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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the consumption of  
2 fresh fruits and vegetables is an integral part of building a  
3 healthy and thriving local food system for Hawaii. The  
4 legislature further finds that between eighty-five and ninety-  
5 five per cent of the State's food supply is imported and  
6 Hawaii's farmers face significant barriers to growth in local  
7 food supply.

8           The legislature further finds that the State faces an  
9 estimated \$83,000,000 in annual costs related to food insecurity  
10 and hunger. Due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)  
11 pandemic and rising inflation, households are facing increasing  
12 food costs. Compared to the rest of the nation, households in  
13 the State spend the highest percentage of their annual budgets  
14 on food.

15           Additionally, the benefits added to the supplemental  
16 nutrition assistance program during the COVID-19 pandemic  
17 expired in March 2023. This resulted in a benefits decrease of



1 \$200 a month on average for more than eighty thousand  
2 supplemental nutrition assistance program households. This  
3 means that statewide, Hawaii will see a decrease in benefits of  
4 more than \$16,000,000 per month. With the loss in food money  
5 payments, supplemental nutrition assistance program participants  
6 need to rely on the State's other food assistance programs, such  
7 as Hawaii's DA BUX double up food bucks program.

8 The legislature further finds that, through the Gus  
9 Schumacher nutrition incentive program administered by the  
10 United States Department of Agriculture, Hawaii has the  
11 opportunity to accelerate the growth of local food production  
12 for the State while addressing food insecurity for low-income  
13 residents who are eligible for supplemental nutrition assistance  
14 program benefits. Currently implemented in more than thirty  
15 states, the Gus Schumacher nutrition incentive program provides  
16 matching federal grant moneys to state programs that incentivize  
17 the use of supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits  
18 for the purchase of fresh produce. These federal matching funds  
19 increase access to healthy dietary options while also  
20 invigorating local economies and addressing food insecurity.



1           The legislature additionally finds that the Hawaii's DA BUX  
2 double up food bucks program began with an initial pilot program  
3 in 2012 by Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services on  
4 the island of Oahu and The Kohala Center on the island of  
5 Hawaii. The enactment of Act 153, Session Laws of Hawaii 2019,  
6 created the Hawaii healthy food incentive program, and in tandem  
7 with a federal Gus Schumacher nutrition incentive program grant  
8 award, united the double up food bucks programs statewide under  
9 one name, DA BUX double up food bucks. This program provides a  
10 dollar-for-dollar match to supplemental nutrition assistance  
11 program beneficiaries who purchase Hawaii grown fruits and  
12 vegetables at participating supplemental nutrition assistance  
13 program food retailers. By the end of 2023, the pilot program  
14 was available at fifty-nine food retailers across one hundred  
15 market sites and pick-up locations, including grocery stores,  
16 farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture programs, and  
17 other farm direct food hubs. From 2020-2021, the DA BUX double  
18 up food bucks program supported four hundred seventy farm  
19 producers and eight distributors. Each dollar reimbursed to  
20 participating food retailers for their issued discounts on local  
21 produce has an economic multiplier of 2.1. This means that each



1 program dollar issued for local produce incentives contributes  
2 \$2.10 to Hawaii's economy. A \$2,000,000 investment by the State  
3 in this program would allow for a federal funding match that  
4 will contribute at least \$12,800,000 to the local economy  
5 annually. This result is a triple win for the State because it  
6 supports families, farmers, and the local economy. Additional  
7 funding will allow the statewide program administrator, led by  
8 The Food Basket Inc., Hawaii island's food bank in partnership  
9 with the Hawaii Good Food Alliance, to obtain matching federal  
10 funds for continued support of the program.

11 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate  
12 funds to the department of agriculture for the continued  
13 administration of the Hawaii healthy food incentive program and  
14 to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in  
15 the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

16 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
18 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for  
19 the continued administration of the Hawaii healthy food  
20 incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries



1 who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance  
2 program.

3 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
4 agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 3. In accordance with section 9 of article VII of  
6 the Hawaii State Constitution and sections 37-91 and 37-93,  
7 Hawaii Revised Statutes, the legislature has determined that the  
8 appropriations contained in H.B. No. , will cause the state  
9 general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be  
10 exceeded by \$ or per cent. In addition, the  
11 appropriation contained in this Act will cause the general fund  
12 expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be further  
13 exceeded by \$ or per cent. The combined total  
14 amount of general fund appropriations contained in only these  
15 two Acts will cause the state general fund expenditure ceiling  
16 for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be exceeded by  
17 \$ or per cent. The reasons for exceeding the  
18 general fund expenditure ceiling are that:

19 (1) The appropriation made in this Act is necessary to  
20 serve the public interest; and



1           (2) The appropriation made in this Act meets the needs  
2                   addressed by this Act.

3           SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



**Report Title:**

DOA; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program; Expenditure Ceiling; Appropriation

**Description:**

Appropriates funds for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded. (SD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

