

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 12, 2023

TO: The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: [HB 1248 HD1](#) – RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM INCENTIVES.

Hearing: Wednesday, March 15, 2023, Time 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this bill, and defers to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) as to administrative and budget needs. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The bill's purpose is to appropriate funds to DOA for the continued administration of the Hawaii healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP). Effective 6/30/3000. (HD1). The HD1 amended this measure by:

- (1) Changing the effective date to June 30, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The Hawaii healthy food incentive dollar-for-dollar matching program helps SNAP participants double their purchasing power. Especially during this time of elevated food costs,

continuing the program doubles the value of SNAP participants' benefits spent on Hawaii-grown fresh fruits and vegetables. This supports local farmers and keeps food dollars in the local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

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
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

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

HOUSE BILL NO. 1248, HD1
RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
INCENTIVES

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1248, HD1. This measure appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program (HHFIP) and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program. The Department is in strong support of this bill and offers comments.

The Department is in strong support of this measure commenting that the DOA served as the administrator of the HHFIP, partnering with The Food Basket in Hilo, Hawaii, Ulupono, The Hawaii Good Food Alliance, and other food system groups addressing food insecurity in Hawaii. The Department looks forward to continuing the effort to provide nutrition to the food insecure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Council Chair
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Presiding Officer Pro Tempore
Tasha Kama

Councilmembers
Tom Cook
Gabe Johnson
Tamara Paltin
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez
Shane M. Sinenci
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins



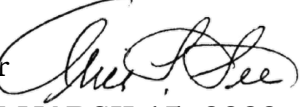
Director of Council Services
Traci N. T. Fujita, Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

March 11, 2023

TO: The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: Alice L. Lee
Council Chair 

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF MARCH 15, 2023; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1248, HD1, RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds for the Hawai'i Food Incentive Program and provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

The Maui County Council adopted Resolution 23-43, "URGING THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO SUPPORT AND ADOPT THE PRIORITY FOOD POLICIES RECOMMENDED BY THE TRANSFORMING HAWAII'S FOOD SYSTEMS TOGETHER INITIATIVE," in support of this measure. Therefore, I offer this testimony on the Council's behalf.

The Maui County Council **supports** this measure for the following reasons:

1. This measure facilitates the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, which is an integral part of a healthy diet and central to the prevention of obesity and chronic disease.
2. The Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program, also known as DA BUX, incentivizes beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program with a dollar-for-dollar match on locally produced fresh fruits and vegetables. This measure provides the essential funding to continue this valuable program.
3. This measure advances the following Maui County General Plan policy: "Expand public awareness and promote programs to achieve healthy eating habits. . ."

For the foregoing reasons, the Maui County Council **supports** this measure.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 7:48:29 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
"Phil" Augustus Acosta	Testifying for Aloha Harvest	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We at Aloha Harvest are in strong support of HB1248, a triple-win for the community as it makes fresh, local produce more affordable by doubling their purchasing power of SNAP recipients, improves nutrition to our most vulnerable populations, while supporting farmers and keeps money in the local economy.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Monday, March 13, 2023; 1:15 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 224
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1248, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES.

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

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 1248, House Draft 1, RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would appropriate an unspecified amounts of general funds for fiscal years 2023-2024, and 2023-2025, to be expended by the Department of Agriculture, for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

This bill would take effect on June 30, 3000.

SNAP, formally known as the "Food Stamps Program", is the largest federal food assistance program that is currently in operation. It provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people. SNAP provided assistance to approximately 40 million persons in 2018, at an expenditure of \$57.1 billion. Approximately 9.2% of American households received SNAP benefits at some point during 2017, with approximately 16.7 of all children living in households receiving SNAP benefits.

Testimony on House Bill No. 1248, House Draft 1
Monday, March 13, 2023; 1:15 p.m.
Page 2

Founded during the height of the Great Depression, SNAP is the cornerstone of our national social safety net. It is intended to prevent mass starvation precipitated from unemployment and homelessness. The program was also seen as a way of helping the poor while boosting the economy and ensuring that America's farmers would obtain a fair price for their labors by allowing government to purchase and distribute excess goods in time of crisis.

The COVID-19 Pandemic demonstrated how food scarcity and poverty threatened the health and welfare of our citizens in times of dire crisis. With so many people unemployed, entire families struggled to put food on the table on a consistent basis. Lines at the food bank and food drives stretched for miles and people waited for hours to receive surplus food.

The HPCA has strongly endorsed this Program in previous years and we continue to urge your support. Additional SNAP benefits for a recipient can mean the difference between having to decide whether someone's last amount of cash will go for food or rent or medications or other necessities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 11:12:32 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Kohn MD	Testifying for We Are One, Inc. - www.WeAreOne.cc - WAO	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly **SUPPORT** HB 1248

People before Profit

www.WeAreOne.cc



March 11, 2023

To: The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Senator Tim Richards, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Subject: **Testimony in Strong Support of HB1248, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**

I am in strong support of bill HB1248 and the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

By way of introduction, my name is Emily Emmons. I am the co-founder and executive director of Ho'ōla Veteran Services 501c3 dba Ho'ōla Farms, established on Hawai'i Island in 2015 to provide natural agriculture educational training and hands-on experiences for military veterans, their families, and the community in hopes of creating a more sustainable community for all. Over the last two years Ho'ōla Farms has expanded services to adopt a full agribusiness incubator model, with programs including Hilo Food Hub and Hawai'i Farm to Car online farmers market.

In April 2022, we started offering SNAP/EBT to our Hawaii Farm to Car customers and have seeing a steady increase in new customers and repeat orders, with 556 unique SNAP customers served in the first year. We also saw an increase in the Market's average dollar amount per order from \$41 per order to \$70 per order, with SNAP/EBT sales totalling \$40,047.24 in 2022. This expanded customer base and additional revenue went directly back to the farmers, not only increasing revenues but also providing stability in the market for farmers to scale up their operations to support the increasing demand.

Hawai'i Farm to Car has recently been added to the DaBux list of East Hawai'i retailers and in the first month we have increased from 15 SNAP customers per week to 30 SNAP customers per week, doubling SNAP dollars spent compared to the Januaray 2023, and we expect the demand to continue to grow over the next year.

This State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide positive, lasting impact both economically and for the well-being of individuals across the state.

