

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
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2023
2:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 AND VIDEOCONFERENCE

HOUSE BILL 974 HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill 974, HD1. The purpose of this bill is to establish and fund a full-time program specialist position within the department of agriculture to seek and write grants, provide technical assistance, provide grant program administration, perform needs assessments, make recommendations to the chairperson of the board of agriculture and assist farmers, ranchers and other agricultural operators in applying for and obtaining grants offered by the United States Department of Agriculture and other sources, and to assist them with fulfilling and complying with the requirements of the grants. The Department supports this bill. There is an appropriation requested for the purposes of this measure.

The Department comments that testimony submitted by Ulupono for a similar measure, HB974 included the securing of more than \$15 million in federal funding through the efforts of three grant positions at three agriculture focused non-profits funded by Ulupono from 2020 – 2021 and most recently, in 2022, Ulupono funded a grant writer whose work enabled CTAHR to secure a \$40 million USDA Climate Smart

Commodities grant that provides direct funding to Hawaii's farmers and ranchers that practice climate smart agriculture.

The position within the Department will prioritize the federal formula grants (block grants) that are available to Hawaii via an allocation of funds that are awarded upon an approved application and not subject to competition.

It has been announced that through the efforts of the Hawaii Congressional delegation, the Infrastructure Improvement and Jobs Act allocated \$2.8 billion to Hawaii. These are the opportunities the position will pursue.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure



Food+ Policy Internship 2023

food@purplemaia.org

March 12, 2023

To: Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Subject: **HB974**, Relating to Agriculture

Aloha mai,

Food+ Policy Supports HB974, which would create a grant specialist position in the department of agriculture to support farmers and ranchers that produce local food.

This kind of technical support would help address a top need of Hawai'i farmers: access to capital. A grant specialist would be a small but possibly very effective step government can take to support the local food system.

Mahalo,
Kelsey Amos & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2023, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students from throughout the UH System. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



Environmental Caucus of
The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Agriculture & Food Security Committee

Monday, March 13, 2023, 2:00 pm

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

HOUSE BILL 974 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Position: Strong Support

Me ke Aloha, Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

HB974 establishes a grant specialist position within the Department of Agriculture to prioritize assistance for farmers and ranchers who produce local food, and appropriates money to fund the position.

The Agriculture & Food Security Committee strongly supports developing infrastructure to build greater self-reliance and food security for local working families, both to raise the quality of health in communities suffering from diet-related illness and to guard against supply disruptions as experienced during the lockdown. With 85-90% of our food imported, we are particularly susceptible to climate disasters in food-producing regions and supply chain disruptions. Every avenue needs to be explored, and having a specialist to identify sources to help build food resilience is a worthy vote. These programs can grow the capacity to substitute local produce for precarious imports, to fortify and nourish soil productivity, and to improve land management.

It is well known that federal programs are available that can assist farmers and ranchers in various aspects of their operations, but that many remain unknown and incompletely tapped. Most farmers and ranchers do not have the time nor initiative to be plying the possibilities. Particularly in a time when federal funding is advancing to overcome the economic downturn experienced during the pandemic, Hawaii needs eyes and ears to discover such available assistance and to create strategic programs to match or tap them, and to assist local producers to use them productively.

Mahalo for the opportunity to address this matter.

/s/ Charley Ice Acting Chair, Agriculture and Food Security Committee
Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT
Wednesday, March 15, 2023 — 2:00 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative strongly supports HB 974 HD1, Relating to Agriculture.

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

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

Ulupono strongly supports HB 974 HD1, which establishes and appropriates funds for a program specialist position within the Department of Agriculture (DOA) and prioritizes assistance for farmers and ranchers who produce local food that is at least partially consumed within the State.

Ulupono supports the State's efforts to actively pursue grant opportunities that help local agriculturalists. Many federal programs are dedicated to state departments or agencies who can apply for funding to support local initiatives. Establishing a position at the DOA for this work is extremely timely, not only to meet the needs of local farmers and ranchers, but also due to the funding that has been made available by the federal government.

Ulupono currently funds three grant and loan writer programs with The Kohala Center, the O'ahu Agriculture and Conservation Association (OACA), and the Hawai'i Farm Bureau. From 2020 to 2021, these three grant and loan writer programs were able to secure more than \$15 million in federal funds via USDA agricultural programs. In 2022, Ulupono funded a grant writer to enable UH CTAHR's USDA Climate Smart Commodities grant application. UH CTAHR was awarded a massive ~\$40 million USDA Climate Smart Commodities grant that will provide direct funding to Hawai'i farmers and ranchers that practice climate smart agriculture. Similarly, Ulupono believes a dedicated DOA grant writer will be well worth the investment, and result in millions of dollars in federal funding to further support the State's agricultural efforts.

We appreciate this committee's effort to hear important measures that look to establish long-term support for our local farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



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March 15, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON HB 974, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:00 PM

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

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 974, HD1, which establishes a program specialist position within the Department of Agriculture and appropriates moneys to fund the position. HB 974, HD1 prioritizes assistance for farmers and ranchers who produce local food that is at least partially consumed within the State.

The decrease in direct Federal appropriations for agriculture has resulted in an increased level of dependence on grants. Many federal programs have turned into competitive grant programs.

Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers are finding it difficult to secure the financial support necessary to build capacity. Grant writing for USDA, State, County, and other grants usually involves a very complex application process that can be difficult to navigate through. This often deters farmers and ranchers from applying for USDA and other grants. A well-trained and skilled grant writer would be able to assist farmers and ranchers obtain USDA and other grants by assisting them with applying for and fulfilling the requirements of the grants.

