

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 29, 2023

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: [HB 1248 HD1](#) – RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM INCENTIVES.

Hearing: Friday, March 31, 2023, Time 9:45 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this bill, and defers to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) as to administrative and budget needs. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget bill HB 300, GM1, and GM2.

PURPOSE: The bill's purpose is to appropriate funds to DOA 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 (SNAP). Effective 6/30/3000. (HD1). The HD1 amended this measure by:

- (1) Changing the effective date to June 30, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The Hawaii healthy food incentive dollar-for-dollar matching program helps SNAP participants double their purchasing power. Especially during this time of elevated food costs,

continuing the program doubles the value of SNAP participants' benefits spent on Hawaii-grown fresh fruits and vegetables. This supports local farmers and keeps food dollars in the local economy.

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**MARCH 31, 2023
9:45 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 211 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1248, HD1
RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
INCENTIVES**

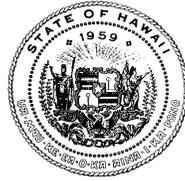
Chairperson Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1248, HD1. This measure appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program (HHFIP) and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program. The Department is in strong support of this bill and offers comments.

The Department is in strong support of this measure commenting that the DOA served as the administrator of the HHFIP, partnering with The Food Basket in Hilo, Hawaii, Ulupono, The Hawaii Good Food Alliance, and other food system groups addressing food insecurity in Hawaii. The Department looks forward to continuing the effort to provide nutrition to the food insecure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P.O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 1248, H.D. 1
RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
INCENTIVES**

SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hearing Date: March 31, 2023

Room Number: Conference Room 211

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the Department of Agriculture
2 (DOA) for fiscal implications of implementation.

3 **Department Testimony:** The DOH supports House Bill 1248, House Draft 1 (H.B. 1248, H.D. 1)
4 that appropriates funds to DOA for the continued administration of the Hawaii healthy food
5 incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the
6 supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

7 The DOH strongly supports Hawaii's DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks Program (DA
8 BUX) as one component of a comprehensive approach to improve the availability and
9 accessibility of healthy foods to improve health outcomes for people in Hawaii, especially for
10 people who face greater health disparities. The DA BUX, allows a dollar-for-dollar match on
11 locally produced fresh fruits and vegetables for SNAP recipients.

12 Major health authorities including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Centers for
13 Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization recommend increasing fruit

1 and vegetable intake as a means to prevent chronic disease and improve overall health.^{1,2,3}
2 However, access to fresh produce for income-limited individuals can be difficult and is one of
3 the reasons why they often have poorer diets and higher rates of chronic disease than middle
4 class and wealthy individuals.^{4,5} Hawaii has the highest cost of living in the nation with food
5 costs that are 82% higher than the national average.⁶ In Hawaii, less than one in five adults
6 reported eating five or more fruits and vegetable a day (2019 Behavioral Risk Factors
7 Surveillance System).⁷

8 Nutrition incentive programs similar to the DA BUX are prevalent around the United
9 States and are often touted as a “win-win-win” for farmers, families, and local businesses. Data
10 from these interventions have shown improvements in dietary behaviors, reduction in household
11 hunger and food insecurity, and increased sales of local produce by more than their dollar value
12 alone.^{8,9,10}

13 The DOH urges the passage of H.B. 1248, H.D. 1 which will allow for continued
14 funding and the possible expansion of this extremely important program that provides much
15 needed support to Hawaii’s families, local farmers, and the economy.

16 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *2015 – 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 8th Edition. December 2015.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Strategies to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases: The CDC Guide to Strategies to Increase the Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2011.

³ World Health Organization. *Healthy Diet Fact Sheet N°394*. Web. Updated September 2015.

⁴ Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2016.

⁵ Simmet, Anja et al. *The Dietary Quality of Food Pantry Users: A Systematic Review of Existing Literature*. Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Volume 117, Issue 4, 563 – 576.

⁶ United States Department of Agriculture: Official USDA Food Thrifty Plans

⁷ Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2019.

⁸ Fitzgerald, Katherine. *Double Up in Farmers’ Markets: The Consumer Experience*. Fair Food Network, 2015.

⁹ Mann, J., et al. *Economics of healthy food incentives at Michigan farmers markets: Study highlights*. Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems, 2017.

¹⁰ Fitzgerald, Katherine. *Double Up Food Bucks and Hunger*. Fair Food Network, 2015.

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COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
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March 30, 2023

TO: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Alice L. Lee
Council Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alice L. Lee".

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF MARCH 31, 2023; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1248, HD1, RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this important measure. The measure's purpose is to appropriate funds for the Hawai'i Food Incentive Program and provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

The Maui County Council adopted Resolution 23-43, "URGING THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO SUPPORT AND ADOPT THE PRIORITY FOOD POLICIES RECOMMENDED BY THE TRANSFORMING HAWAII'S FOOD SYSTEMS TOGETHER INITIATIVE," in support of this measure. Therefore, I offer this testimony on the Council's behalf.

The Maui County Council **supports** this measure for the following reasons:

1. This measure facilitates the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, which is an integral part of a healthy diet and central to the prevention of obesity and chronic disease.
2. The Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program, also known as DA BUX, incentivizes beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program with a dollar-for-dollar match on locally produced fresh fruits and vegetables. This measure provides the essential funding to continue this valuable program.
3. This measure advances the following Maui County General Plan policy: "Expand public awareness and promote programs to achieve healthy eating habits . . ."

For the foregoing reasons, the Maui County Council **supports** this measure.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
INCENTIVES.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that consumption of fresh
2 fruits and vegetables is an integral part of a healthy diet and
3 central to the prevention of obesity and chronic disease. The
4 legislature also finds that every community should have access
5 to fresh and healthy dietary options, but the high cost of fresh
6 produce often makes that difficult. This challenge is felt
7 acutely by participants in the federal supplemental nutrition
8 assistance program, which serves a low-income population that
9 struggles to afford healthy food.

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



1 The legislature further finds that through the national
2 Double Up Food Bucks Program, Hawaii has the opportunity to
3 expand access to healthy foods for low-income residents who are
4 eligible for supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits.
5 Currently implemented in more than twenty states, the Double Up
6 Food Bucks Program provides matching federal grant moneys to
7 state programs that incentivize the use of supplemental
8 nutrition assistance program benefits for the purchase of fresh
9 produce. Provided by both the United States Department of
10 Agriculture National Institute of Food and the United States
11 Department of Agriculture food insecurity nutrition incentive
12 grants program, these federal matching funds increase access to
13 healthy dietary options while also invigorating local economies
14 and addressing food insecurity.

15 The enactment of Act 153, Session Laws of Hawaii 2019,
16 created the Hawaii healthy food incentive program, now commonly
17 known as the DA BUX double up food bucks program. The DA BUX
18 double up food bucks program began first with a pilot program in
19 2012 by Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services on
20 Oahu and The Kohala Center on Hawai'i island. The program
21 provides a dollar-for-dollar match to supplemental nutrition



1 assistance program beneficiaries who purchase locally grown
2 fruits, vegetables, and proteins at participating farmers'
3 markets, grocery stores, and community-supported agriculture
4 projects. By the end of 2021, the pilot program was available
5 at fifty-seven food retailers across ninety-eight market sites
6 and pick-up locations that include grocery stores, farmers'
7 markets, community-supported agriculture programs, and other
8 farm direct retailers. From 2020-2021, DA BUX supported four
9 hundred seventy farm producers and eight distributors. Each
10 dollar reimbursed to participating DA BUX food retailers for
11 their issued discounts on local produce has an economic
12 multiplier of 2.1. This means that each program dollar issued
13 for local produce incentives contributes \$2.10 to Hawaii's
14 economy. A \$3,000,000 investment by the State in this program
15 would allow for a federal funding match that will contribute at
16 least \$12,600,000 to our local economy annually. This result is
17 a triple win for the State because it supports families,
18 farmers, and the local economy. Additional funding will allow
19 the statewide program coordinator, led by The Food Basket on
20 Hawai'i island, to obtain matching federal funds to continue to
21 support the program.



1 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the
2 department of agriculture for the continued administration of
3 the Hawaii healthy food incentive program and to provide
4 matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the
5 supplemental nutrition assistance program.

6 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
8 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and
9 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
10 year 2024-2025 for the continued administration of the Hawaii
11 healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to
12 beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition
13 assistance program.

14 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
15 of agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

16 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on June 30, 3000.



