

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEXTER KISHIDA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI  
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD**  
**CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**FEBRUARY 2, 2024**  
**1:00 PM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2794**  
**RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2794 that appropriates funds for the establishment of three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors and one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) inspector program supervisor position to perform meat inspection services pursuant to Chapter 159, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The Department supports this measure and provides comments.

The meat inspector program supervisor is essential to establish and to operate a meat inspection program. The Department appreciates that the measure recognizes the need for additional personnel to establish and operate a meat inspection program. The current staff of Veterinary Medical Officers or Veterinary Program Manager would be constrained by the time and training needed to oversee this specialized program.

Additionally, operating costs including equipment, vehicle(s), office space, travel expenses, laboratory testing and supplies such as PPE are also needed. Payroll and operating costs are necessary recurring expenditures to continue the program once active, which are estimated to be approximately \$1,000,000 annually.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





# MAUI COUNTY FARM BUREAU

PO Box 148, Kula, HI 96790  
mauicountyfarmbureau.org

## TESTIMONY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

February 2, 2024  
1:00 PM  
Conference Room 224  
**SB 2794**  
**RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

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

Maui County Farm Bureau (MCFB) appreciates this opportunity to testify on this important issue. MCFB is a general agriculture advocacy organization representing farm and ranch families and organizations on the island of Maui.

MCFB strongly supports HB 609 seeking to increase Hawaii's meat inspection capacity.

Food Safety is a priority for a healthy community. Inspection of livestock prior to slaughter is a critical step to ensuring safety of our food supply. States across the nation had meat inspection capacity in addition to those provided by the Federal government. During the economic downturn, states, including Hawaii, eliminated these positions wholly relying on Federal inspection capacity.

Over the years, small ranches raising a variety of animals have become commonplace and states are realizing the need for local capacity in addition to Federal capacity. This is a link to Oregon that just restored their state inspection capacity.

[https://www.capitalpress.com/state/oregon/oregon-lawmakers-approve-state-meat-inspection-to-strengthen-local-meat/article\\_19bd2b48-b645-11ea-95d0-8fbfd152f006.html](https://www.capitalpress.com/state/oregon/oregon-lawmakers-approve-state-meat-inspection-to-strengthen-local-meat/article_19bd2b48-b645-11ea-95d0-8fbfd152f006.html)

Maui has an axis deer problem. Expansion of venison meat sales allowed with increased inspection capacity is an integral part of managing this invasive species. Expanded meat processing capacity provides one of the steps needed for a long term solution.

Goat meat is becoming very popular. Commercialization of this option will also require inspections.

MCFB respectfully requests your support of this measure to strengthen local agricultural operations.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this matter. Please contact Warren Watanabe at 8082819718 if there are any questions.



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

**SB2794**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Friday, February 2, 2024, 1:00 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 SB2794** which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for its meat inspection program, including one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) inspector program supervisor position and three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors.

Access to inspectors to validate safety of harvest and processing of livestock is a necessary part of Hawaii's local meat supply chain. The creation of a state administered meat and poultry inspection could increase access to inspectors that facilities can utilize, which would increase the capacity of meat that could be processed. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council supports the establishment and funding of a meat inspection program. The state program should be supplemental to the existing federal inspection, allowing for more options for processors to choose from to get the job done.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Nicole Galase  
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council  
Managing Director





P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
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February 1, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2479**  
RELATING TO THE HAWAII FARM TO FOOD BANK PROGRAM

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
1:00 PM

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

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 2479**, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Food Bank Program and Hawai'i Food Assistance Program Special Fund to alleviate food shortages in the State.

The Coronavirus Pandemic disrupted Hawai'i's local food systems and caused many local producers to lose their local markets. Many catered to tourism, large-scale events, hotels, restaurants, cruise ships, farmers' markets, and school lunch programs, which were non-existent during Hawai'i's shutdown.

Like small businesses around the state, without open and consistent markets, local farmers and ranchers will decrease food production levels and will likely downsize and/or go out of business. To help address the state's food security during the pandemic, Hawai'i's Foodbanks partnered with local food producers to ensure that farmers and ranchers could survive.

