

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



JAMES J. NAKATANI
Executive Director

STATE OF HAWAII
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

235 S. Beretania Street, Room 205
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 586-0186 Fax: (808) 586-0189

TESTIMONY OF JAMES J. NAKATANI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND
ENVIRONMENT

Wednesday, April 5, 2023
1:00 PM

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

GM 584 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of
Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial
Nominee, JASON OKUHAMA, for a term to expire 06-30-2027

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee:

The Agribusiness Development Corporation (“ADC”) **supports** GM 584, relating to the consideration and confirmation of Mr. Jason Okuhama’s appointment to the ADC Board of Directors.

Mr. Okuhama has a background in finance specializing in the USDA Rural Development, U.S. Small Business Administration, and USDA Farm Service Agency loan programs, as well as commercial real estate and residential financing.

ADC believes Mr. Okuhama’s finance experience will be instrumental in helping keep Hawaii’s agriculture industry moving forward. Furthermore, ADC is

confident he has the experience and skills required to serve on the Board and respectfully ask for your consideration and support of his nomination

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



April 3, 2023

SENATE COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

THE HONORABLE MIKE GABBARD, CHAIR

THE HONORABLE HERBERT M. "TIM" RICHARDS III, VICE CHAIR

GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE JASON T. OKUHAMA
SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Testimony of the Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development

Aloha e Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of GM 584 for the confirmation of Jason T. Okuhama to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

Mr. Okuhama is highly qualified to served on the ADC Board based on his agricultural and rural business and lending expertise. Mr. Okuhama also served on the Aloha Tower Development Corporation Board and his vast knowledge and expertise in business development, financing, and community revitalization efforts will again be helpful to guide ADC's efforts protect the future of agriculture in Hawai'i by facilitation its transformation to a multi-crop industry. Mr. Okuhama's work demonstrates history of community involvement and mindful economic development that has aimed to lift the genuine wealth of families across the islands.

I have had the opportunity to work with Mr. Okuhama over the past ten years in his role as HACBED's Board President. HACBED is a statewide, intermediary, and federally tax-exempt nonprofit organization that was established in 1992 to "*achieve economic, social, and environmental justice in Hawai'i through community-based economic development,*" and Mr. Okuhama acts both professionally and personally to effectuate our mission. Over the 20+ years of service to HACBED, Mr. Okuhama has been extremely generous volunteering his expertise and experience and experience to assist many community-based organizations and small businesses to establish viable ventures that have generated meaningful economic opportunities for residents in low- and moderate-income communities in Hawai'i.

As a new Executive Director in 2013, Mr. Okuhama was integral in supporting my transition by providing compassionate leadership, an open-minded and collaborative approach, and a willingness to help me effectuate my vision for HACBED. Such mindfulness and commitment to supporting someone with limited professional experience is a testament to Mr. Okuhama's understanding of mindful development and true community involvement. I believe Mr. Okuhama's extensive experience and knowledge, and more importantly, his ability to lead compassionately in an open-

minded and collaborative way that lifts up the values of the community are critical assets for a Board of Director of the ADC.

Mahalo,

Brent N. Kakesako
Executive Director



Oahu Agriculture and Conservation Association

16 March 2023

Senate Committee on
Agriculture And Environment
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Herbert M. “Tim” Richards III, Vice Chair

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

*RE: GM583, Gubernatorial Nominee Jason T. Okuhama, Board Of Directors, Agribusiness
Development Corporation*

I am pleased to extend **the Ag Finance Hui’s strong support** of GM583, the confirmation of Jason T. Okuhama to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

The **Hawai‘i Ag Finance Hui** (also known as Ag Microfinance Hui) was founded in 2018 by Ulupono Initiative, a Hawai‘i-based impact investment firm, in partnership with agricultural community lenders Feed the Hunger Fund, Slow Money Hawai‘i, and The Kohala Center. The intent in bringing Hawai‘i’s agricultural funders together was to identify collective ways to address the financial needs of businesses in operating across Hawai‘i’s food and agricultural sector. To date, more than 18 organizations have consistently participated in our Hui including:

- the Hawaii Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Loan Division
- Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism’s (DBEDT), Business Development and Support Division, Community-based Economic Development (CBED)
- USDA Farm Service Agency (USDA FSA)
- Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA)
- USDA Rural Development (USDA RD)
- Hawai‘i Central Federal Credit Union (HCFCU)
- American AgCredit (AAC)
- Whole Foods Market (WFM), Loan Producer Loan Program (LPLP)
- RSF Social Finance,
- Commercial and Business Lending (CBL) represents First Financial Bank in Hawai‘i
- Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA)
- Hawai‘i Investment Ready (HIR)
- Pacific Gateway Center (PGC)

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Oahu Agriculture and Conservation Association

- Kamehameha Schools (KS)
- Slow Money Hawai'i (SMH)
- Feed the Hunger Fund
- The Kohala Center (TKC) and;
- Ulupono Initiative.