Sincerely,

Emily Emmons
Executive Director
Ho'ōla Farms

The Waianae Store
85-863 Farrington Hwy., Waianae HI 96792
T(808)696-3131 / F(808)696-7411



Nanakuli Super
87-2090 Farrington Hwy., Waianae HI 96792
T(808)668-2055 / F(808)668-2223

March 10, 2023

To: The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Senator Tim Richards, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

From: Kit Okimoto
CFO
Okimoto Corporation dba Waianae Store, Nanakuli Super and Friendly Market Center

Subject: **Testimony in Strong Support of HB1248, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**

I am in strong support of bill HB1248 and the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

DA BUX benefits the state's food system through three different ways. First, DA BUX offers discounts on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables to low-income recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, allowing them to purchase more, healthy food. Second, DA BUX helps farmers increase their customer base and compete with imported produce. And third, DA BUX supports the local economy, generating increased revenue for 57 participating food retailers across 100+ statewide locations.

DA BUX has proven to be beneficial for Hawai'i's economy. According to a study conducted by Colorado State University, each program dollar used to incentivize local produce contributes \$2.10 to Hawai'i's economy. Additionally, if DA BUX was further scaled to food retail locations statewide, the potential economic contribution would be \$14-\$22 million in one year.

Furthermore, a \$3 million State investment will serve as significant match funds needed to unlock federal grant dollars from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). As the GusNIP only accepts proposals that have secured 100% non-federal matching funds, a State investment will strengthen the program's FY '23 application.

State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide positive, lasting impact both for the economy and the well-being of individuals across the state.

Sincerely,

Kit Okimoto
CFO, Okimoto Corporation



Testimony to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Wednesday, March 15, 2023
2:00 p. m.
State Capitol Conference Room 224 and via videoconference

Re: HB 1248 HD 1 RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

I am Gary Simon, a member of the board of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition, whose mission is to improve the quality of life of those who give and receive care by increasing community awareness of caregiver issues through continuing advocacy, education, and training.

The Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition (HFCC) strongly supports HB 1248 HD 1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawaii healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

HFCC is deeply appreciative of this effort to provide nutrition to the food insecure.

We urge you to support HB 1248 HD 1, and we urge you to recommend its passage.

We thank you for seriously considering the bill.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Simon".

Gary Simon



Email gsimon@aar.org



Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: HB1248 HD1

Monday, March 15, 2023 2p.m. Conference Room 224

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

HAPA strongly supports HB1248 HD1 appropriates funds to DOA for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

The Da Bux program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai'i's food economy.

Even before the pandemic DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- It's putting more food on the tables of local families in need.
- It's providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food.
- It's strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in the Islands.
- It's improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.

The DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families have access to quality fresh food.

Please support HB1248 HD1.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director



Food+ Policy Internship 2023

food@purplemaia.org

March 12, 2023

Aloha Chair Gabbard and the Senate committee on Agriculture and Environment,

By providing matching funds to beneficiaries of SNAP, this program helps stretch their food budgets further, allowing them to purchase more fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and other healthy options. The result is a healthier, more sustainable diet for those who need it most, and a reduced burden on the healthcare system.

In addition, the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program supports local farmers and the state's agriculture industry, creating a virtuous cycle of economic and health benefits. We strongly urge the legislature to **support this bill** and provide continued funding for this important program.

Mahalo,
Kahealani Acosta & 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.



To: The Honorable Chair Mike Gabbard, the Honorable Vice Chair Tim Richards, III, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment

From: Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: **Hearing HB1248 HD1 RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES**

Hearing: Monday March 13, 2023, 1:15 p.m., room 224

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

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (HIROC) is a group of scientists, educators, filmmakers and environmental advocates who have been working since 2017 to protect Hawaii's coral reefs and ocean.

The Climate Protectors Hawai'i seeks to educate and engage the local community in climate change action, to help Hawai'i show the world the way back to a safe and stable climate.

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i STRONGLY SUPPORT HB1248 HD1 to fund the Department of Agriculture program to provide healthy fruits and vegetables for SNAP recipients!

Supporting healthy local food production makes good sense! It would not only produce more healthy food, but would help local farmers and increase food security.

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo!

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 2:00 PM
Via Video Conference; Conference Room 224

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

To: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

**Re: Testimony in Support of HB 1248, HD1
Relating To The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**

My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

HPH writes in SUPPORT of HB 1248, HD1 which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program, and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

HPH recognizes the strong connection between access to healthy foods with health and wellness. Adults who eat a healthy diet live longer and have a lower risk of obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. Healthy eating can help people with chronic diseases manage these conditions and avoid complications. However, many low income families continue to struggle to put food on the table.

HPH has supported the Double Up food bucks program since 2019 to both foster strengthening local food systems and allow SNAP recipients to access good nutrition. The program has been successful in encouraging SNAP recipients to make healthy food choices. Fresh fruits and vegetables are an integral part of a healthy diet and central to the prevention of obesity and chronic disease. While every community should have access to fresh and healthy dietary options, the high cost of fresh produce often makes that difficult. This challenge is felt acutely by participants in the federal supplemental nutrition assistance program, a low-income population that struggles to afford healthy food. The double up food bucks program is a viable model that supports local farmers, helps low-income families that receive double the purchasing power for healthy, Hawaii-grown produce, and benefits Hawaii by keeping dollars in the local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 5:02:41 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Crawford	Testifying for Hawaii Farmers Union United - Hana Chapter	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HFUU-Hāna Chapter operates the Hana Farmers Market, which accepts SNAP-EBT with Da Bux discounts.

We are in strong support of HB1248 and the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai‘i healthy food incentive program, or Da Bux program.

The Da Bux program creates an incentive in exactly the right place in the local food system to directly benefit low-income consumers and support better health outcomes, farmers, and the local economy.

In 2022, Hana Farmers Market processed \$13,500 in Da Bux discounts. While this may be a relatively small amount compared to the overall program, for our small, remotes community where shopping in central Maui is 4-hour round trip or more, this is a significant contribution to our local food self-sufficiency, and income for our farmers.

Each incentive dollar provided by the state creates multiple dollars of benefits, and helps unlock federal incentive dollars.

Please support HB1248.

mahalo



March 13, 2023

Sen. Mike Gabbard, Chair
Sen. Tim Richards, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

RE: Testimony in support of HB 1248, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

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

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I **support HB 1248**, which would appropriate funds to Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

Food security is a critical issue in Hawai'i, where one in six residents lacks comprehensive access to healthy, nutritious food. SNAP is one of our most important anti-hunger programs, offering choice and healthy options for families who need extra support putting food on the table. We strongly support DA BUX, which doubles the purchasing power of SNAP when it is used for locally produced food.

- **DA BUX increases consumer purchasing power.** Locally grown produce is often more expensive than imported items. DA BUX stretches dollars farther and makes it possible for more people to choose local.
- **DA BUX advances nutrition, health and well-being.** Healthy food can also be more expensive, and we consistently hear requests for more produce and healthy proteins from our distribution partners and the people we serve. DA BUX makes these desired, healthier food items more affordable.
- **DA BUX invests in farmers and statewide food security.** With an estimated 85%-90% of our food imported, programs that support Hawai'i farmers are important to us all. The Hawai'i Foodbank regularly purchases from local farmers, and programs that invest in local production capacity help us better support those we serve.

