



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2023**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 520, S.D. 1, RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

DATE: Wednesday, February 22, 2023 **TIME:** 10:00 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 211

TESTIFIER(S): **WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY.**
(For more information, contact Jodi K. Yi,
Deputy Attorney General, at 808-586-1195)

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments regarding this bill.

This bill, in sections 1 and 2, establishes and appropriates funds for a farm succession pilot program in the University of Hawaii's community college system. In section 3, the bill also appropriates money for a farmer apprentice mentoring program, which was created by Act 304, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022. Section 3 of the bill states that the appropriation is "for the purposes of this Act" at page 3, line 13. As written, the term "this Act" may appear to refer to the farm succession program (that already has an appropriation to be expended by the University of Hawaii, in section 2) rather than the farmer apprentice mentoring program created by Act 304, Sessions Laws of Hawaii 2022.

We recommend deleting the wording "for the purposes of this Act" at page 3, line 13, and replacing it with "for the purposes of Act 304, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022."

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.



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February 22, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON SB 520, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
10:00 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 SB 520, SD1, which establishes the Farmer Succession Pilot Program within the University of Hawaii Community College System, requires a report to the Legislature, and appropriates funds for the pilot program and Farmer Apprentice Mentoring Program.

Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers are aging. The average age of the Hawai'i farmer exceeds 60 years old, and if they were in other professions would most likely be retired. Yet many of these farmers are those that provide to supermarkets, restaurants, hotels, and farmers' markets, and truly make a difference in reducing imports.

Multigenerational commercial farms and ranches are facing the prospect of closure because succession plans do not exist. As these farmers and ranchers retire, their lands go out of agricultural production. There is an urgent need for interns or apprentices that are willing to not only work on these farms but take over their operations.

This measure will provide support for the next generation of new farmers who are interested in developing the skills and knowledge needed to be successful agriculture businesses.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

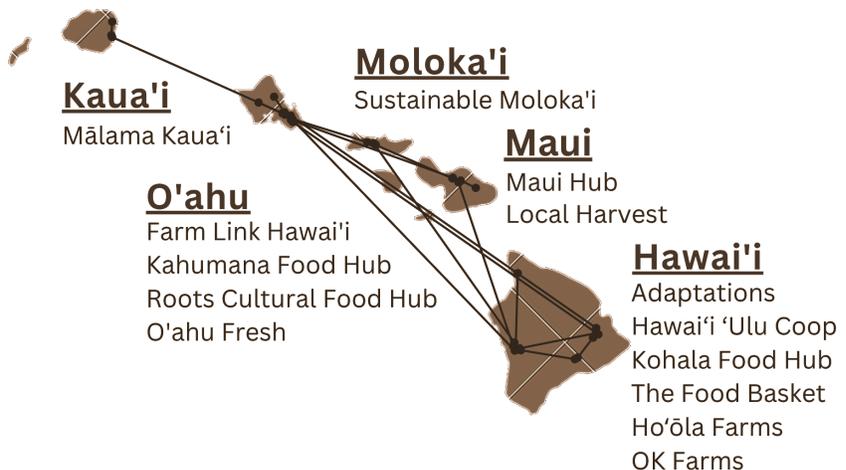
Hawai'i Food Hub Hui

2/20/2023

Dear WAM committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB520.

Hawai'i Food Hub Hui (HFHH) strongly supports SB520. The farm succession pilot program is designed to help ensure the succession of agricultural lands and productive resources by encouraging matchmaking between incoming and outgoing farmers, as well as matchmaking between recently trained farmers and available jobs in agriculture and food systems. Additionally, the program provides technical assistance and coordination to assist prospective farmers with access to land, finance, counseling, business planning and management, and grant writing. The program also funds and continues programs that provide education and training to beginning farmers and ranchers, including agricultural rehabilitation and vocational training programs. Finally, the program helps to advance land partnerships such as farm incubator programs and educational programs on commercial farms that teach agricultural and business skills.

HFHH is a collaboration dedicated to supporting local food hubs and promoting the consumption of locally grown, culturally preferred foods. Food hubs do this by aggregating, storing, processing, and distributing locally grown produce to Hawaii's residents.



Our collaboration was created in 2017 and currently encompasses 14 food hubs across the states supporting 1,337 farms that serve approximately 14,465 customers every year. The HFHH's efforts ensure that small- and medium-sized farms have access to the resources they need to thrive, as well as providing access to fresh, healthy, and culturally appropriate foods to local residents.

Saleh Azizi Fardkhales, Ph.D.
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SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS
Wednesday, February 22, 2023 — 10:00 a.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports SB 520 SD1, Relating to Agriculture.

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 supports SB 520 SD1, which establishes the Farmer Succession Pilot Program within the University of Hawaii Community College System and appropriates funds for the pilot program and the Farmer Apprentice Mentoring Program.

According to the 2017 USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Census of Agriculture, the average age of a Hawai'i farmer was 60.1 years. Additionally, 66% of Hawai'i's 7,328 farms statewide, or 4,868 farms, are between 1–9 acres and 78%, or 5,701 farms, produce less than \$25,000 in sales.¹ This data shows that there is an aging farmer workforce that works off of extremely tight profit margins. This measure is helpful in developing the next generation of local, successful producers here in Hawai'i.

The Farm Succession Pilot Program's efforts, as identified in subsection (b) of this bill, easily align with the work of the GoFarm Hawai'i Program. **We ask the committee to consider adding in an appropriation for the GoFarm Hawai'i statewide beginning farmer training program**, as this effort has proven successful in teaching young, interested farmers not just how to grow products, but also the importance of business and market development.

As Hawai'i's local food issues become increasingly complex and challenging, we appreciate this committee's efforts to look at policies that support the future of local food production.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

¹https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_1_State_Level/Hawaii/



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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 supports SB520.**

The future of farming in Hawaii depends on the next generation of farmers and the ability for existing farmers to pass on their knowledge, land, and resources to their children or other individuals who are committed to farming. However, the barriers to entry and the complexities of running a farm can be overwhelming, especially for those just starting out.

The farmer succession pilot program will provide much-needed support for the next generation of farmers, helping to ensure that Hawaii's agricultural heritage is preserved and that our communities continue to have access to fresh, locally grown food. The farmer apprentice mentoring program will provide critical on-the-job training and support for aspiring farmers, helping them to develop the skills and confidence they need to succeed. I strongly urge the legislature to support this bill and appropriate funds for these essential programs. They will be critical in supporting the growth and sustainability of our state's agricultural industry.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF

SB-520-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 11:01:20 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support SB520 SD1.