Mr. Okuhama has been an integral part of the Hui, where he has worked tirelessly to bring financing options to the agricultural producers of Hawai'i. He has led the development of a number of significant inter-agency lending projects, at times combining multiple sources of federal government and commercial capital, that have supported major players in Hawai'i agriculture. He has secured tens of millions of dollars in federal and commercial financing for large-scale macadamia nut, food processing, nursery, and orchard clients as well as support for individual smaller farms such as Ho Farms, Oko'a Farms, Zhao's Produce, Pauwela Produce, Kona Star Farms, Maui Dragon Fruit Farm, and many more.

Jason also takes an active role in sharing about projects and lessons learned with the broader funding community, thereby enhancing strategy and coordination amongst the community of Hawai'i lenders and technical assistance providers. He is a highly knowledgeable and generous colleague whose in-depth knowledge of Hawai'i farmers' realities consistently shapes our Hui discussions. Jason operates with warmth and integrity, and is always willing to volunteer his time to support farmers.

The Hui offers our highest recommendation of Mr. Okuhama for the role of Board Member; we are confident he will make an outstanding contribution to the work of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Warm regards,



Amanda Shaw, Ph.D.

Executive Director, OACA/Administrator, Ag Finance Hui

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Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT
Wednesday, April 5, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative strongly supports GM 583-GM 584, Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, Jason Okuhama, for a Term to Expire 6-30-2027.

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono strongly supports GM 583-GM 584, which submits for consideration and confirmation Jason Okuhama to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

Jason Okuhama has the experience and expertise needed by the ADC to seek out commercial, federal, and state funding for projects that are important to Hawai'i's agricultural industry. Ulupono considers Mr. Okuhama as one of the most knowledgeable people in Hawai'i when it comes to creative financing that combines capital from both traditional banks and government programs. Over his career, he has secured tens of millions of dollars in federal and commercial financing for small Hawai'i food producers including Ho Farms, Oko'a Farms, Ho'omau Ranch, Zhao's Produce, and Bibo Farm, as well as larger clients in the macadamia nut, food processing, nursery, and orchard sectors. These financing transactions often include funding from multiple federal government programs and multiple commercial lenders. As Hawai'i seeks to increase local food production, we need capable and experienced professionals who have real-world experience in financing and seeing projects through to completion.

Ulupono humbly asks this committee and the Legislature for their support of the nomination of Jason Okuhama to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



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April 5, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON GM 584

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, JASON OKUHAMA, for a term to expire 06-30-2027

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:00 PM

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

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau strongly supports the confirmation of Jason Okuhama to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Mr. Okuhama's diverse background and experience in finance and agriculture lending would be invaluable to ADC as they continue to partner with farmers, ranchers, and aquaculture groups to optimize the use of selected high-value lands, water systems, and infrastructure for commercial agricultural use for the economic, environmental, and social benefit of the people of Hawaii.

Mr. Okuhama's experience will undoubtedly provide positive leadership for the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

HFB respectfully requests your strong support of Mr. Okuhama's confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

LARRY JEFTS FARMS, LLC
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GM583 and GM584, Jason Okuhama
Gubernatorial Nominee to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC)

Senate AEN Hearing – 1:00 pm
Room 224
Wednesday, April 5, 2023

Testimony By: Larry Jeffs
Position: Support

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate AEN Committee:

I am Larry Jeffs, owner and operator of Larry Jeffs Farms, LLC. We have more than 42 years of Hawaii farm experience on Molokai and Oahu. Our family farms grow about 1 million pounds weekly of import replacement produce. I am a volunteer director and chair of the West Oahu Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). I have been an officer of the Hawaii Farm Bureau for many years.

ADC's purpose, established by HRS163-D, is to provide leadership for developing, financing, improving, or enhancing agribusiness enterprises to increase local production for local consumption and reduce reliance on imported agricultural products. One of ADC's challenges is conserving and converting arable lands and their associated infrastructure to new production uses.

Jason Okuhama's professional experience with financial management loan programs, particularly agricultural financing programs like the USDA Farm Service Agency, Farm Mac agricultural loan programs, and the USDA Rural Development, are an asset to ADC. In various business loan officer positions, he has worked with communities in Hawaii/Guam/American Samoa/CNMI, including Molokai. These experiences enhance ADC's capacity to meet its objectives.

Your favorable consideration of Mr. Okuhama's nomination to the ADC Board of Directors is appreciated. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



April 3rd, 2023

Senate Committee on Agriculture And Environment
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Herbert M. "Tim" Richards III, Vice Chair

RE: GM583, Gubernatorial Nominee Jason T. Okuhama, Board Of Directors, Agribusiness Development Corporation

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to extend my strong support of GM583, the confirmation of Jason T. Okuhama to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

Feed the Hunger Fund is a community development financial institution providing nearly \$10 Million in loans, business development services and networking to farmers, ranchers, and owner operators in the food and agricultural sectors in Hawai'i and California. In this capacity, we have worked closely with Mr. Okuhama.