H.B. NO. 1248 H.D. 1

Report Title:

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

Description:

Appropriates funds to DOA 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. Effective 6/30/3000. (HD1)

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





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Community Health
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COVID-19 Response

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free
Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective

Date: March 29, 2023

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

Re: Strong Support for HB1248 HD1, Relating to Supplemental
Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

Hrg: Friday, March 31, 2023, 9:45 AM

The Obesity Prevention Task Force (OPTF), a program of the Hawai'i Public Health Instituteⁱ (HIPHI), is in **Strong Support of HB1248 HD1**, which provides continued funding for the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program.

Double Up Food Bucks is a triple win for families, farmers, and the local economy.

The Hawai'i Healthy Food incentive program, also known as DA BUX, provides a dollar-for-dollar match on locally produced fresh fruits and vegetables for SNAP recipients. Through this program, SNAP recipients can bring home healthy food, local farmers gain new customers and increased income, and more money goes into and grows our local economy.

Incentivizing SNAP dollars for fresh fruits and vegetables stretches food dollars for families, especially with increasing food costs. Furthermore, the doubling effect that DA BUX has on SNAP dollars gives families more room in their budgets for other necessary expenses.

Double Up Food Bucks demand has risen significantly over the last several years.

Year after year, this program has grown its impact making a significant impact on SNAP recipients. In 2019, SNAP shoppers spent \$87,359 through the DA BUX program; by 2022, SNAP shoppers spent \$2,275,460 through the DA BUXⁱⁱ. That money has brought healthy foods to homes while positively impacting our local economy.

Double Up Food Bucks provides a strong return on investment.

SNAP is proven to stimulate the economy by being an economic multiplier. For every SNAP dollar spent, it generates \$1.79 in economic activity. These dollars ripple out throughout the supply chain, supporting farmers, retailers, and food distributor employees; these people, in turn, spend their dollars to help support economic activity further and so on. If the state provides \$3 million in funding for this program, the federal

government could provide up to an additional \$3M of matching funds. This \$6M would result in over \$9.9M of total economic activity. In other words, the \$3M investment has a return of over 230%.

Health and food security are positively impacted.

Double Up Food Bucks' focus on locally grown produce helps to bring healthy foods to homes and supports the local agricultural industry. Studies have found that a lack of food security is associated with diet-related chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressureⁱⁱⁱ. Supporting local agriculture also aligns with the renewed calls to increase local food production and decrease Hawai'i's dependence on imported goods for a more sustainable and resilient food system.

A \$3 million investment can help expand the program to more stores.

The Double Up program has seen significant growth. It started with KTA in Hawai'i County and is now accessible statewide through Times, KTA, Foodland, and participating farmers' markets. These stores are locally based and operated, ensuring the economic impact is amplified. There are still ways for the program to grow its impact.

The \$3M will increase the program's reach and participation by engaging more people through educational campaigns in areas where there has been stalled growth, as well as provide the ability to engage more retail outlets that were unable to participate due to a limit of SNAP funding for participants.

Double Up Food Bucks is a triple win for health, agriculture, and the local economy and is a lifeline for many during the pandemic. We strongly support this measure and respectfully ask you to **pass HB1248 HD1**.

Mahalo,



Peggy Mierzwa
Policy & Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

ⁱ Created by the legislature in 2012, the Obesity Prevention Task Force is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations and works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and healthcare environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents. The Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) convenes the Task Force and supports and promotes policy efforts to create a healthy Hawai'i.

ⁱⁱ https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bca7bc67eb88c2e986a5203/t/62f6dc8f8e3f8d1a809e2e9a/1660345536073/2020-2021_Outcomes_Report_0.9.8.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4584410/>



To: The Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Friday, March 31, 2023, 9:45 am

In strong support of HB1248 HD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and WAM Committee members;

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **strongly supports HB1248 HD1.**

The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program helps keep federal funding circulating in the local economy and incentivizes the use of SNAP benefits for the purchase of fresh local produce. HB1248 HD1 will help low-income families bring home more healthy food, area farmers gain new customers and make more money, and more food dollars stay in the local economy.

Supporting this successful program makes good sense. It promotes good health for families and our local economy, as well as improving the health of our planet by avoiding the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping produce in.

Please pass HB1248 HD1 so that we can reap all these benefits!

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on this very important bill.
Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Friday, March 31, 2023; 9:45 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 221
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1248, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 1248, House Draft 1, RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would appropriate an unspecified amounts of general funds for fiscal years 2023-2024, and 2023-2025, to be expended by the Department of Agriculture, 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 (SNAP).

This bill would take effect on June 30, 3000.

SNAP, formally known as the "Food Stamps Program", is the largest federal food assistance program that is currently in operation. It provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people. SNAP provided assistance to approximately 40 million persons in 2018, at an expenditure of \$57.1 billion. Approximately 9.2% of American households received SNAP benefits at some point during 2017, with approximately 16.7 of all children living in households receiving SNAP benefits.

Testimony on House Bill No. 1248, House Draft 1
Friday, March 31, 2023; 9:45 a.m.
Page 2

Founded during the height of the Great Depression, SNAP is the cornerstone of our national social safety net. It is intended to prevent mass starvation precipitated from unemployment and homelessness. The program was also seen as a way of helping the poor while boosting the economy and ensuring that America's farmers would obtain a fair price for their labors by allowing government to purchase and distribute excess goods in time of crisis.

The COVID-19 Pandemic demonstrated how food scarcity and poverty threatened the health and welfare of our citizens in times of dire crisis. With so many people unemployed, entire families struggled to put food on the table on a consistent basis. Lines at the food bank and food drives stretched for miles and people waited for hours to receive surplus food.

The HPCA has strongly endorsed this Program in previous years and we continue to urge your support. Additional SNAP benefits for a recipient can mean the difference between having to decide whether someone's last amount of cash will go for food or rent or medications or other necessities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.

Friday, March 31, 2023, at 9:45 AM
Via Video Conference; Conference Room 211

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

To: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

**Re: Testimony in Support of HB 1248, HD1
Relating To The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**

My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

HPH writes in SUPPORT of HB 1248, HD1 which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program, and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

HPH recognizes the strong connection between access to healthy foods with health and wellness. Adults who eat a healthy diet live longer and have a lower risk of obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. Healthy eating can help people with chronic diseases manage these conditions and avoid complications. However, many low income families continue to struggle to put food on the table.

HPH has supported the Double Up food bucks program since 2019 to both foster strengthening local food systems and allow SNAP recipients to access good nutrition. The program has been successful in encouraging SNAP recipients to make healthy food choices. Fresh fruits and vegetables are an integral part of a healthy diet and central to the prevention of obesity and chronic disease. While every community should have access to fresh and healthy dietary options, the high cost of fresh produce often makes that difficult. This challenge is felt acutely by participants in the federal supplemental nutrition assistance program, a low-income population that struggles to afford healthy food. The double up food bucks program is a viable model that supports local farmers, helps low-income families that receive double the purchasing power for healthy, Hawaii-grown produce, and benefits Hawaii by keeping dollars in the local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



March 29, 2023

Hawai'i State Senate
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SUPPORT of HB1248 HD1

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee,

The DA BUX program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

DA BUX succeeds in: putting more food on the tables of local families in need, providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food, strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in the Islands, and improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.

The DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families have access to quality fresh food.

Please support HB1248.

Mahalo,

Anna Camacho, co-founder





Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: **HB 1248, HD1 - Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
March 31, 2023, 9:45 AM

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB 1248, HD1**. This bill appropriates funds to DOA for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program ("DA BUX") and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

Investing DA BUX is investing in our keiki, as more than 60% of SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) participants in Hawai'i are in families with children,¹ and the program has been shown to increase the fruit and vegetable consumption of its participants.²

Especially with high inflation and the most expensive groceries in the nation,³ it is nearly impossible for the low-income families in Hawai'i who qualify for SNAP to afford to buy healthy food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

That's where DA BUX comes in. It is designed to help low-income families afford fresh produce, by doubling the value of their SNAP benefits when they purchase Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables.

DA BUX truly is a triple-win for our state. First, it helps families afford fresh produce, which benefits their health and well-being.⁴ Second, it helps local farmers by increasing their sales. And third, it helps our local food stores and markets by bringing more dollars to them and keeping those dollars in the local economy.

