

**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 AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024  
1:00 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 129  
AND SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 111  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A  
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP AN  
INTERAGENCY FOOD SYSTEMS PLAN.**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 129 and Senate Resolution No. 111 that requests the Department of Agriculture (Department) to establish a Sustainable Food Systems Working Group (Working Group). The Working Group is to be led by the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture and the Director of the Department of Planning, Economic Development, and Tourism. The Department offers comments and has strong concerns.

The Working Group is requested to have 11 members (Page 2, lines 1-12). A single member of the House of Representatives and a single member of the Senate (to be selected by the House Speaker and the Senate President, respectively) are to



collaboratively select and invite one representative with knowledge in the following general areas (Page 3, lines 2-15):

- (1) Food as a human right and healthy food for all;
- (2) Social equity and food justice;
- (3) Food system resilience;
- (4) Agriculture and food system sustainability;
- (5) Food at the center of a circular economy;
- (6) Sustainable education, workforce development, and fair labor; and
- (7) Good food governance

The Working Group is requested to develop an “Interagency Food Systems Plan” (Plan) that links to the United Nations “sustainable development goals”, identifies a “governance structure”, and a plan to implement the Plan.

The Plan and recommendations to implement the Plan are due to the 2025 Legislature. The Department is requested to provide administrative, and staff support to the Working Group and prepare the Plan.

The Department has strong concerns.

The Department is very concerned that there is no request to have agricultural operators or agricultural organizations represented on the Working Group. The Plan risks becoming an academic exercise without the full and sustained participation of local farmers who produce food that most, if not all, of the elements of the Plan will be based on. Further, despite earlier repeated requests by the Department for legislative guidance, there has been no attempt to define each of the seven broad areas that will

be at the heart of the Plan. The utility of linking the seven broad areas to the United Nations sustainable development goals (Page 2, lines 32-36) is not clear. Further, the Plan is to identify a “governance structure” which is also not defined. (Page 2, line 38)

The Department is requested to “provide administrative and staff support to the Sustainable Food Systems Working Group, including the preparation of the interagency food systems plan” (Page 3, lines 26-29). The Department is very concerned about the duties to the Department in establishing the Working Group, addressing the seven broad areas, writing the Plan and recommendations for implementation of the Plan to the 2025 Legislature, providing staff support including any meetings that may have to be in accordance with Chapter 92, and writing and printing the Plan. These duties require the Department to redirect the already severely diminished professional staff resources away from the State’s highest priority of increasing the economic viability of existing agricultural businesses and assist in the establishment of new ones in direct support of increasing local food self-sufficiency and export.

The Department is very concerned that the Working Group and the Plan not become an academic exercise with no meaningful impact on the State’s highest priorities of increasing the economic viability of existing agricultural businesses and assisting in the establishment of new ones in direct support of increasing local food self-sufficiency and exports.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.



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

#### **Executive Officers**

**Gary Okimoto**, Safeway Hawaii, *Chair*  
**Maile Miyashiro**, C&S Wholesale Grocer, *Vice Chair*  
**Kit Okimoto**, Okimoto Corp., *Secretary/Treas.*  
**Lauren Zirbel**, HFIA, *Executive Director*  
**Paul Kosasa**, ABC Stores, *Advisor*  
**Derek Kurisu**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*  
**Toby Taniguchi**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*  
**Joe Carter**, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*  
**Eddie Asato**, Pint Size Hawaii, *Immediate Past Chair*

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TO: Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 27, 2024  
TIME: 1pm  
PLACE: Room 224

RE: SCR129 / SR111 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP AN INTERAGENCY FOOD SYSTEMS PLAN.

Position: Support

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

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

HFIA is in support of this measure and the intent of the Sustainable Food Systems Working Group. We also understand the need to keep the group at a reasonable size in order to maximize its ability to take action.

We strongly believe that the effectiveness of the working group will be improved with representation from Hawaii's Food Industry. A representative from HFIA would provide high level industry knowledge and expertise to the group and we are glad to participate. It's also important to note that by including HFIA, the working group would gain access to a network of local retailers and suppliers, amplifying the impact of any initiatives the group takes.

HFIA's mission aligns with purpose of the working group - a robust, sustainable, and resilient food supply chain. We encourage the Committee to pass this measure and consider adding a food retailer or representative from HFIA to the group, and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
Wednesday, March 27, 2024 – 1:00 P.M.  
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

**SCR 129/SR 111 – REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A SUSTAINABLE FOOD  
SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP AN INTERAGENCY  
FOOD SYSTEMS PLAN**

**SUPPORT**

Hawai'i Aquaculture &  
Aquaponics Association  
Hawai'i Cattlemen's Council  
Hawai'i Farm Bureau  
Federation  
Hawai'i Farmers' Union  
United  
Hawai'i Food Industry  
Association  
Hawai'i Food  
Manufacturers Association  
Kohala Center  
Land Use Research  
Foundation of Hawai'i  
Maui Farm to School  
Network (Maui F2SN)  
Ulupono Initiative  
College of Tropical  
Agriculture and Human  
Resources - University of  
Hawai'i at Manoa

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

The Local Food Coalition **SUPPORTS** SCR 129 and SR 111,  
requesting the Department of Agriculture to establish a sustainable  
food systems working group to develop an interagency food  
systems plan.

The pandemic, supply chain issues, and inflation highlighted the  
need to increase Hawaii's food self-sufficiency and reduce our  
reliance on imports. Developing an interagency food systems plan  
can help the state fulfill its goal of increasing local food production  
and support our local agriculture industry.

The Local Food Coalition is an organization comprised of farmers,  
ranchers, livestock producers, investors and other organizations  
working to provide Hawaii's food supply.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of  
SCR 129 and SR 111.



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

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & THE ENVIRONMENT  
Wednesday, March 27, 2024 — 1:00 p.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports SCR 129, Requesting the Department of Agriculture to Establish a Sustainable Food Systems Working Group to Develop an Interagency Food Systems Plan.**

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, clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**Ulupono supports SCR 129**, which requests the Department of Agriculture to establish a Sustainable Food Systems Working Group to develop an interagency Food Systems Plan.

The development of an interagency food systems plan can help achieve the state's goal of increasing local food production, while also creating more resilient communities, expanding the local workforce, and bolstering our local economy by decreasing our reliance on imported food. We need all efforts to uplift our local food producers and ensure the future of the agriculture industry in Hawai'i during this critical time, as highlighted recently by the pandemic and climate change related natural disasters.

Ulupono supports this measure to create and identify a plan for a viable and resilient local food economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Director of Government Affairs

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*



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

March 27, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON SCR 129 and SR 111**  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A  
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP AN  
INTERAGENCY FOOD SYSTEMS PLAN

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 SCR 129 and SR 111**, which request the Department of Agriculture to establish a sustainable food systems working group to develop an interagency food systems plan.

The impacts of the COVID pandemic have highlighted the need to strengthen Hawai'i's food system to ensure greater resilience, food security, human health, and economic diversity and stability.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments, and thank you for your continued support of Hawai'i's agricultural community.

**SCR-129**

Submitted on: 3/23/2024 12:24:34 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/27/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Yes to; REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP AN INTERAGENCY FOOD SYSTEMS PLAN.



**SCR-129**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 11:42:52 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/27/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!

MAHALO!