The Hawai'i Foodbank gathers donated, rescued, and purchased food and distribute it to those in need through our network of more than 200 agency partners. We also advocate for policies and programs that end hunger, and we strongly support DA BUX as a critical food security effort that advances the health and well-being of the people we serve.

Mahalo for your consideration.

With aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Miller Marvin".

Amy Miller Marvin
President and CEO, Hawaii Foodbank



March 15, 2023

The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Herbert Richards, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment

Re: HB 1248 HD1 – Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Program Incentives

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

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1248 HD1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawaii healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

HMSA recognizes the impact that healthy foods have on a person's overall wellness. Conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity can be positively impacted by maintaining a healthy diet. We support this effort to increase affordability and accessibility to healthy foods in Hawaii, especially to individuals and families who could truly benefit. An added benefit to this program is that it also serves to support our local agricultural sector and farmers as we take steps towards food security in our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1248 HD1.

Sincerely,

Dawn Kurisu
Assistant Vice President
Community and Government Relations

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 10:11:10 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Fox	Testifying for Malama Kaua'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

DA BUX is a win-win for farmers and families, and an exceptional way to increase federal funding coming into our state. This program has significantly benefited many of our food hubs and farmers across the state and is a big step in providing more support for our local food system.



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for H.B. 1248 – Relating to SNAP Incentives
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at 11:30AM

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support for **H.B. 1248**, which would provide matching funds to appropriate funds to the Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture (DOA) for the continued administration of the Hawai‘i healthy food incentive program and beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

SNAP is a proven economic stimulus. In fact, the [USDA estimates](#) that every dollar in SNAP generates an additional \$0.54 in economic activity. **In 2022, nearly 170,000 Hawai‘i residents drew down over \$900 million in federal SNAP funds to purchase food—an estimated \$1.4 billion dollar investment in Hawai‘i’s food system after applying the economic multiplier.**

While SNAP is an important program for ensuring the food security of low-income Hawai‘i households, the individual household benefit is often still not enough to afford fresh fruits and vegetables. This results in most of these economic stimulus funds leaving the islands—right into the pockets of major mainland food companies, rather than getting recirculated locally into our local agriculture industry.

SNAP incentives like those proposed in H.B. 1248 address this concern by providing an additional subsidy for SNAP users when they purchase local fruits and vegetables. The federal program that funds this incentive requires a one-to-one match, meaning that every dollar the state invests will be matched by federal funding. **Therefore, a \$3 million investment by the state would be doubled with matching federal funds. Factoring in the \$1.54 multiplier mentioned earlier would ultimately result in \$9.24M million in economic impact.** Passing this bill would be an impact investment for the State, channeling much-needed capital into local businesses and farms.

Hawai‘i’s existing SNAP incentive program, known as DA BUX, has already been enormously successful and popular among SNAP users, retailers, and farmers alike. According to the latest [program outcomes report](#), DA BUX has already directly supported 470 farm producers, eight distributors, and increased local produce sales by 531% at farm-direct retailers.

SNAP incentives are a win for everyone—families, farmers and local businesses. There is no downside. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

The Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice is committed to a more socially just Hawai‘i, where everyone has genuine opportunities to achieve economic security and fulfill their potential. We change systems that perpetuate inequality and injustice through policy development, advocacy, and coalition building.

THE KŪPUNA CAUCUS



AEN_03-15-23 2:00 PM

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

CONCERNING: HB 1248 HD1 (HSCR 855) Relating to Supplemental Nutrition
Program Incentives

POSITION: SUPPORT

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

The Kūpuna Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i has a membership of more than 2,000 politically active and aware seniors and we strongly support all assistance to the SNAP program in Hawaii.

The ever rising cost of all food in Hawaii makes this state one of the most challenging for people suffering food insecurity. Ironically, local produce is often just as costly, or more costly, than produce imported from the mainland because the cost to local growers for being farmers is prohibitive.

The DA BUX program would be and should be extremely helpful to people who want to buy local produce. The Kūpuna Caucus supports that concept. However, as a Kūpuna who relies on the SNAP program for food, my personal experiences have been disappointing. My first experiences with the card were that it was unusable. There was a lack of participating supermarkets and other sources of local produce, like farmers markets which made it useless. I gave up carrying my Da Bux card within months of receiving. This bill says the program has improved and expanded however I never received up dated information about the card or any expanded services which might be available

A program like this is absolutely necessary, but the structure may need to be changed. I was able to buy more local produce with the extra \$95 a month we received during COVID than was ever possible using Da Bux card.

The Kūpuna Caucus supports the program but we ask the departments in charge to reexamine the way it functions so that it may better serve its purpose.

Martha E Randolph
SCC Representative on behalf of the Kūpuna Caucus



**American
Heart
Association.**

American Heart Association testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1248, HD1, “Relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives”

The American Heart Association strongly supports HB 1248, HD1 and asks that the legislature fully fund the \$3 million, two-year funding request.

Chairman of the Board

Jason Fujita

President

Zia Khan, MD

Board Members

Rick Bruno, MD, FACEP

Greg Christian

Jackie De Luz

Michael Lui, MD

Ben Morgan

Michael Rembis, FACHE

Andrew S. Rosen

Ben Salazar

David Underriner

Jennifer Walker

For more than 50 years, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP – formerly Food Stamps) has been vital in addressing food insecurity and nutrition in the United States. It has an impact on health, educational attainment and economic self-sufficiency. The program helps more than 45 million Americans struggling through underemployment and low or stagnant wages. The majority of benefits go to households with children, older adults or those with disabilities.

For more than a decade, SNAP nutrition incentive programs across the country like Hawaii’s DA BUX program have existed to reduce hunger and improve nutrition among low-income families while also supporting local agriculture and the economy. The DA BUX program works by providing matching dollars to SNAP recipients to purchase additional fresh fruits and vegetables at participating retailers and farmers markets.

DA BUX directly addresses nutrition insecurity by helping families stretch their food dollars and incentivizing them to buy healthier options. The program helps families teach their children healthy behaviors, establishing lifelong habits that will support their overall health and wellness. Roughly half of all SNAP recipients have children in their homes. In addition, DA BUX acts as a catalyst for the local economy. Farmers and retailers alike benefit from increased sales of local produce.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated a problem that has long existed in Hawaii – nutrition insecurity, or a household’s inability to provide enough nutritious food for every person to live an active, healthy life. Today, local families are finding it harder than ever to put nutritious food on the table. According to data from Feeding America, the number of Hawaii residents dealing with food insecurity has grown by 51 percent since 2019. In addition, about 81,000 keiki across the state are food insecure this year.