SNAP shoppers' local produce purchases at DA BUX grocery stores nearly tripled in January 2022 compared to 2019, and at DA BUX farm direct retailers those sales were more than five times larger.⁵ In addition, every \$1 spent on DA BUX is estimated to create \$2.30 in local economic activity.⁶

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_hawaii.pdf

² <https://dabux.org/for-advocates>

³ <https://meric.mo.gov/data/cost-living-data-series>

⁴ <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/vegetables-and-fruits/>

⁵ <https://dabux.org/for-advocates>

⁶ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oU3wNy7IKmJ4ITLEgR6Td-o1_DscDPzX/view



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

March 29, 2023

To: The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Kristin Frost Albrecht
Executive Director

Chelsea Takahashi
Director of Healthy Food Access Initiatives

The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

Subject: **Testimony in Strong Support of HB1248, HD1 Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Keith-Agaran,

We are in strong support of HB1248, HD1 and the appropriation of \$3 MM for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

In keeping with The Food Basket's (TFB) overarching mission to "end hunger", we are the statewide administrator for DA BUX. TFB established DA BUX as a statewide program upon receiving a \$985 K federal grant through the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). Additionally, we secured the 100% non-federal matching funds that GusNIP requires. We scaled the program in 2021 after receiving two additional GusNIP awards totaling \$7.6 MM in federal dollars. Today, TFB administers DA BUX at 58 food retailers across 100+ locations statewide, including grocery stores, farmers markets and food hubs. DA BUX partner retailers continue to offer 50% discounts on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables solely to low-income customers paying with SNAP food dollars (formerly known as food stamps).

Philanthropy has largely carried the weight of our GusNIP match needs over the years; however, we cannot expect philanthropy to meet this need over the long term. We are humbly requesting the State to invest \$3 MM per year in DA BUX to support program sustainability and continuous affordable healthy food access to SNAP recipients.

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST
ALBRECHT

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

ANN EBESUNO
BOARD CHAIR

MARK
KRZYZANOWSKI
VICE-CHAIR

DENNIS LIN
TREASURER

JULIA ZEE
SECRETARY

STEPHEN UEDA

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA
COLLINS

MAURICE
MESSINA

WWW.HAWAIIFOODBASKET.ORG

Administration and East Hawai'i Warehouse
40 Holomua Street, Hilo, HI 96720
808-933-6030 Phone | 808-934-0701 Fax

West Hawai'i Warehouse
73-4161 Ulu Wini Place, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740
808-322-1418 Phone | 808-322-7373 Fax



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

Furthermore, a State commitment will be leveraged in our FY '23 GusNIP application to unlock \$3 MM in federal funds to meet the grant's requirement of a 100% non-federal match.

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

It is our intent to eventually scale DA BUX to a \$20 MM annual program in the State of Hawai'i pending the approval of expanded federal GusNIP funding. We, along with the Alliance for National Nutrition Incentives (ANNI), are actively advocating for a new tier of GusNIP funding in the 2023 National Farm Bill that would be reserved for successful statewide SNAP nutrition incentive programs, including DA BUX.

KRISTIN FROST
ALBRECHT

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

While a wide range of financial support and programs were available during the pandemic, Hawai'i's low-income residents are perhaps now more in dire need of this support as pandemic relief wanes and inflation rates have soared above historical averages. Rising food prices and climbing food insecurity in Hawai'i are indicative of the widespread economic hardship residents continue to face. The Food Basket is steadfast in our commitment to ensuring DA BUX savings for local fruits and vegetables will be continuously available for these households.

ANN EBESUNO
BOARD CHAIR

MARK
KRZYZANOWSKI
VICE-CHAIR

DENNIS LIN
TREASURER

We respectfully ask your committee to pass HB1248, HD1. Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

JULIA ZEE
SECRETARY

Kristin Frost Albrecht

STEPHEN UEDA

Kristin Frost Albrecht
Executive Director

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA
COLLINS

Chelsea Takahashi
Director of Healthy Food Access Initiatives

MAURICE
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HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 9:02:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Kohn MD	Testifying for We Are One, Inc. - www.WeAreOne.cc - WAO	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly **SUPPORT** [HB 1248](#), which requests \$3M in state funding to support this "triple win" program. Da Bux



Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: HB1248 HD1

Friday, March 31, 2023 9:45 a.m. Conference Room 211

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee,

HAPA strongly supports HB1248 HD1 appropriates funds to DOA for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

The Da Bux program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- It's putting more food on the tables of local families in need.
- It's providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food.
- It's strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in the Islands.
- It's improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.

The DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families have access to quality fresh food.

Please support HB1248 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hbf.org; www.hbf.org

March 31, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON HB 1248, HD1
RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
9:45 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, 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 supports HB 1248, HD1, which appropriates funds to DOA for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

SNAP offers nutrition assistance to eligible, low-income individuals and families, increasing their food purchasing power and improving their nutrition. SNAP also provides economic benefits to farmers participating at farmers' markets, roadside stands, CSA programs, grocery stores, and other food retailers.

Some of HFB's farmers' markets participate or have participated in the SNAP program. We believe that access to locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables, and protein to low-income individuals and families provides benefits to both SNAP participants and Hawai'i farmers and ranchers.

The Double Up Food Bucks program works by doubling the value of federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits spent on locally grown fruits and vegetables at participating farmers' markets, grocery stores, food hubs, and community-supported agriculture projects. In Hawaii, the Double Up Food Bucks program is managed by The Food Basket and is known as "DA BUX" Double Up Food Bucks. The DA BUX program presents a "win-win" scenario by supporting local farmers with an increased customer base and low-income families who receive double the purchasing power for healthy, Hawaii-grown produce.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS
Friday, March 31, 2023 —9:45 a.m.

Ulupono Initiative strongly supports HB 1248 HD1, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives.

Dear Chair Dela Cruz 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 HB 1248 HD1, which appropriates funds to the State Department of Agriculture (DOA) for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

Ulupono strongly supports the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program within the DOA. The "DA BUX" Double Up Food Bucks Program, administered by The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's food bank, is a triple-win solution for our communities as SNAP-eligible recipients double their spending power at point of purchase with healthy local produce, local farmers are able to expand their markets, and all money spent is kept right here in our state. In addition, this program leverages federal funding at a 1:1 match.

From 2020-2021, DA BUX has supported more than 470 farm producers and eight distributors through farm product sales. With rising inflation and Hawai'i's high cost of living, SNAP participation and benefits continue to climb since 2019 levels.¹ These numbers substantiate the need to support our local community as food insecurity continues to increase.

We are hopeful that the State can consider a \$3 million appropriation, per year, for the DOA program to support the continued efforts of DA BUX. A \$3 million investment by the State would receive a direct match of \$3 million in federal funding. Furthermore, our analysis shows that with that level of state funding in place, the potential economic impact created by DA BUX in Hawai'i reaches nearly \$19 million.

¹ 9% increase for those receiving benefits; 100% increase in total annual SNAP benefits paid; and, 26 times increase in the annual amount of DA BUX discounts issues to SNAP shoppers since 2019.

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



We appreciate the Legislature's attention to this highly impactful program and look forward to sustained funding to support our SNAP community and our local producers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

See Attachment

OUR STATE HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO UNLOCK SIGNIFICANT FEDERAL AND PHILANTHROPIC DOLLARS IN SUPPORT OF THIS PROVEN AND HIGHLY IMPACTFUL PROGRAM



“The most I saved in one trip was \$28 and some change. **I really love this program because I am diabetic and need fresh veggies and fruits to help keep me healthy.** Mahalo for this amazing program. Also, DA BUX helps me with my kids too. They love looking for the DA BUX label on produce & can choose what they want. They love to eat! Carrots, cabbage and cucumbers are their faves as well as local apple bananas to name a few.”

— Dawn Marquez
SNAP Shopper,
Waimanalo, HI

DA BUX

DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS PROVIDES A TRIPLE-WIN

“For over a century, KTA Super Stores has strived to serve as an essential source for locally grown produce for our Hawai‘i Island community. DA BUX provides us the opportunity to support our local growers. **Since launching DA BUX in September 2017, we have seen transactions associated with the DA BUX program more than quadruple at our seven store locations.** We see this as positive sign that DA BUX is motivating families to purchase and consume more healthy fruits and vegetables and that this increased demand will drive increases in agricultural production for the state.”