At the onset of the pandemic, Hawai'i's Foodbanks partnered with farmers and ranchers to provide local agricultural produce and proteins for their food assistance programs. As organizations that aggregate and distribute food, Foodbank staff brought valuable logistical insight to these programs. The combined efforts of Hawai'i's Foodbanks, the Hawai'i Farm Bureau, and other partner organizations allowed tens of thousands of families to have access to food during unprecedented times. This win-win partnership connected local producers that lost markets and revenue

sources due to COVID-19 with the Hawai'i Foodbank to meet the increased demands of feeding Hawai'i's communities.

A Hawai'i Farm to Food Bank Program with dedicated funding will provide funds to Hawai'i's food banks that support non-profit and community feeding programs by providing locally grown or produced foods to communities in need. This will also help Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers while also providing local nutritional food to those who need it most.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



January 30, 2024

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

**Testimony in Support of SB 2794, Relating to Agriculture (Appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for its meat inspection program, including one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) inspector program supervisor position and three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors.)**

**Friday, February 2, 2024, 1:00 p.m.; State Capitol, Conference Room 211, and Videoconference**

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers, and utility companies. LURF's mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational, and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express its **support of SB 2794** and for the various agricultural stakeholder groups who defend the goals of viable agricultural operations and the conservation and protection of agriculture in Hawaii.

**SB 2794.** The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds for costs for meat inspection services under Chapter 159, Hawaii Revised Statutes, including the establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) inspector program supervisor position and three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspector positions.

LURF understands that consumer demand for locally grown beef, together with the drastic surge in the axis deer population in Maui County have resulted in a lack of antemortem meat inspection capacity in the State. Due to the discontinuance of the State's meat inspection program in the mid-1990s, local meat producers have no alternative but to now comply with inspection requirements of the USDA-Food Safety and Inspection Service in order to sell meat to the retail and wholesale market. Restoration and update of the local meat inspection program to comply with new federal law requirements will expand Hawaii's livestock industry; address the use of axis deer;

and supplement federal inspection capacity to provide the local livestock industry greater access to the marketplace.

**LURF's Position.** LURF members include property owners, farmers and ranchers who own, maintain, and engage in agricultural enterprises, and who consider efforts to protect and support agriculture significant to the continued conduct of their operations and to help sustain and preserve farming and ranching businesses into the future.

LURF supports SB 2794 because the bill could allow local meat facilities to meet the needs of the State's diverse livestock industry by providing an alternative to USDA-Food Safety and Inspection Service inspection; assist in meeting the demand of Hawaii consumers; and increase processing capacity and diversify processing options.

This measure makes a significant effort to advance and facilitate needed meat production in Hawaii. By recognizing the issues faced by local farmers and ranchers, and by identifying the need to assist the local agriculture and ranching industries and implement measures which help to support the viability and maintenance of agriculture and ranching in the State, this bill significantly helps to promote economically viable agriculture, increased food production, and food self-sufficiency in Hawaii.

For the reasons stated above, LURF **supports SB 2794**, and respectfully urges your favorable consideration of this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding this matter.



**Officers**

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Ted Radovich  
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminka  
Kauai

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment 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 SB2794.**

The discontinuation of the State's meat inspection program in the mid-1990s has left a significant void in our livestock industry's infrastructure, hindering our capacity to grow and compete effectively in the marketplace. The restoration and modernization of this program are essential not only for the expansion of Hawaii's livestock industry but also for the sustainable management of axis deer populations, which present both a challenge and an opportunity for our state.

Furthermore, the act's proposition to supplement existing federal inspection capacity by certifying local veterinarians is an innovative and practical approach to overcoming the logistical and financial challenges posed by Hawaii's unique geographic context. This strategy will ensure that our livestock industry can meet federal requirements efficiently while providing greater access to the marketplace for our producers.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF



**SB-2794**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 8:27:47 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mamiko Carroll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Senator Richards, Senator DeCoite, Senator Rhoads, and Senator Awa,

I am writing in SUPPORT of SB2794, allocating funds to update Hawaii's meat inspection program. This is an investment in our economy and food security, supporting the growth of the livestock industry while also insuring consumer safety.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of SB2794.