Food insecurity and poor nutrition remain problems for millions of American households. Research shows that SNAP benefits are often not adequate to last a family the entire month. A 2016 report by the Food Research and Action Center summarized the important role SNAP plays in addressing food insecurity. **Importantly, the majority of SNAP recipients who are eligible for work do so while on the program, underscoring that many recipients are using the program to overcome underemployment or temporary job loss.**

Although diet quality has been steadily improving in the U.S. during the past two decades, overall dietary quality is still poor. Most significantly, there is a widening gap associated with education and income. Despite the important role SNAP plays in

Serving Hawaii since 1948

Our Mission:

“To be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.”

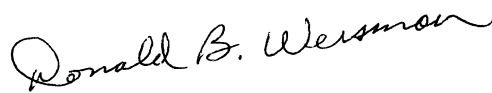
For more information on the AHA’s educational or research programs, visit www.heart.org or contact your nearest AHA office.

addressing hunger, additional data indicate that SNAP recipients have worse diet quality than income-eligible non-participants.

The DA BUX program is already successfully in place at a number of retail and farmers market locations across the state. However, current funding does not allow for expansion of the program to all geographic areas of the state meaning that not all in need have access to its benefits. The proposed funding would allow the DA BUX program to expand more broadly across the state, reaching thousands of additional residents in need, and to sustain existing programs. HB 1248, HD1 would also allow the state to draw down matching federal funds doubling the health and economic benefits to Hawaii.

The American Heart Association urges legislators to support HB 1248, HD1 and to fully fund the \$3 million request to help reduce health disparities in our state by expanding access to locally-grown fresh fruit and vegetables to those who might be economically challenged to afford access to those foods vital to improved health and reduced obesity.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald B. Weisman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the name.

Donald B. Weisman
Hawaii Government Relations/Communications and Marketing Director



March 13, 2023

To: Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Committee on Agriculture & Environment

Regarding: Testimony in Strong Support of HB1248 “Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Incentives”

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony in strong support for HB1248, “Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Incentives,” on behalf of Farm Link Hawai‘i (FLH). We encourage you to support the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai‘i healthy food incentive program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX. According to a study conducted by Colorado State University, each program dollar used to incentivize the purchase of local produce contributes \$2.10 to Hawai‘i’s economy. DA BUX benefits Hawai‘i’s food system in three vital ways:

1. Offers discounts on Hawai‘i grown fruits and vegetables to low-income SNAP recipients, allowing them to purchase more healthy food
2. Empowers farmers compete with lower cost imported produce and increase their sales
3. Supports the local economy, generating increased revenue for participating retailers

Farm Link’s mission is to create a thriving, equitable local food system by empowering local farmers and improving access to good local food. We work with over 170 Hawai‘i farmers, ranchers, and food makers, to serve more than 1,000 customers with over 500 local products. Over 18% of our revenue is derived from customers using Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-EBT) and DA BUX to purchase their groceries. Last year FLH saw transactions associated with the DA BUX program grow by over 300%. We see this as a clear sign that DA BUX is motivating families to purchase and consume more healthy produce, and providing a steady market for Hawai‘i farmers.

State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide positive, lasting economic and well-being impact. A \$3 million State investment will serve as significant match funds to unlock federal grant dollars from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). As the GusNIP only accepts proposals that secure 100% non-federal matching funds, a State investment is critical to the program’s FY ‘23 GusNIP application.

Sincerely,

Claire Sullivan, CEO

Farm Link Hawai‘i

Phone: (808) 218-0077

Email: claire@farmlinkhawaii.com



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Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free
Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective

Date: Monday, March 13, 2023

To: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice-Chair
Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Re: Strong Support for HB1248 HD1, Relating to Supplemental
Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

Hrg: Wednesday, March 15, 2023, 2:00 PM

The Obesity Prevention Task Force (OPTF), a program of the Hawai'i Public Health Instituteⁱ (HIPHI), is in **Strong Support of HB1248 HD1**, which provides continued funding for the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program.

Double Up Food Bucks is a triple win for families, farmers, and the local economy.

The Hawai'i Healthy Food incentive program, also known as DA BUX, provides a dollar-for-dollar match on locally produced fresh fruits and vegetables for SNAP recipients. Through this program, SNAP recipients can bring home healthy food, local farmers gain new customers and increased income, and more money goes into and grows our local economy.

Incentivizing SNAP dollars for fresh fruits and vegetables stretches food dollars for families, especially with increasing food costs. Furthermore, the doubling effect that DA BUX has on SNAP dollars gives families more room in their budgets for other necessary expenses.

Double Up Food Bucks demand has risen significantly over the last several years.

Year after year, this program has grown its impact making a significant impact on SNAP recipients. In 2019, SNAP shoppers spent \$87,359 through the DA BUX program; by 2022, SNAP shoppers spent \$2,275,460 through the DA BUXⁱⁱ. That money has brought healthy foods to homes while positively impacting our local economy.

Double Up Food Bucks provides a strong return on investment.

SNAP is proven to stimulate the economy by being an economic multiplier. For every SNAP dollar spent, it generates \$1.79 in economic activity. These dollars ripple out throughout the supply chain, supporting farmers, retailers, and food distributor employees; these people, in turn, spend their dollars to help support economic activity further and so on. If the state provides \$3 million in funding for this program, the federal

government could provide up to an additional \$3M of matching funds. This \$6M would result in over \$9.9M of total economic activity. In other words, the \$3M investment has a return of over 230%.

Health and food security are positively impacted.

Double Up Food Bucks' focus on locally grown produce helps to bring healthy foods to homes and supports the local agricultural industry. Studies have found that a lack of food security is associated with diet-related chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressureⁱⁱⁱ. Supporting local agriculture also aligns with the renewed calls to increase local food production and decrease Hawai'i's dependence on imported goods for a more sustainable and resilient food system.

A \$3 million investment can help expand the program to more stores.

The Double Up program has seen significant growth. It started with KTA in Hawai'i County and is now accessible statewide through Times, KTA, Foodland, and participating farmers' markets. These stores are locally based and operated, ensuring the economic impact is amplified. There are still ways for the program to grow its impact.

The \$3M will increase the program's reach and participation by engaging more people through educational campaigns in areas where there has been stalled growth, as well as provide the ability to engage more retail outlets that were unable to participate due to a limit of SNAP funding for participants.

Double Up Food Bucks is a triple win for health, agriculture, and the local economy and is a lifeline for many during the pandemic. We strongly support this measure and respectfully ask you to **pass HB1248 HD1**.

Mahalo,



Peggy Mierzwa
Policy & Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

ⁱ Created by the legislature in 2012, the Obesity Prevention Task Force is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations and works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and healthcare environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents. The Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) convenes the Task Force and supports and promotes policy efforts to create a healthy Hawai'i.