— Toby Taniguchi
President, KTA Super Stores

DA BUX continues to be an amazing way to connect our farm directly to the

consumers who need it most. Being able to offer the best quality fresh locally grown food in a very affordable way removes a big hurdle for people; [DA BUX] helps to make feeding them and their families easy. **This program helps to support local agriculture so we can more easily compete with imported food and gives us farmers a big incentive to produce more fruits and vegetables to satisfy the increased demand for our goods.**”

— Ryan Earehart
Farm Owner, Oko‘a Farms

DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks provides a Triple-Win

HAWAII IMPORTS APPROXIMATELY 85-90% of its food and has food costs that are 91% higher than the national average. Dependence on food imports threatens the sustainability of food producers throughout the islands and places the entire population directly at risk of food shortages in the event of pandemics, natural disasters, and economic disruptions. Furthermore, with the highest cost of living in the nation, Hawaii is challenged with growing food costs and food insecurity, and 12% of its population receives Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 2022.

THE PROBLEM

Overall, Hawaii faces an estimated \$83 million in annual costs related to food insecurity and hunger. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rising inflation, Hawaii households are facing increasing food costs. Compared to the rest of the nation, Hawaii households spend the highest percentage of their annual budget on food. This is compounded with the rising inflation that has increased food prices and overall cost of living in Hawaii by 6.6% and 7.4%, respectively. Increasing food prices reinforces many residents' reliance on cheaper, less healthy fast food options that have long-range impacts on health and wellbeing. This situation creates a significant need to help feed low income families AND support local agricultural food producers.

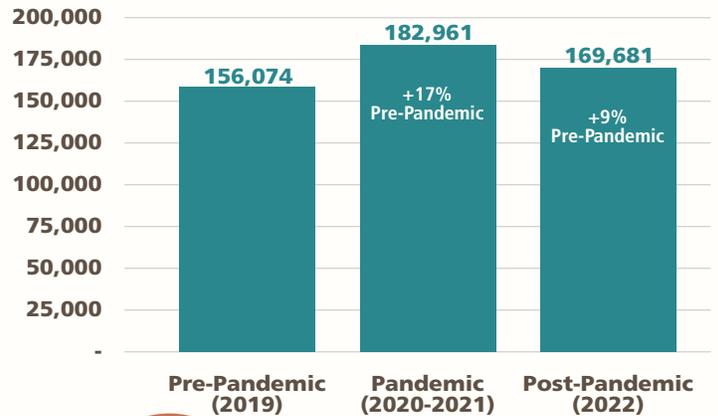
BY THE NUMBERS

- 90% Imported Food
- 91% Higher Food Costs (Refer to the graph for the increasing trend of Hawaii's cost of food under the USDA Thrifty Food Plan compared to the national average cost of food)
- 12% Received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance in 2022

Hawaii's Monthly Thrifty Food Plan Cost vs. National Average



Monthly Average of Individual SNAP Recipients in Hawaii



THE SOLUTION

DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks is a triple-win solution because it doubles the purchasing power of low-income SNAP families for healthy, Hawaii-grown produce; it supports local farmers with an increased customer base; and it benefits the entire island community by keeping dollars in the local economy.

An appropriation of up to \$3 million in state funds will bring in additional federal funds to sustain, expand and extend the statewide DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks program. Given the broad benefits of DA BUX for our state, it is imperative to secure sustained funding for DA BUX and ensure it is a staple service providing economic relief to SNAP households and directly supporting local agricultural food producers across the state. Based on the projected spend down rate, current funding of the DA BUX program will only last through August 2024.

HOW IT WORKS

The program offers SNAP participants a DA BUX Access Card or voucher at point of sale that doubles their purchasing power when they buy locally



grown fruits and vegetables — \$10 of SNAP benefits would be worth \$20 of Hawaii grown produce. Thus, each \$1 funded into the program provides \$2 worth of local food purchases.

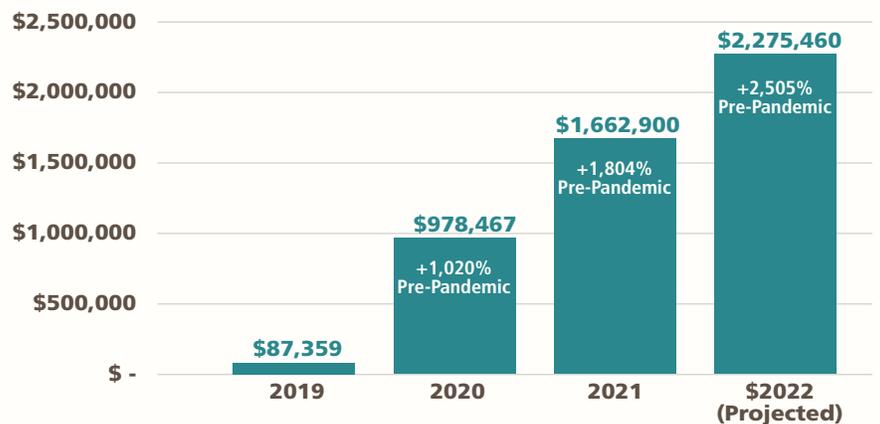
State Support is Key to Federal and Philanthropic Funding

	State Investment of \$1M	State Investment of \$2M	State Investment of \$3M
State Funding	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000
Federal GusNIP grant	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000
Total Funding for DA BUX discounts	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$6,000,000
Economic multiplier on DA BUX discounts ¹	1.7	1.7	1.7
Potential economic impact of DA BUX discounts	\$3,328,020	\$6,656,041	\$9,984,061
Federal SNAP benefits	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$6,000,000
Economic multiplier of SNAP benefits ²	1.5	1.5	1.5
Potential economic impact of SNAP benefits	\$3,000,000	\$6,000,000	\$9,000,000
Total funding for SNAP & DA BUX	\$4,000,000	\$8,000,000	\$12,000,000
Potential economic impact	\$6,328,000	\$12,656,041	\$18,984,061
Economic impact multiplier of state funding	6.3	6.3	6.3

Over the course of the pandemic, DA BUX has become a critical service for low-income SNAP beneficiaries struggling with economic hardship and food insecurity. There has been significant growth and demand for the program due to the increase in SNAP participation and participating DA BUX retail locations across the state.



Annual DA BUX Discounts Issued to SNAP Shoppers



Local Food Sales Driven By SNAP DA BUX				
County	2019	2020	2021	2022 (Projected)
Honolulu	\$ -	\$929,217	\$1,659,101	\$2,397,563
% increase		100%	79%	45%
Hawai'i	\$174,718	\$842,482	\$1,125,573	\$1,244,464
% increase		382%	34%	11%
Kaua'i	\$ -	\$87,574	\$191,309	\$211,498
% increase		100%	118%	11%
Maui	\$ -	\$97,661	\$349,817	\$697,394
% increase		100%	258%	99%
Statewide Total	\$174,718	\$1,956,934	\$3,325,800	\$4,550,919

- From 2020 through 2021, DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors by incentivizing the sale of their farm products sold at participating farm direct retailers.
- In January 2022, local produce sales to SNAP shoppers at participating farm direct retailers increased an average of 531% from 2019
- DA BUX gives farmers the opportunity to feed local residents (rather than exporting product to the mainland) and to increase production towards a self-sufficient local food supply for the state. The program strengthens the relationship between local residents and food producers. Increasing local food production capacity can help to bring prices down, making healthy local food accessible and affordable to more people.

¹ Based on the "The Economic Contributions of Healthy Food Incentives" report prepared by Colorado State University, and the percentage of 2021 DA BUX discounts issued via farm-direct outlets and food retailers. Refer to the report at: https://fairfoodnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Economic_Contributions_Incentives_2_2_21.pdf

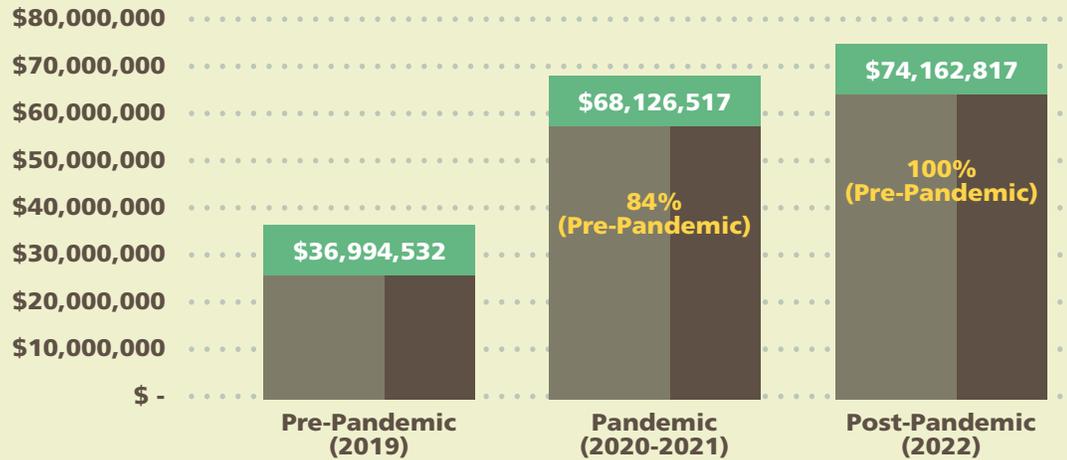
² Based on the "The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Economy: New Estimates of the SNAP Multiplier" report prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service. Refer to the report at: https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/93529/err265_summary.pdf

More Impact for State 'BUX'

Due to rising inflation and higher cost of living, SNAP participation and SNAP benefits in Hawai'i continue to be significantly higher compared to 2019 levels.