Access to USDA and other grants can result in increased capacity, new business opportunities, increase employment opportunities and address Hawai'i's goals of increased self-sufficiency and sustainability.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



HB974 HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

March 15, 2023

2:00 PM

Room 224

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers its **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS** for HB974 HD1, which would establish and fund a full-time program specialist position within the Department of Agriculture to, among other things, to provide grant program administration and to perform needs assessments. **OHA takes care to note that Native Hawaiian farmers and ranchers often face greater inequities and disparities as a result of historic injustice. OHA asks that the Legislature to amend this measure to require that the program specialist is tasked with developing a program that specifically addresses the needs of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (SDFR) “as those belonging to groups that have been subject to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice.”¹ The USDA has affirmed that Native Hawaiians are recognized under the SDFR characterization² and a number of financial support instruments exist through the USDA for SDFRs.³ While this distinction and the needs of those within this designation exist at the federal level, the State of Hawai‘i has yet to adopt the necessary policies and mechanisms to address inequities and disparities faced by socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, like Native Hawaiian mahi‘ai. **As the principal public agency in the State responsible for the performance, development, and coordination of programs and activities relating to Native Hawaiians, OHA asks this legislature to ensure that Native Hawaiian farmers and ranchers are provided equitable farm assistance opportunities, such as the grants proposed through this measure.**

OHA appreciates this opportunity to offer its support with amendments on HB974 HD1 and **asks that the Legislature level the field for socially disadvantaged farmers by amending this measure with OHA’s recommendation.** Mahalo nui loa.

¹ USDA Economic Research Service, Socially Disadvantaged, Beginning, Limited Resource, and Female Farmers and Ranchers, available at <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/socially-disadvantaged-beginning-limited-resource-and-female-farmers-and-ranchers/#:~:text=The%20USDA%20defines%20socially%20disadvantaged,and%20Asian%20or%20Pacific%20I slander.>

² USDA Farm Service Agency, Minority and Women Farmers and Ranchers, available at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/minority-and-women-farmers-and-ranchers/index>.

³ USDA Farm Service Agency, Loans for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Fact Sheet 2019, available at https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/2019/sda_loans-fact_sheet-aug_2019.pdf.

HB-974-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 12:39:59 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii **SUPPORT** funding local food production to provide healthier food and greater food security, and avoid greenhouse gas emissions associated with importing food from distant continents. We support funding a grant specialist in DoA to prioritize local food production.

Please pass this bill. Mahalo!



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND
ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

HB974 HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, March 15, 2023, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB974 HD1** which establishes a program specialist position within the Department of Agriculture and appropriates moneys to fund the position and prioritizes assistance for farmers and ranchers who produce local food that is at least partially consumed within the State.

Funding a position within the Department of Agriculture to assist ranchers and farmers to secure funding is important to ensuring access to capital for operations to succeed. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council supports all forms of agriculture and would like to point out that the opportunity to export goods helps many operations stay economically viable as a business. Every rancher in Hawaii contributes to local food whether it's through a grass-finished branded program or through cull cows and bulls that contribute to the local ground beef supply. Exporting goods is a smart way to diversify operations especially in times of drought. However, we support this measure which gives priority to those who produce local food.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director



HB-974-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 3:11:15 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Redfeather	Testifying for Hawai'i Seed Growers Network	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

The Hawaii Seed Growers Network stands in full support of HB974 HD1 for this additional Staff person at HDOA whose responsibility will be Grant Specialist to assist farmers and ranchers to connect with funds available at the federal or with other entities to support and improve their ability to produce food. It is only fair that they be local food producers to receive such assistance. As we begin to build capacity in HDOA hopefully not one position at a time, we are building capacity statewide to fulfill the vision that the Governor, Chair, and many Legislators hold for developing greater food security and income for Hawaii's farmers and ranchers. Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha, Nancy Redfeather

Hawai'i Seed Growers Network - Education and Outreach Coordinator

HB-974-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 9:09:21 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-974-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 10:19:43 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
penny levin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a local farmer I support this measure. However, I have some concerns regarding the wording of who will be considered a qualifying farmer to benefit from this bill. As written, any producer who sells a single pound of food to a local consumer will qualify even when their primary focus is distribution outside Hawaii. I make the following recommendation to address this issue:

“...provided that priority shall be given to farmers and ranchers who produce local food, at least ~~some portion~~ twenty-five percent of which is consumed within the State.”

This would make a clear statement about the intentions of the position to grow our local food supply, yet still allows those producers who pursue both local and outside markets to benefit, without placing those farmers who distribute solely to local markets at a disadvantage.

Mahalo

Penny Levin

HB-974-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 6:07:12 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of HD1. Thank you.

HB-974-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 7:03:08 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Barry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill with reservations. I think you should specify what percentage of local use is required. I don't like the word "some" in this bill. What does "some" mean? An orange, lime or lemon? That could be construed as "some".

if farmers or ranchers are getting this benefit, I suggest 75% of their products should be for Hawaii food security and not exporting to Japan or some other lucrative market.

This Bill is meant to support local farmers and ranchers, not Mahi Pono who is a foreign Canadian pension fund landowner.

Please fix the language to protect and care for farmers and ranchers from Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

HB-974-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 2:28:56 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas L. Vincent	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. Writing grant proposals is a skill lacking in many agencies. I teach grant writing at UHManoa and have done so for 17 semesters. It is critically important that this skill is available in our state government. Please pass this bill. My testimony is personal and does not necessarily represent the views of my employer, UH Manoa.