ⁱⁱ https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bca7bc67eb88c2e986a5203/t/62f6dc8f8e3f8d1a809e2e9a/1660345536073/2020-2021_Outcomes_Report_0.9.8.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4584410/>



Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Re: **HB 1248, HD1 - Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
March 15, 2023, 2:00 PM

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

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB 1248, HD1**. This bill appropriates funds to DOA for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program ("DA BUX") and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

Investing DA BUX is investing in our keiki, as more than 60% of SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) participants in Hawai'i are in families with children,¹ and the program has been shown to increase the fruit and vegetable consumption of its participants.²

Especially with high inflation and the most expensive groceries in the nation,³ it is nearly impossible for the low-income families in Hawai'i who qualify for SNAP to afford to buy healthy food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

That's where DA BUX comes in. It is designed to help low-income families afford fresh produce, by doubling the value of their SNAP benefits when they purchase Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables.

DA BUX truly is a triple-win for our state. First, it helps families afford fresh produce, which benefits their health and well-being.⁴ Second, it helps local farmers by increasing their sales. And third, it helps our local food stores and markets by bringing more dollars to them and keeping those dollars in the local economy.

SNAP shoppers' local produce purchases at DA BUX grocery stores nearly tripled in January 2022 compared to 2019, and at DA BUX farm direct retailers those sales were more than five times larger.⁵ In addition, every \$1 spent on DA BUX is estimated to create \$2.30 in local economic activity.⁶

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

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¹ https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_hawaii.pdf

² <https://dabux.org/for-advocates>

³ <https://meric.mo.gov/data/cost-living-data-series>

⁴ <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/vegetables-and-fruits/>

⁵ <https://dabux.org/for-advocates>

⁶ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oU3wNy7IKmJ4ITLEgR6Td-o1_DscDPzX/view



Email: communications@ulupono.com

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

Ulupono Initiative strongly supports HB 1248 HD1, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives.

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 1248 HD1, which appropriates funds to the State Department of Agriculture (DOA) for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

Ulupono strongly supports the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program within the DOA. The "DA BUX" Double Up Food Bucks Program, administered by The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's food bank, is a triple-win solution for our communities as SNAP-eligible recipients double their spending power at point of purchase with healthy local produce, local farmers are able to expand their markets, and all money spent is kept right here in our state. In addition, this program leverages federal funding at a 1:1 match.

From 2020-2021, DA BUX has supported more than 470 farm producers and eight distributors through farm product sales. With rising inflation and Hawai'i's high cost of living, SNAP participation and benefits continue to climb since 2019 levels.¹ These numbers substantiate the need to support our local community as food insecurity continues to increase.

We are hopeful that the State can consider a \$3 million appropriation, per year, for the DOA program to support the continued efforts of DA BUX. A \$3 million investment by the State would receive a direct match of \$3 million in federal funding. Furthermore, our analysis shows that with that level of state funding in place, the potential economic impact created by DA BUX in Hawai'i reaches nearly \$19 million.

¹ 9% increase for those receiving benefits; 100% increase in total annual SNAP benefits paid; and, 26 times increase in the annual amount of DA BUX discounts issues to SNAP shoppers since 2019.

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



We appreciate the Legislature's attention to this highly impactful program and look forward to sustained funding to support our SNAP community and our local producers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

See Attachment

OUR STATE HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO UNLOCK SIGNIFICANT FEDERAL AND PHILANTHROPIC DOLLARS IN SUPPORT OF THIS PROVEN AND HIGHLY IMPACTFUL PROGRAM



“The most I saved in one trip was \$28 and some change. **I really love this program because I am diabetic and need fresh veggies and fruits to help keep me healthy.** Mahalo for this amazing program. Also, DA BUX helps me with my kids too. They love looking for the DA BUX label on produce & can choose what they want. They love to eat! Carrots, cabbage and cucumbers are their faves as well as local apple bananas to name a few.”

— Dawn Marquez
SNAP Shopper,
Waimanalo, HI

DA BUX

DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS PROVIDES A TRIPLE-WIN

“For over a century, KTA Super Stores has strived to serve as an essential source for locally grown produce for our Hawai‘i Island community. DA BUX provides us the opportunity to support our local growers. **Since launching DA BUX in September 2017, we have seen transactions associated with the DA BUX program more than quadruple at our seven store locations.** We see this as positive sign that DA BUX is motivating families to purchase and consume more healthy fruits and vegetables and that this increased demand will drive increases in agricultural production for the state.”

— Toby Taniguchi
President, KTA Super Stores

DA BUX continues to be an amazing way to connect our farm directly to the

consumers who need it most. Being able to offer the best quality fresh locally grown food in a very affordable way removes a big hurdle for people; [DA BUX] helps to make feeding them and their families easy. **This program helps to support local agriculture so we can more easily compete with imported food and gives us farmers a big incentive to produce more fruits and vegetables to satisfy the increased demand for our goods.**”

— Ryan Earehart
Farm Owner, Oko‘a Farms

DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks provides a Triple-Win

HAWAI'I IMPORTS APPROXIMATELY 85-90% of its food and has food costs that are 91% higher than the national average. Dependence on food imports threatens the sustainability of food producers throughout the islands and places the entire population directly at risk of food shortages in the event of pandemics, natural disasters, and economic disruptions. Furthermore, with the highest cost of living in the nation, Hawai'i is challenged with growing food costs and food insecurity, and 12% of its population receives Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 2022.

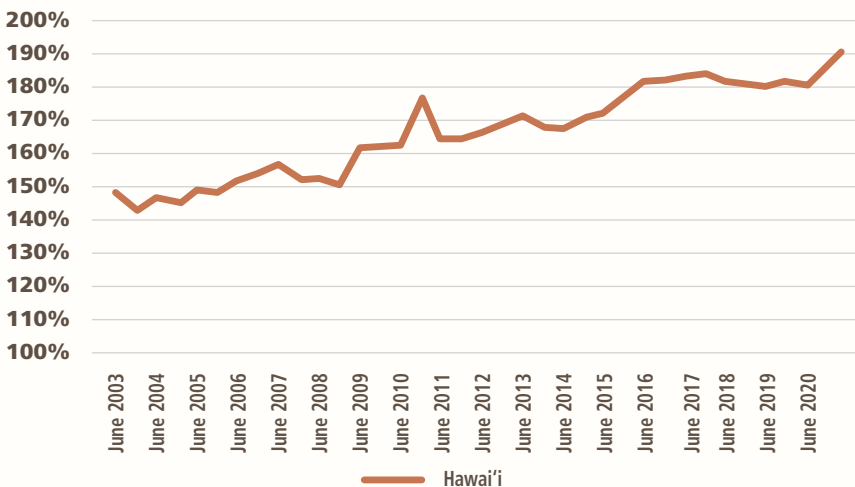
THE PROBLEM

Overall, Hawai'i faces an estimated \$83 million in annual costs related to food insecurity and hunger. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rising inflation, Hawai'i households are facing increasing food costs. Compared to the rest of the nation, Hawai'i households spend the highest percentage of their annual budget on food. This is compounded with the rising inflation that has increased food prices and overall cost of living in Hawai'i by 6.6% and 7.4%, respectively. Increasing food prices reinforces many residents' reliance on cheaper, less healthy fast food options that have long-range impacts on health and wellbeing. This situation creates a significant need to help feed low income families AND support local agricultural food producers.