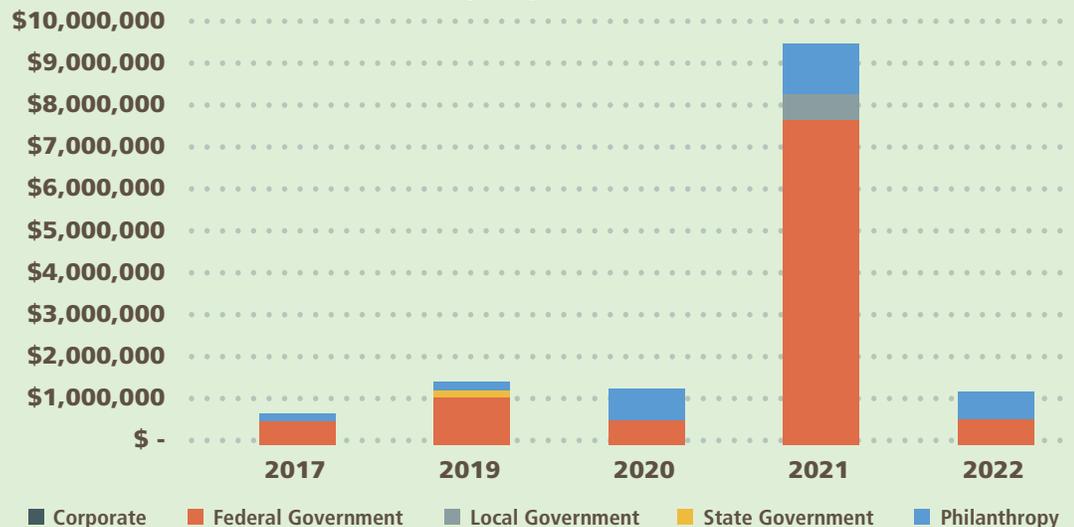
- 8th highest poverty rate (10.5% of the population living at or below the poverty line)
- 9% increase in the number of individuals in Hawai'i receiving SNAP benefits
- 100% increase in the annual total amount of SNAP benefits paid in Hawai'i
- 26x increase the annual total of DA BUX discounts issued to SNAP shoppers

Average Monthly SNAP Benefits Paid for Hawaii SNAP Participants



Historically, the DA BUX program has been primarily funded by Federal grants and philanthropic/private funding (representing almost all of total program funds). To date, the State of Hawaii has only provided \$94,000 in General Funds, and allocated \$500,000 in Federal CARES Act funds to the program.

DA BUX Fundings by Source (2017-2022)



Secure and sustained state funding for DA BUX program is the key to federal and philanthropic funding matches. State funds can generate significant leverage:

- Stimulate economic activity of \$19 million (6.3x of state funding) while increasing local food production for local consumption.
- \$3 million can be matched by \$3 million in federal dollars from a Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) grant, as well as \$6 million from SNAP purchases, resulting in \$12 million going toward local food purchases and supporting local farmers
- Given the impact achieved and successful track record, state funding will be a worthwhile investment and position the DA BUX program for future federal funding.
- Other states have recognized the benefit and impact of double up food bucks programs by investing state funds in expanding and sustaining their programs. There are nine states that have invested state funds in their double up food bucks programs, totaling approximately \$94.5 million from 2015 through 2021.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 5:43:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tehani Kaalekahi	Testifying for Sustainable Molokai	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 30, 2023

To: The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Aragan, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Subject: **Testimony in Strong Support of HB1248, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**

I am in strong support of bill HB1248 and the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

DA BUX benefits the state's food system through three different ways. First, DA BUX offers discounts on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables to low-income recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, allowing them to purchase more, healthy food. Second, DA BUX helps farmers increase their customer base and compete with imported produce. And third, DA BUX supports the local economy, generating increased revenue for 57 participating food retailers across 100+ statewide locations.

DA BUX has proven to be beneficial for Hawai'i's economy. According to a study conducted by Colorado State University, each program dollar used to incentivize the purchase of local produce contributes \$2.10 to Hawai'i's economy. Additionally, if DA BUX was further scaled to food retail locations statewide, the potential economic contribution would be \$14-\$22 million in one year.

Furthermore, a \$3 million State investment will serve as significant match funds needed to unlock federal grant dollars from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). As the GusNIP only accepts proposals that secure 100% non-federal matching funds, a State investment will strengthen the program's FY '23 GusNIP application.

State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide positive, lasting impact both economically and for the well-being of individuals across the state.

Sincerely,
Tehani Kaalekahi



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents

Madeline Ross
Kohala, Hawai'i

Odysseus Yacalis
East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Andrea Drayer
Ka'u, Hawai'i

Chantal Chung
Kona, Hawai'i

Fawn Helekahi-Burns
Hana, Maui

Reba Lopez
Haleakala, Maui

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Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Rufina Kaauwai
Molokai

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

Brynn Foster
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Ray Maki
Kauai

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee,

The Hawaii Farmers Union United (HFUU) is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU strongly supports HB1248.**

By providing matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in SNAP, this program creates a direct connection between our local farmers and the families they serve. It strengthens the local economy by keeping dollars in our state and supporting the local agriculture industry. Additionally, the program encourages healthier eating habits among SNAP recipients, which in turn can reduce the burden on our healthcare system by preventing diet-related chronic diseases. Food grocers also stand to benefit from the increased sales of fresh, locally grown produce, which will promote a more vibrant and resilient local food system.

We urge the committee to recognize the far-reaching benefits of HB1248 and support the appropriation of \$3,000,000 to continue the administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF



March 31, 2023

The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: HB 1248 HD1 SD1– Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Program Incentives

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

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1248, which appropriates funds to DOA 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.

HMSA recognizes the impact that healthy foods have on a person’s overall wellness. Conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity can be positively impacted by maintaining a healthy diet. We support this effort to increase affordability and accessibility to healthy foods in Hawaii, especially to individuals and families who could truly benefit. An added benefit to this program is that it also serves to support our local agricultural sector and farmers as we take steps towards food security in our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1248 HD1 SD1.

Sincerely,

Dawn Kurisu
Assistant Vice President
Community and Government Relations



March 30, 2023

To: The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Senator Gil Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Subject: **Testimony in Strong Support of HB1248, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**

I am in strong support of bill HB1248 and the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

Maui Hub's mission is two-fold: create a reliable farm-to-market pipeline that supports our local farmers in ways that allow them to focus on rapidly increasing production, and ensure equitable access to locally produced food for all Maui residents, even our most vulnerable.

DABUX benefits have been a major reason that many of Maui Hub's EBT customers switched to Maui Hub. There is such a prevalent conception that "locally grown food is too expensive" many folks automatically avoid it and just shop at big box stores. Processed, shelf stable foods are cheaper, and that's what we see folks consuming. **DABUX benefits actually incentivize EBT customers to buy local, and make it as, if not more affordable to eat fresh local produce.** Maui Hub's staff interacts with our regular customers weekly when they come to pick up their groceries and the feedback from folks who have been able to incorporate fresh food and vegetables into their family's diets is nothing short of inspiring.

"I could never afford kalo before. Now we eat it every week."

"My keiki never liked tomatoes until I bought locally grown ones!"

"It's cheaper to make luau stew for my family than it is to grab MacDonalds."

These are just a few things I personally have heard from regular customers who have made the switch to Maui Hub and locally grown food, almost entirely motivated by DABUX benefits. These are habits that will stick, that will change the pallets of the kids in the family, and will give them a healthy relationship with food and set them up for better health outcomes in the future.

Please continue to fund and support this program.

