

**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  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

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

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024  
1:15 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 229 AND VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2932  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairs Inouye and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Elefante and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2932. This bill appropriates funds for capital improvement projects for agricultural infrastructure projects throughout the State. SB 2932 recognizes that a reliable agricultural infrastructure that supports the State's land and water resources is the lifeline of Hawaii's agriculture industry and critical for farmers' and ranchers' plan to increase production on agricultural lands and for Hawaii's for-profit and non-profit agencies to invest in Hawaii agriculture knowing there will be a reliable source of water and support for the infrastructure of agricultural lands as well as support for new and innovative opportunities to grow agriculture in the State.

The Department greatly appreciates and supports SB 2932 for quantifying the repair and maintenance needs statewide, recognizing the request in the bill is a lengthy stretch at this time of limited resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**WENDY L. GADY**  
Executive Director

STATE OF HAWAII  
**AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
235 S. Beretania Street, Suite 205  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
Phone: (808) 586-0186 Fax: (808) 586-0189

**TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER AND LAND  
AND AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

Monday, February 5, 2024  
1:15 p.m.  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

**SENATE BILL NO. 2932  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairpersons Inouye and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Elefante and Richards, and Members of the joint Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 2938, which appropriates funds for capital improvement projects per the agricultural infrastructure of the State, a food and product innovation network, and outstanding debt on the Waiahole water system.

The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) strongly supports this measure, which provides funding for critical infrastructure projects statewide. These capital improvement projects will make ADC's water systems more reliable and efficient, and provide water retention areas to address fire mitigation, drought conditions, and climate change. This measure also provides funding for the Food Product Innovation Network, which will create rural jobs, provide additional revenue streams to our local farmers and producers, and foster the

development of locally made value-added products to expand the “Made in Hawaii” brand.

In addition to the infrastructure projects that will help ADC utilize its land assets and promote economic development, this measure also provides debt relief for the Waiahole Water System, which would allow ADC to re-invest the revenues generated back into the century old irrigation system, which provides irrigation water to 5,866 acres in Central Oahu.

The ADC believes these investments will make the agency more dynamic and stimulate economic development, particularly in our rural communities. By making these investments, ADC will be able to attract and support agribusinesses and entrepreneurs and help them reach economies of scale.

We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

SENATE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT AND WATER & LAND  
Monday, February 5, 2024 — 1:15 p.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports SB 2932, Relating to Agriculture**

Dear Chair Gabbard, Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committees:

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 2932**, which appropriates funds for capital improvement projects per the agricultural infrastructure of the State, a food and product innovation network, and outstanding debt on the Waiahole water system.

Ulupono supports funding for critical agricultural infrastructure across Hawai'i, much of which resides within the management of the Department of Agriculture (DOA) and the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), the State's two entities tasked with agricultural infrastructure management and development. From irrigation maintenance, repair and water resource development to agricultural land acquisition, ag park development and innovative food and product networks, we believe that this bill captures a bulk, if not all, of the actual DOA and ADC infrastructure needs.

From 2020 to 2023, Ulupono Initiative actively engaged with agricultural stakeholders across the state seeking to understand the greatest needs of the industry and how best to coordinate funding and resources toward those needs. In most cases, local producers identified access to affordable, reliable land and water resources as top issues that will determine the success and financial viability of their operations. This measure presents a singular opportunity to meet those needs of our hard-working, local farmers and ranchers with dedicated state resources, and to directly support the State's local food production goals.

If we are serious about the future of our state's agriculture, key infrastructure investments are needed, and they are needed **now**.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Director of Government Affairs

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*



# Food+ Policy Internship 2024

[food@purplemaia.org](mailto:food@purplemaia.org)

February 4, 2024

To: Chair Gabbard, the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment and the Senate Committee on Water and Land

Subject: *Testimony in Support of SB 2932: Food and Product Innovation Network*

Aloha,

Hawaii Food+ Policy is in full support of SB 2932, which seeks appropriations for capital improvement projects in agricultural infrastructure, the establishment of a food and product innovation network, and the retirement of outstanding debt on the Waihole water system. This is a commendable effort to bolster our agricultural sector and ensure the well-being of our communities. Hawaii's unique geographic location and climate provide an ideal environment for diverse agricultural activities. However, our agricultural sector faces significant challenges, including outdated infrastructure, limited resources, and the impact of natural disasters. SB2932 addresses these challenges by allocating funds to upgrade and modernize our agricultural infrastructure, ensuring that farmers have the tools and support they need to thrive.

Our Intern Wailana Purdy-Avelino is a Hoolehua homesteader of Molokai, they rely on the Molokai Irrigation System (MIS) to be able to grow and produce food on 5-acres. They hope to expand production into their remaining 35-acres and yet, many other homesteaders are still waiting for MIS access so that they too can expand their production and benefit from lower water rates of the MIS. The MIS project was originally created and funded through the Federal Small Reclamation Act for the intent of fulfilling the Hawaiian Homestead Act. Through the approval of this bill we hope that our patient homestead farmers as well as other farmers across the state, will have access to water to be able to produce more food for Hawai'i.

We urge you to consider the long-term benefits that SB2932 will bring to our agricultural community and the entire state. By supporting this bill, we can lay the foundation for a thriving and sustainable agricultural sector that benefits current and future generations. Thank you for your dedication to the well-being of Hawaii and its residents. We are confident that your support will contribute to the prosperity and resilience of our agricultural community.

Mahalo,

Hawaii Food+ Policy Team

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**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 2024, the cohort of interns are undergrads 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.