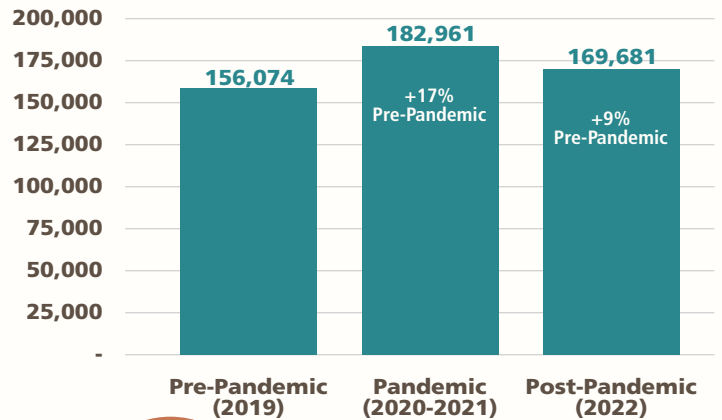
BY THE NUMBERS

- 90% Imported Food
- 91% Higher Food Costs (Refer to the graph for the increasing trend of Hawai'i's cost of food under the USDA Thrifty Food Plan compared to the national average cost of food)
- 12% Received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance in 2022

Hawai'i Monthly Thrifty Plan Cost vs. National Average



Monthly Average of Individual SNAP Recipients in Hawai'i



THE SOLUTION

DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks is a triple-win solution because it doubles the purchasing power of low-income SNAP families for healthy, Hawai'i-grown produce; it supports local farmers with an increased customer base; and it benefits the entire island community by keeping dollars in the local economy.

An appropriation of up to \$3 million in state funds will bring in additional federal funds to sustain, expand and extend the statewide DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks program. Given the broad benefits of DA BUX for our state, it is imperative to secure sustained funding for DA BUX and ensure it is a staple service providing economic relief to SNAP households and directly supporting local agricultural food producers across the state. Based on the projected spend down rate, current funding of the DA BUX program will only last through August 2024.

HOW IT WORKS

The program offers SNAP participants a DA BUX Access Card or voucher at point of sale that doubles their purchasing power when they buy locally

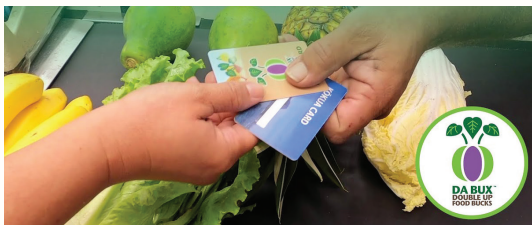


grown fruits and vegetables — \$10 of SNAP benefits would be worth \$20 of Hawai'i grown produce. Thus, each \$1 funded into the program provides \$2 worth of local food purchases.

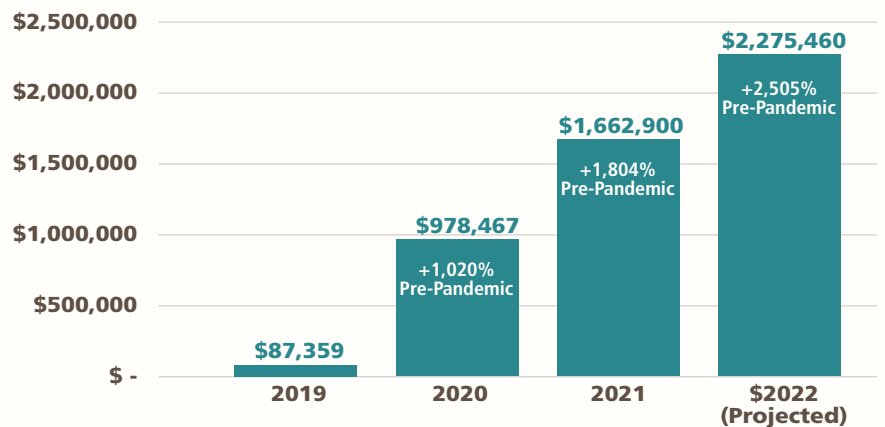
State Support is Key to Federal and Philanthropic Funding

	State Investment of \$1M	State Investment of \$2M	State Investment of \$3M
State Funding	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000
Federal GusNIP grant	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000
Total Funding for DA BUX discounts	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$6,000,000
Economic multiplier on DA BUX discounts ¹	1.7	1.7	1.7
Potential economic impact of DA BUX discounts	\$3,328,020	\$6,656,041	\$9,984,061
Federal SNAP benefits	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$6,000,000
Economic multiplier of SNAP benefits ²	1.5	1.5	1.5
Potential economic impact of SNAP benefits	\$3,000,000	\$6,000,000	\$9,000,000
Total funding for SNAP & DA BUX	\$4,000,000	\$8,000,000	\$12,000,000
Potential economic impact	\$6,328,000	\$12,656,041	\$18,984,061
Economic impact multiplier of state funding	6.3	6.3	6.3

Over the course of the pandemic, DA BUX has become a critical service for low-income SNAP beneficiaries struggling with economic hardship and food insecurity. There has been significant growth and demand for the program due to the increase in SNAP participation and participating DA BUX retail locations across the state.



Annual DA BUX Discounts Issued to SNAP Shoppers



Local Food Sales Driven By SNAP DA BUX				
County	2019	2020	2021	2022 (Projected)
Honolulu	\$ -	\$929,217	\$1,659,101	\$2,397,563
% increase		100%	79%	45%
Hawai'i	\$174,718	\$842,482	\$1,125,573	\$1,244,464
% increase		382%	34%	11%
Kaua'i	\$ -	\$87,574	\$191,309	\$211,498
% increase		100%	118%	11%
Maui	\$ -	\$97,661	\$349,817	\$697,394
% increase		100%	258%	99%
Statewide Total	\$174,718	\$1,956,934	\$3,325,800	\$4,550,919

- From 2020 through 2021, DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors by incentivizing the sale of their farm products sold at participating farm direct retailers.
- In January 2022, local produce sales to SNAP shoppers at participating farm direct retailers increased an average of 531% from 2019
- DA BUX gives farmers the opportunity to feed local residents (rather than exporting product to the mainland) and to increase production towards a self-sufficient local food supply for the state. The program strengthens the relationship between local residents and food producers. Increasing local food production capacity can help to bring prices down, making healthy local food accessible and affordable to more people.