Sincerely,

Autumn Ness
Maui Hub
Co-Founder and President, Board of Directors
808 250 4200



To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Public Policy Manager

Hearing: Friday, March 31, 2023, 9:45 AM, Conference Room 211

RE: **HB1248, HD1 Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB1248, HD1**. This measure appropriates funding to the Department of Agriculture to continue the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit, safety net health plan serving over 80,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately half of our membership are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality health care for all. We believe that health is about supporting whole-person health needs.

AlohaCare's commitment to whole person care includes addressing a variety of social determinants of health, including housing, economic stability, and nutrition among other factors. We understand that without access to affordable healthy food, the health and well-being of our members is negatively impacted. For example, researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that food insecurity is associated with obesity among US adults in Hawai'i and 11 other states.¹

AlohaCare has provided grant funding to Kokua Kalihi Valley and others to support this program, and we endorse continued State investment. The Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program is an innovative and successful solution, which supports local farmers, low-income families who receive double the purchasing power for Hawai'i-grown fresh fruits and vegetables, and our entire community by keeping dollars in the local economy. This program is particularly important during this time of rising costs for food among other necessities.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of HB1248, HD1**.

¹ [J Acad Nutr Diet. 2012 Sep; 112\(9\): 1403-1409.](#)



March 30, 2023

To: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Regarding: Testimony in Strong Support of HB1248 “Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Incentives”

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony in strong support for HB1248, “Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Incentives,” on behalf of Farm Link Hawai‘i (FLH). We encourage you to support the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai‘i healthy food incentive program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX. According to a study conducted by Colorado State University, each program dollar used to incentivize the purchase of local produce contributes \$2.10 to Hawai‘i’s economy. DA BUX benefits Hawai‘i’s food system in three vital ways:

1. Offers discounts on Hawai‘i grown fruits and vegetables to low-income SNAP recipients, allowing them to purchase more healthy food
2. Empowers farmers compete with lower cost imported produce and increase their sales
3. Supports the local economy, generating increased revenue for participating retailers

Farm Link’s mission is to create a thriving, equitable local food system by empowering local farmers and improving access to good local food. We work with over 170 Hawai‘i farmers, ranchers, and food makers, to serve more than 1,000 customers with over 500 local products. Over 18% of our revenue is derived from customers using Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-EBT) and DA BUX to purchase their groceries. Last year FLH saw transactions associated with the DA BUX program grow by over 300%. We see this as a clear sign that DA BUX is motivating families to purchase and consume more healthy produce, and providing a steady market for Hawai‘i farmers.

State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide positive, lasting economic and well-being impact. A \$3 million State investment will serve as significant match funds to unlock federal grant dollars from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). As the GusNIP only accepts proposals that secure 100% non-federal matching funds, a State investment is critical to the program’s FY ‘23 GusNIP application.

Sincerely,

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



March 30, 2023

Testimony in Support of HB1248, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and WAM Committee Members,

We are writing to voice our strong support of HB1248 and the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

My name is Harmonee Williams, and I am the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Good Food Alliance (HGFA). Prior to joining HGFA staff, I served as the Executive Director of Sust'ainable Molokai, which is a founding organizational partner of HGFA. The other founding organizations are listed below. HGFA is a 501(c)(3) corporation formed by a statewide collaboration of organizations that are engaged in the production and distribution of food with the goal of rebuilding thriving community food systems. HGFA is a cross-sector network of food producers, food hubs, food banks, farmers markets, and healthcare providers from each major Hawaiian island. Our mission is that we join together—with a sense of urgency—to raise community voice and support one another in the belief that each and every person in Hawai'i can share in healthy, locally produced food.

DA BUX benefits the state's food system through three different ways. First, DA BUX offers a 50% discount on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables to low-income recipients of the SNAP program (formerly known as food stamps), allowing them to purchase more, healthy food. Second, DA BUX helps farmers increase their customer base and compete with imported produce. And third, DA BUX supports the local economy, generating increased revenue for the participating food retailers across 100+ statewide locations. Several of our member organizations offer DA BUX through their retail operations, allowing them to offer affordable local produce to all of their SNAP customers.

A \$3 million State investment will serve as significant match funds needed to unlock federal grant dollars from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). As the GusNIP only accepts proposals that secure 100% non-federal matching funds, a State investment will strengthen the program's FY '23 GusNIP application. State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide positive, lasting impact both for the economy and the well-being of individuals across the state.

Sincerely,



Executive Director, Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
harmonie@hawaiigoodfoodalliance.org, 808-646-1314

HGFA Founding Partners:

- The Food Basket
- The Kohala Center
- Kanaka Ha'aheo
- Maui Food Bank
- Sust'ainable Molokai
- Kōkua Kalihi Valley
- 'Elepaio Services, Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center
- MA'O Farms
- Kahumana Organic Farm & Food Hub
- Mālama Kaua'i

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Friday, March 31, 2023 – 9:45 A.M.
In Support: H.B. 1248 – Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of H.B. 1248 – Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives, which would appropriate funds to the department of agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program (also known as DA BUX) and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

DA BUX helps local producers thrive and sets beginning farmers up for success.

In FY21, DA BUX supported *470 farm producers and 8 distributors statewide* by incentivizing the sale of their farm products sold at participating farm direct retailers.¹ This support resulted in a 531% average increase in local produce sales at participating retailers.² DA BUX provides a new market for local producers and helped many keep their doors open during the pandemic when the tourism industry was no longer a viable customer. A study conducted by the USDA Economic Research Service found that beginning farmers accepting SNAP incentives were more likely to continue farming over time.³

Nutrition incentive programs are a lifeline to Hawai'i's struggling families.

The ending of the public health emergency and SNAP emergency allotments has resulted in *more than 83,000 of Hawai'i's low-income households* experiencing the greatest SNAP benefit cliff in history. With SNAP participating households losing at least \$95 per month (with some of our most vulnerable losing up to \$238), DA BUX has become even more vital to improve access to healthy food for these communities as their purchasing power decreases. Our emergency food system alone cannot fill this gap and meet the need.

DA BUX sustainability requires state investment, which the federal government can match.

A \$3 million state investment will provide significant match funds required to unlock federal grant dollars from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP), which the state applicant—The Food Basket—has successfully applied for and received previously. With an economic multiplier of 2.3 for every \$1 spent in Hawai'i on incentives, a \$3M investment by the state will result in \$12.6M generated in Hawai'i's local economy.⁴

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HAWAII
**HUNGER
ACTION**
NETWORK

Aloha Harvest

County of Hawai'i

Hawai'i Alliance for Community-
Based Economic Development

Hawai'i Appleseed

Hawai'i Children's Action Network

Hawai'i Food Bank

Hawai'i Good Food Alliance

Hawai'i Public Health Institute

Kōkua Kalihi Valley
Comprehensive Health Center

Lanakila Pacific

Malama Kaua'i

Maui Food Bank

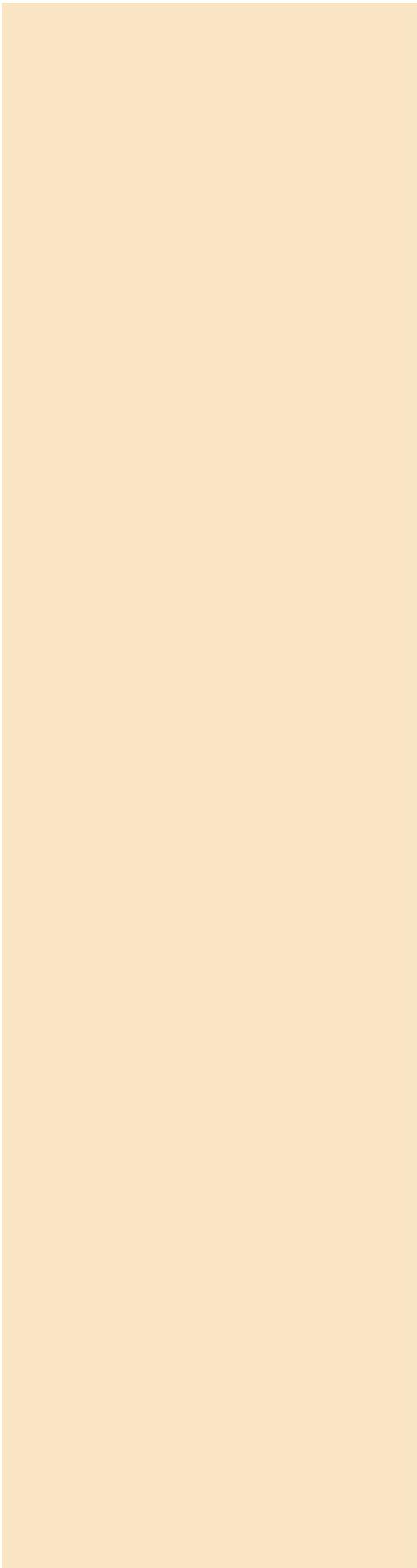
The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network is composed of advocates statewide dedicated to connecting communities and taking action to ensure all people in Hawai'i have enough food to live healthy, dignified, productive lives.

