding how much school food waste ends up in their landfills. I am sure this is true for other counties.
2. It is part of the Hawaii Farm to School Hui conversations that continue to design initiatives that increase local fresh, tasty and nutritious meals and snacks in school menus and address student palates through school garden programs, which in turn decreases food waste.
3. Despite best efforts and strategies, there will be some food waste, which is already being composted by programs such as the Zero Waste Program in Kailua-Kalaheo complex schools. One intent of this bill could be to examine these local successful programs, incorporate indigenous practices and technology utilized in other states or countries. The goal would be to create a "closed" system that begins with food production and ends with integrating the food opala back into the aina.

Mahalo

SB-2545

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 1:11:08 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/7/2022 3:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jennifer Masutani	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB2545. Composting is not only a great way for schools to become more sustainable and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but it's also a great learning opportunity for students.

SB-2545

Submitted on: 2/5/2022 7:58:05 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/7/2022 3:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Dyson Chee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB2545.

SB-2545

Submitted on: 2/5/2022 7:17:10 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/7/2022 3:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Fiona Fong Weingartner	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in support of SB 2545. Please fund school composting. Especially for this reason: if you have been in a school cafeteria lately, you have seen that more fresh produce on keiki plates means more fresh produce in keiki bellies. However, it also means significant quantities of fruit and vegetable trash. In decades past, many schools had pigs or other animals that ate this food, forming more of a closed loop system. At this time very few schools have a way to divert their food waste, and do not have the capacity to set up composting on their own with existing resources. Let's keep these nutrients in our local environments, and hopefully into school gardens! - Fiona (garden staff aiming to implement safe effective composting at Honoka'a Elementary)

SB-2545

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 12:38:32 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/7/2022 3:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Ming Wei Koh	Testifying for Center for Getting Things Started	Support	No

Comments:

Center for Getting Things Started supports SB2545 as a way to #fixourfoodsystem.

We have been conducting composting workshops at schools for over a decade and understand the value of this regenerative practice. More than just diverting waste, we can also teach science using composting. As an example, refer to Lesson 3 found the FEAST (Food Experiences for Agricultural Science Training) Grades 3 - 5 book. <https://crdg.hawaii.edu/products/feast-food-and-our-island-gr-3-5-workbook/> This curriculum was funded by the USDA and has been shared to more than 16,000 students in Hawai'i and Guam. Students can learn so many skills and content through composting.

Mahalo nui loa.

Koh Ming Wei, PhD

Executive Director/Ecoliteracy Educator

SB-2545

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 1:24:03 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/7/2022 3:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Marian Huff	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB2545 School Composting Grant Program

I have worked with the State Farm to School Program on Maui for the past 12 years. I strongly support funding for the SB2545 HDOE School Composting Grant Program. This is an essential part of teaching sustainability in our school gardens, will reduce waste, and will contribute to the production of organic soil amendments for the future of our garden work which will also result in being able to proceed with our Garden to Cafeteria Program statewide.

Mahalo Nui,

Marian Huff

Member Emeritus- Hawaii Farm to School Hui

LATE

SB-2545

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 10:05:23 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/7/2022 3:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Debbie Millikan	Testifying for Oahu Farm to School Network	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in SUPPORT of SB2545 which establishes a permanent school composting grant program within the Department of Education. These grants will allow schools to purchase needed supplies to build their on campus composting program. School composting is not only an appropriate and integral method of recycling nutrients for soil fertility and healthy plant growth, but an excellent way teachers can integrate important scientific concepts and scientific inquiry. Thank you for allowing testimony from the O‘ahu Farm to School Network serving schools and school garden support organizations on O‘ahu.