¹ Based on the "The Economic Contributions of Healthy Food Incentives" report prepared by Colorado State University, and the percentage of 2021 DA BUX discounts issued via farm-direct outlets and food retailers. Refer to the report at: https://fairfoodnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Economic_Contributions_Incentives_2_2_21.pdf

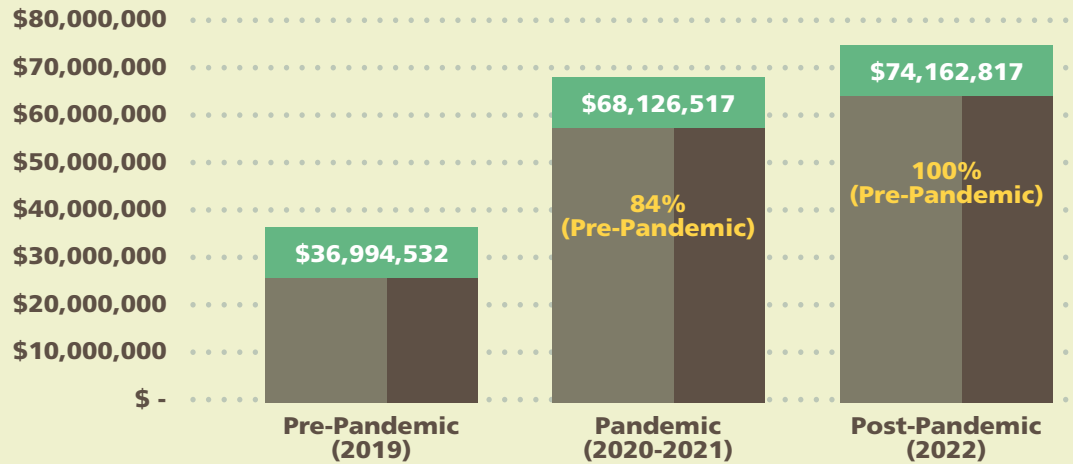
² Based on the "The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Economy: New Estimates of the SNAP Multiplier" report prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service. Refer to the report at: https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/93529/err265_summary.pdf

More Impact for State 'BUX'

Due to rising inflation and higher cost of living, SNAP participation and SNAP benefits in Hawai'i continue to be significantly higher compared to 2019 levels.

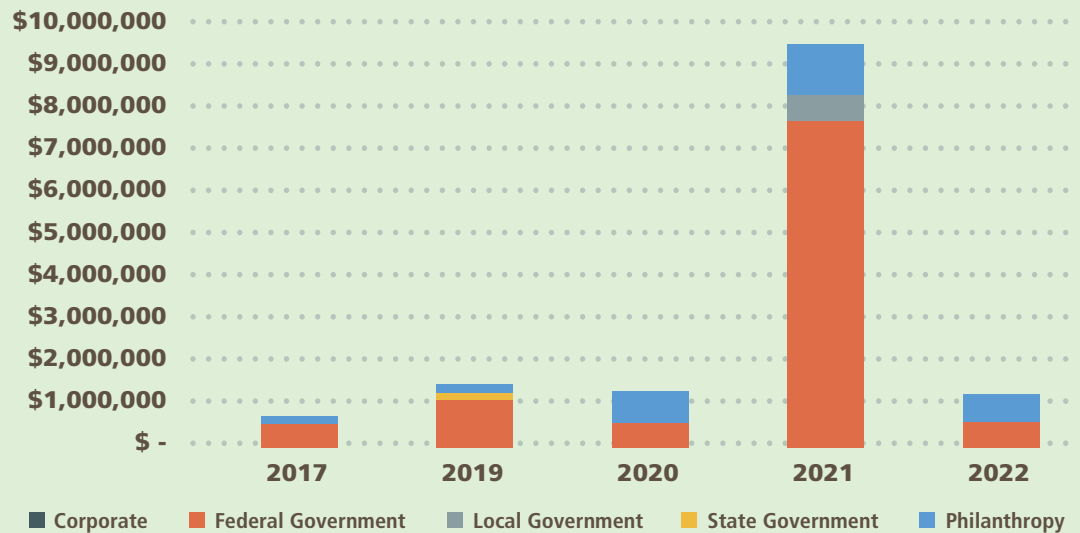
- 8th highest poverty rate (10.5% of the population living at or below the poverty line)
- 9% increase in the number of individuals in Hawai'i receiving SNAP benefits
- 100% increase in the annual total amount of SNAP benefits paid in Hawai'i
- 26x increase the annual total of DA BUX discounts issued to SNAP shoppers

Average Monthly SNAP Benefits Paid for Hawaii SNAP Participants



Historically, the DA BUX program has been primarily funded by Federal grants and philanthropic/private funding (representing almost all of total program funds). To date, the State of Hawaii has only provided \$94,000 in General Funds, and allocated \$500,000 in Federal CARES Act funds to the program.

DA BUX Fundings by Source (2017-2022)



Secure and sustained state funding for DA BUX program is the key to federal and philanthropic funding matches. State funds can generate significant leverage:

- Stimulate economic activity of \$19 million (6.3x of state funding) while increasing local food production for local consumption.
- \$3 million can be matched by \$3 million in federal dollars from a Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) grant, as well as \$6 million from SNAP purchases, resulting in \$12 million going toward local food purchases and supporting local farmers
- Given the impact achieved and successful track record, state funding will be a worthwhile investment and position the DA BUX program for future federal funding.
- Other states have recognized the benefit and impact of double up food bucks programs by investing state funds in expanding and sustaining their programs. There are nine states that have invested state funds in their double up food bucks programs, totaling approximately \$94.5 million from 2015 through 2021.



To: The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Wednesday, March 15, 2023, 2:00 pm

In strong support of HB1248 HD1

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and AEN Committee members;

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **strongly supports HB1248 HD1.**

The Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program helps keep federal funding circulating in the local economy and incentivizes the use of SNAP benefits for the purchase of fresh local produce. HB1248 HD1 will help low-income families bring home more healthy food, area farmers gain new customers and make more money, and more food dollars stay in the local economy.

Supporting this successful program makes good sense. It promotes good health for families and our local economy, as well as improving the health of our planet by avoiding the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping produce in.

Please pass HB1248 HD1 so that we can reap all these benefits!

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on this very important bill.
Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org

March 13, 2023

HB1248 HD1

Title: Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

The **Pioneering Healthier Communities Initiative** brings together local, diverse leaders to discuss and support strategies, policies and programs that we can accomplish together to build healthier communities in our island home. The members of PHC Honolulu are involved in supporting efforts that enable children and families to become healthier through schools, afterschool programs, healthcare and more.