¹ [double up food bucks - 2020-2021 outcomes report](#)

² [double up food bucks - 2020-2021 outcomes report](#)

³ [Economics Of Healthy Food Incentives At Michigan Farmers Markets: Study Highlights](#)

⁴ [Expanding Healthy Food Incentives Across Hawai'i: The Return on Investment](#)





HAWAII APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

LATE

Testimony of Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for H.B. 1248 – Relating to SNAP Incentives
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Friday, March 31, 2023 at 9:45AM

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **H.B. 1248**, which would provide matching funds to appropriate funds to the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (DOA) for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

SNAP is a proven economic stimulus. In fact, the [USDA estimates](#) that every dollar in SNAP generates an additional \$0.54 in economic activity. **In 2022, nearly 170,000 Hawai'i residents drew down over \$900 million in federal SNAP funds to purchase food—an estimated \$1.4 billion dollar investment in Hawai'i's food system after applying the economic multiplier.**

While SNAP is an important program for ensuring the food security of low-income Hawai'i households, the individual household benefit is often still not enough to afford fresh fruits and vegetables. This results in most of these economic stimulus funds leaving the islands—right into the pockets of major mainland food companies, rather than getting recirculated locally into our local agriculture industry.

SNAP incentives like those proposed in H.B. 1248 address this concern by providing an additional subsidy for SNAP users when they purchase local fruits and vegetables. The federal program that funds this incentive requires a one-to-one match, meaning that every dollar the state invests will be matched by federal funding. **Therefore, a \$3 million investment by the state would be doubled with matching federal funds. Factoring in the \$1.54 multiplier mentioned earlier would ultimately result in \$9.24M million in economic impact.** Passing this bill would be an impact investment for the State, channeling much-needed capital into local businesses and farms.

Hawai'i's existing SNAP incentive program, known as DA BUX, has already been enormously successful and popular among SNAP users, retailers, and farmers alike. According to the latest [program outcomes report](#), DA BUX has already directly supported 470 farm producers, eight distributors, and increased local produce sales by 531% at farm-direct retailers.

SNAP incentives are a win for everyone—families, farmers and local businesses. There is no downside. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

The Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice is committed to a more socially just Hawai'i, where everyone has genuine opportunities to achieve economic security and fulfill their potential. We change systems that perpetuate inequality and injustice through policy development, advocacy, and coalition building.



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 | Honolulu, HI 96813
P: 808-533-1292 | e: info@hawaiiifood.com

Executive Officers

Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Chair*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Vice Chair*
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Paul Kosasa, ABC Stores, *Advisor*
Derek Kurisu, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, Odom, *Advisor*
Charlie Gustafson, Tamura Super Market, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

LATE

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 31, 2023
TIME: 9:45am

RE: HB607 HD2 SD1 Relating to Taxation

RE: HB1248 HD1 Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

The Double Up Food Bucks program is important as a means to combat food insecurity, support healthy eating, and as a way to support Hawaii's agricultural sector. During the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis, food insecurity in our state soared to unprecedented levels, at the same time the local agricultural sector suffered disproportionate economic losses. The Double Up Food Bucks program has been a vital tool to increase the produce buying power of Hawaii consumers who use the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and helps grow our local agricultural sector. Continuing to fund this important program will ensure that the many benefits continue.

Fruits, vegetables, and healthy proteins tend to be more expensive per calorie than less healthy foods, which makes eating healthy a challenge for those with limited food budgets. Doubling the purchasing power for SNAP users makes it easier to choose fruits, vegetables, and healthy proteins when shopping. Data has shown that families use the Double Up Food Bucks Program eat more fruits and vegetables, a greater variety of fruits and vegetables, and fewer unhealthy foods. Getting more fruits and vegetables for each SNAP dollar also means

that low-income families will have more in their budget to spend on things like housing and healthcare.

By prioritizing locally grown agricultural products this program also helps Hawaii farmers and encourages retailers to stock Hawaii grown produce and protein. This helps promote a resilient food economy where local farmers are selling to local stores that sell to local customers.

Each dollar spent in this program goes into Hawaii's agricultural sector and circulates from there into the larger local economy. This is a win for SNAP users, a win for Hawaii farmers, a win for Hawaii retailers, and a win for Hawaii's economy.

We urge you to vote yes on this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 11:48:33 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cards Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cards Pintor

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 1:05:11 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suzanne Fields	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

DA BUX provides a dollar-for-dollar match on fresh, locally-grown produce for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants. This program is a “triple win” for Hawai‘i: making healthy food more accessible for families in need, supporting agriculture and farmers, and keeping money within the local economy. Continued funding is needed to support this important program.

SUPPORTING this bill should be a no brainer, given the triple win for Hawai‘i.

Do the right thing and SUPPORT this legislation.

Suzanne Fields

Haiku, Maui

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 1:08:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jean Butel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a resident of Hawai‘i, I am writing in support of SCR187. AS we are all aware, the cost of food has risen dramatically in the past year making it more difficult for families to purchase food especially healthy food. SCR187 will provide \$3M to fund and grow the DA BUX program. This support of the DA BUX program will help families, local farmers, and our economy.

This is needed as 59% of participants who currently use the DA BUX programs are food insecure. By growing the program, it would be possible to reach more food insecure households.

The DA BUX program also helps to grow our local food supply and put more money into our economy. Hawai‘i currently imports ~85% of its food supply, by increasing our local food supply we can move towards a more self-sufficient local food supply for Hawai‘i. Additionally, a \$3M dollar investment in Double Up Bucks would result in over \$9.9M in economic activity.

Finally, if Hawai‘i allocates \$3M for the DA BUX program, the state could apply for an additional \$3M in federal matching funds, totaling \$6M. I urge you to support SCR187. This legislation is a win for families, farmers, and the economy.

Sincerely,

Jean Butel

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 1:58:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samuel M Mitchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Da Bux program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- It's putting more food on the tables of local families in need.
- It's providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food.
- It's strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in the Islands.
- It's improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.

The DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families have access to quality fresh food.

Please support HB1248.

Thank you for your consideration,

Samuel Mitchell Makiki NB-10

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 4:30:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Nihipali	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Da Bux program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- It's putting more food on the tables of local families in need.
- It's providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food.
- It's strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in the Islands.
- It's improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.

The DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families have access to quality fresh food.

Please support HB1248.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 5:14:21 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ezgi Green	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

The Da Bux program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods, and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways, including:

- It's putting more food on the tables of local families in need.
- It provides incentives encouraging people to buy locally grown and produced food.
- It's strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in the Islands.
- It's improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.

The DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB1248.

I appreciate your consideration,

Ezgi Green, Kaimanu/Waialua

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 5:51:10 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Selene LeGare	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good for families, good for local farmers. Support!!!

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 5:58:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nikos Leverenz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members:

I **strongly support** HB 1248, HD 1, which would provide \$3 million to support SNAP recipients in purchasing local produce through DA BUX program.

The program has supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors with a 531% increase in sales by farm direct retailers.

This funding will also make our state eligible to apply for \$3 million in federal matching funds and is estimated to have a total economic impact of \$9.9 million.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 6:08:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jamie Walker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawai‘i Healthy Food Incentive Program—DA BUX double up food bucks program—first started with a pilot program in 2012 through Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services on O‘ahu and The Kohala Center on Hawai‘i island. The program provides a dollar-for-dollar match to supplemental nutrition assistance program beneficiaries who purchase locally grown fruits, vegetables, and proteins at participating farmers’ markets, grocery stores, and community-supported agriculture projects.

By the end of 2021, the pilot program was available at 57 food retailers across 98 market sites and pick-up locations that include grocery stores, farmers markets, community supported agriculture programs, and other farm direct retailers. From 2020–2021, DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors.