He has been an integral part of our work as a lender, where he has worked tirelessly to bring financing options to the agricultural producers of Hawai'i. He is uniquely skilled at complex lending projects, at times combining multiple sources of federal government and commercial capital, that have supported major players in Hawai'i agriculture. He has secured tens of millions of dollars in federal and commercial financing for large-scale food processing, nursery, and orchard clients as well as support for individual smaller farms.


Jason takes an active role in supporting projects, both small and large, with the broader funding community. He is a highly knowledgeable and generous colleague and a go-to resource for Feed The Hunger Fund. He operates with warmth and integrity, and is always willing to contribute his time to support farmers.

We offer our highest recommendation of Mr. Okuhama for the role of Board Member. We are confident he will make an outstanding contribution to the work of the Agribusiness Development Corporation. Thank you for your consideration.

Warm regards,

DocuSigned by:

0F00BEE7092A471...
Patti Chang, CEO

DocuSigned by:

48C8A94CF659494...
Eric Bowman, Loan Officer



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Testimony in Support of [GM584](#)// Gubernatorial Nominee Jason T. Okuhama, Board Of Directors, Agribusiness Development Corporation

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Wednesday 4/05/23 @ 1:00 pm | Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide robust support for GM584 to confirm Jason T. Okuhama to the Board Of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC). Please accept this letter on behalf of myself, Keoni Lee, CEO of Hawai'i Investment Ready (HIR), along with select members of HIR's [Food Systems](#) Funder Cohort comprised of 24 Hawai'i investors across philanthropy, government, and private sector committed to investing strategically in food systems change. Collectively, we represent tens of millions of dollars in annual investments in agriculture in Hawai'i.

The Funder Cohort represents high-potential innovators across the food system value chain and funders from government, philanthropic, and private sectors who share a common objective of a viable and resilient local food system. The urgent problems we face, and solutions we hold in Hawai'i require more resources than the current system of funding can or will provide. Our funder cohort is committed to leveraging our resources to seed possibilities for deeper systems-level collaboration and problem-solving.

As a part of our economy making significant investments in a local and regenerative food system, we offer our highest support of Jason T. Okuhama's nomination and uplift his years of lending, real estate, business, and banking experience and commitment to move tens of millions of dollars to Hawai'i's agricultural producers. It is critical to have experienced leaders in finance and lending to meet the state's goal of doubling local production as a key element of economic self-sufficiency and sustainability for Hawaii.



Mr. Okuhama brings a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities in moving complex private, federal, and state funding into food & agriculture and has built a trusted and respected brand of leadership within the sector and our communities. He has local and national connections to conventional and alternative lending institutions, state agencies, the USDA, SBA, FSA, and more. He understands small farmers' difficulties and knows how to support their critical contributions toward scaling production. His confirmation would bring invaluable perspective and more and stronger partnerships to the table for the ADC board's work in the food system.

HIR and our Food Systems Funder Cohort are tremendously grateful for Mr. Okuhama's contributions to our work and Hawaii's Food Systems. We value his knowledge, diligence, thoughtfulness, creativity, and tireless advocacy for local farmers and ranchers.

We respectfully request your support of GM583 & GM584. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keoni Lee".

Keoni Lee, Hawai'i Investment Ready
Aaron Ellis, Feed the Hunger Fund
Marisa Hayase, Harry, and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation
Usha Kilpatrick, The Healy Foundation
Abigail Perrin, Nuestro Futuro Foundation
Sarah Freeman, County of Hawai'i
Nicole Milne, The Kohala Center
Lisa Kleissner, KL Felicitas Foundation
Lia Sheehan
Janel Yamamoto



April 3, 2023

To: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Tim Richards, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Regarding: Gubernatorial Nominee Jason T. Okuhama, submitted for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors, Agribusiness Development Corporation

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to provide this testimony in support of GM583 and GM584, the confirmation of Jason T. Okuhama to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

I serve as CEO of Farm Link Hawai'i, where we work with over 170 Hawai'i farmers, ranchers, and food makers, to serve more than 1,000 O'ahu customers with over 500 local products. In this role I recently had the opportunity to interact directly with Mr. Okuhama when exploring the possibility for securing a USDA Rural Development loan guarantee. Throughout the process I found him to be knowledgeable, thorough, and thoughtful. I have also observed Mr. Okuhama at work with colleagues in Hawai'i's agricultural industry, and have heard their universal appreciation for his professionalism and partnership.

It is widely acknowledged that the Agribusiness Development Corporation has struggled to successfully execute its mandate to "facilitate the transition of agricultural infrastructure from plantation operations to other agricultural enterprises" (Act 264). As reference, see the separate [State Audit](#) and [UHERO](#) reports, dated January 2021. In light of these difficulties, and the resulting lack of public faith in the ADC, it is more critical than ever that the ADC Board be composed of highly qualified and respected individuals.

I highly recommend Jason Okuhama for this role and believe that he will be a tremendous asset to the Board and our agricultural community. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CS", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Claire Sullivan, CEO
Farm Link Hawai'i
Phone: (808) 218-0077
Email: claire@farmlinkhawaii.com