Each dollar reimbursed to participating DA BUX food retailers for their issued discounts on local produce has an economic multiplier of 2.1 times. This means that each program dollar issued for local produce incentives contributes \$2.10 to Hawai‘i’s economy. A \$3,000,000 investment by the state in this program would allow for a federal funding match that will contribute at least \$12,600,000 to our local economy annually.

This is a triple win for the state because it supports families, farmers, and the local economy. Please support HB1248 HD1.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 6:41:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eliel Starbright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Da Bux program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than [70 participating retail locations statewide](#). Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- It's putting more food on the tables of local families in need.
- It's providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food.
- It's strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in the Islands.
- It's improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.

The DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families have access to quality fresh food.

Please support HB1248.

Thank you for your consideration, Eliel Starbright, Kapaa

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 6:42:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Stayton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support bill HB1248.

Respectfully,

Susan Stayton, Lawai, Kauai, HI

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 6:56:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Kong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Honorable Chair Senator Dela Cruz, Vice Chair, Ranking Members and Distinguished Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

My name is Michael Kong and I am a resident of Honolulu and a small business owner. Over the course of the last 3 years, I've been working with DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks to generate awareness and encourage use of the program.

I have reviewed thousands of comments on DA BUX's social posts and the #1 feedback from users of DA BUX on social media is that they wish it were more widely available.

I believe this program works to provide vital help to our lower income families as well as to our local farmers, and food retailers and that it's an indispensable program to have in our community.

All indicators suggest it will remain as such, even more so, for the foreseeable future.

Please support HB1248.

Thank you for your service, time and consideration.

Respectfully,

**Michael T. Kong
520 Analu St.
Honolulu, HI 96817**

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 7:17:45 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Of course this program support must continue.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 7:22:22 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vince Kana`i Dodge	Testifying for `Ai Pohaku- The Stone Eaters	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kakou!

Writing and strong support for HB1248HD1 as a Waianae community member and small business owner.

This is what DA BUX is doing:

- It's putting more food on the tables of local families in need.
- It's providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food.
- It's strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in the Islands.
- It's improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.

The DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families have access to quality fresh food.

Please support HB1248HD1

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 7:24:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bethan Pualani Baptista	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators, Please vote in the affirmative supporting this effort to Maintain this Supplemental program for the man individuals and family lies who are in need. This program is presently enable families to meet he basic food needs of their family. Please make every effort to ensure children have their nutritional needs met. It impacts every aspect of their lives. It supports many needy families. Children, Parents, Kupuna, Houseless, Disabled, ill and Injured. You all hav the capacity to lift the load of a single mom to put food on the table for her babies, Please Kokua!!! Bethan Pualani Baptista

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 7:38:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawai‘i Healthy Food Incentive Program—DA BUX double up food bucks program—first started with a pilot program in 2012 through Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services on O‘ahu and The Kohala Center on Hawai‘i island. The program provides a dollar-for-dollar match to supplemental nutrition assistance program beneficiaries who purchase locally grown fruits, vegetables, and proteins at participating farmers’ markets, grocery stores, and community-supported agriculture projects.

By the end of 2021, the pilot program was available at 57 food retailers across 98 market sites and pick-up locations that include grocery stores, farmers markets, community supported agriculture programs, and other farm direct retailers. From 2020–2021, DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors.

Each dollar reimbursed to participating DA BUX food retailers for their issued discounts on local produce has an economic multiplier of 2.1 times. This means that each program dollar issued for local produce incentives contributes \$2.10 to Hawai‘i’s economy. A \$3,000,000 investment by the state in this program would allow for a federal funding match that will contribute at least \$12,600,000 to our local economy annually.

This is a triple win for the state because it supports families, farmers, and the local economy. Please support HB1248 HD1.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 9:08:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Brandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support!

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 11:04:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii **STRONGLY SUPPORT** continued SNAP and "DA BUX" funding to help low income residents and farmers producing healthy local fruits and vegetables.

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo!

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 6:34:08 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
RoAnn Viloría	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee,

I am RoAnn Viloría, a Maui Nui resident.

I am in support of HB1248 HD1 because this bill makes locally grown and nutritious food more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders.

By making locally grown and nutritious food more affordable for our residents in Hawai'i, more of our communities will be fed nutritious meals. Having DA BUX is a win-win situation on the vendor and consumer end as it helps local farmers along with our communities, creating a sustainable and economically sound food system. Thus, I am in support of HB1248 HD1.

Mahalo piha,

RoAnn Viloría

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 7:34:18 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn J Ishii	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Da Bux program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

It's putting more food on the tables of local families in need.

It's providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food.

It's strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in the Islands.

It's improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.

The DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families have access to quality fresh food.

Please support HB1248.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lynn Ishii, Wahiawā

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 8:39:13 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am requesting the state to support the DA BUX program with \$3M in funding to support families, local farmers, and our economy.

Helps Families Eat Healthy

- A survey conducted among DA BUX participants (n=436) revealed that 59% of participants are food insecure (dabux.org).
- This program helps SNAP recipients buy more fresh fruits and vegetables by doubling their purchasing power.

Helps Local Farmers and Businesses – numbers are from dabux.org site

- DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors.
- Local produce sales increased 531% at Farm Direct Retailers.
- Helps to grow our local food supply and put more money into our economy.
- The general sentiment from recipient interviews was that DA BUX is giving farmers the opportunity to feed local residents (rather than exporting products to the mainland) and increases production toward a self-sufficient local food supply for the state.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 9:18:46 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Romala Radcliffe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure.

DA BUX increases consumer purchasing power. Locally grown produce is often more expensive than imported items.

DA BUX stretches dollars farther and makes it possible for more people to choose local.

DA BUX advances nutrition, health and well-being. Healthy food is more expensive, and we consistently hear requests for more produce and healthy proteins from our distribution partners and the people we serve.

DA BUX makes these desired, healthier food items more affordable.

DA BUX invests in farmers and statewide food security. With an estimated 85%-90% of our food imported, programs that support Hawai'i farmers are important to us all. The Hawai'i Foodbank regularly purchases from local farmers, and programs that invest in local production capacity help us better support those we serve.

Romala Sue Radcliffe

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 9:29:33 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle K.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I am **strongly supportive** of this bill because many low income folks will continue to benefit when the DA BUX program is sustain to feed them while at the same time, encouraging healthy eating from consumption of fruits and veggies. In addition, local businesses including 470 farm producers and 8 distributors also benefit from this program. Please do the right thing by providing the \$3M in funding because this program is a win-win for everyone participating. Thank you for your kind consideration!

Mahalo,
Michelle K.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 9:45:05 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Emmons	Testifying for Ho`ola Veteran Services d.b.a. Ho`ola Farms / Hilo Food Hub	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ho`ōla Veteran Services d.b.a. Ho`ōla Farms is in Strong Support of HB1248 to continue to feed our community and support local farmers and producers.

LATE

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 12:13:30 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support.

If you don't support food assistance for hungry kids, you should quit the Demoratic Party today.

LATE

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 12:19:03 PM
Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

The Da Bux program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- It's putting more food on the tables of local families in need.
 - It's providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food.
 - It's strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in the Islands.
 - It's improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.
- The DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families have access to quality fresh food.

Please support HB1248.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili

LATE

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2023 12:57:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/31/2023 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Nelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of H.B. 1248 – Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives, which would appropriate funds to the department of agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawai‘i healthy food incentive program (also known as DA BUX) and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

DA BUX helps local producers thrive and sets beginning farmers up for success. DA BUX supports over 450 farm producers and our local economy by incentivizing the sale of their farm products sold at participating farm direct retailers. DA BUX provides a new market for local producers and helped many keep their doors open during the pandemic when the tourism industry was no longer a viable customer. The ending of the public health emergency and SNAP emergency allotments has resulted in more than 83,000 of Hawai‘i’s low-income households experiencing the greatest SNAP benefit cliff in history. With SNAP participating households losing at least \$95 per month (with some of our most vulnerable losing up to \$238), DA BUX has become even more vital to improve access to healthy food for these communities as their purchasing power decreases. Our emergency food system alone cannot fill this gap and meet the need. DA BUX sustainability requires state investment, which the federal government can match.

A \$3 million state investment will provide significant match funds required to unlock federal grant dollars from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP), which the state applicant—The Food Basket—has successfully applied for and received previously. With an economic multiplier of 2.3 for every \$1 spent in Hawai‘i on incentives, a \$3M investment by the state will result in \$12.6M generated in Hawai‘i’s local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

Lauren Nelson

Makawao