We strongly support HB1248 HD1.

The DA BUX program WORKS and is LOVED by community members! It has been extremely successful in increasing access to fresh, healthy produce for food insecure families. This bill will provide \$3M in funding to support families, local farmers, and our economy.

Helps Families Eat Healthy

- Food insecurity has soared with the onset of COVID-19 pandemic.
- This program helps SNAP recipients buy more fresh fruits and vegetables by doubling their purchasing power.

Helps Local Farmers and Businesses – numbers are from dabux.org site

- DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors.
- Local produce sales increased 531% at Farm Direct Retailers.
- Helps to grow our local food supply and put more money into our economy.
- The general sentiment from recipient interviews was that DA BUX is giving farmers the opportunity to feed local residents (rather than exporting products to the mainland) and increases production toward a self-sufficient local food supply for the state.

Helps Hawai'i's Economy

- SNAP Benefits are shown to have a large multiplier effect. For every dollar that is spent by a SNAP recipient, an additional \$0.79 moves throughout the economy.
- Farmers use that money to pay workers or buy other goods and services, continuing the benefit of SNAP dollars down the line.
- A \$3M dollar investment in Double Up Bucks would result in over \$9.9M in economic activity.

Opportunity for Federal Match

- If Hawai'i allocates \$3M for the DA BUX program, it could apply for an additional \$3M in federal matching funds, totaling \$6M.

Thank you very much for allowing us to testify.

May Okihiro

Daniel Leung

Paula Adams

Joy Barua

Stacy Evensen

Daniela Spoto

Ray L'Heureux

Jennifer Dang

Diane Tabangay

John Mai

Tina Tamai

Michael Libertini

Greg Weibel



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
2759 South King Street
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

March 13, 2023

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

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: **Measure:** H.B. No. 1248 H.D. 1 – RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INCENTIVES
Hearing Date: Wednesday, March 15, 2023
Time: 2:00 PM
Location: Conference Room 224

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

EOEL supports H.B. No. 1248 H.D. 1 and defers to the Department of Agriculture regarding implementation and budgetary needs.

EOEL works with stakeholders to establish a system that ensures a solid foundation of early childhood development and learning for Hawaii's children from prenatal to age five. Healthy eating in childhood is important for children's growth and development and prevents various health conditions.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides eligible Hawaii residents with monthly benefits to purchase food. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, in Hawaii, more than 60% of SNAP beneficiaries are in families with children. This bill would not only allow families and children better access to healthy, nutritious food by doubling their purchasing power, but also supports local farmers. Recognizing the importance that nutrition plays in children's growth, development, and learning experiences, EOEL supports this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



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

Executive Officers

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Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, Odom, *Advisor*
Charlie Gustafson, Tamura Super Market, *Immediate Past Chair*

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

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: Wednesday, March 15, 2023
TIME: 2pm

RE: HB1248 HD1 Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

Position: Support

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

The Double Up Food Bucks program is important as a means to combat food insecurity, support healthy eating, and as a way to support Hawaii's agricultural sector. During the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis, food insecurity in our state soared to unprecedented levels, at the same time the local agricultural sector suffered disproportionate economic losses. The Double Up Food Bucks program has been a vital tool to increase the produce buying power of Hawaii consumers who use the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and helps grow our local agricultural sector. Continuing to fund this important program will ensure that the many benefits continue.

Fruits, vegetables, and healthy proteins tend to be more expensive per calorie than less healthy foods, which makes eating healthy a challenge for those with limited food budgets. Doubling the purchasing power for SNAP users makes it easier to choose fruits, vegetables, and healthy proteins when shopping. Data has shown that families use the Double Up Food Bucks Program eat more fruits and vegetables, a greater variety of fruits and vegetables, and fewer unhealthy foods. Getting more fruits and vegetables for each SNAP dollar also means that low-income families will have more in their budget to spend on things like housing and healthcare.

By prioritizing locally grown agricultural products this program also helps Hawaii farmers and encourages retailers to stock Hawaii grown produce and protein. This helps promote a resilient food economy where local farmers are selling to local stores that sell to local customers.

Each dollar spent in this program goes into Hawaii's agricultural sector and circulates from there into the larger local economy. This is a win for SNAP users, a win for Hawaii farmers, a win for Hawaii retailers, and a win for Hawaii's economy.

We urge you to vote yes on this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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

March 15, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON HB 1248, HD1
RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
INCENTIVES

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 1248, HD1, which appropriates funds to DOA for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

SNAP offers nutrition assistance to eligible, low-income individuals and families, increasing their food purchasing power and improving their nutrition. SNAP also provides economic benefits to farmers participating at farmers' markets, roadside stands, CSA programs, grocery stores, and other food retailers.

Some of HFB's farmers' markets participate or have participated in the SNAP program. We believe that access to locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables, and protein to low-income individuals and families provides benefits to both SNAP participants and Hawai'i farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



Officers

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Ted Radovich
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Ray Maki
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 strongly supports HB1248.**

Not only is this program beneficial to SNAP recipients, but it has a huge impact on our local agricultural industry in Hawaii. This incentive program helps to bridge the gap between small farms and access to nutritious food for SNAP beneficiaries, by providing an incentive for purchasing locally grown products. It also increases economic opportunities for small farms and farmers, providing an additional source of income and increased rural jobs. The Hawaii-grown products purchased through this program serve to improve healthy diets, and the financial support helps to ensure a secure local source of food.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF

Date: March 15, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Herbert M. Richards, III, Vice Chair
And Members of the Committee

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for HB1248, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners are working to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

ECAS strongly supports passage of HB1248, which would continue the Double Up Food Bucks (Da Bux) program, which expands families' access to healthy and nutritious food. Da Bux matches SNAP dollars spent on fresh fruits and vegetables with a financial benefit to local growers and food retailers. Low-income families bring home more healthy food, area farmers gain new customers and make more money, and more food dollars stay in the local economy. Food markets participating in the program have seen increases in fresh produce sales. In addition, state supplemental funding would be potentially matched by federal funding adding yet another benefit to Hawai'i's investment in these important programs.

Da Bux helps reduce health disparities in our state by expanding access to fresh fruit and vegetables to those who might be economically challenged to afford access to those foods vital to improved health and reduced obesity.

HB1248 is a significant positive step in helping Hawai'i build back better from the pandemic and provides a proven support to the state's population of families and children. ECAS is delighted to support its passage.

We thank you for your consideration of this measure.



To: The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Public Policy Manager

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

RE: **HB1248 HD1 Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB1248 HD1**. This measure appropriates funding to the Department of Agriculture to continue the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 80,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately half of our membership are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality health care for all. We believe that health is about supporting whole-person care.

AlohaCare's commitment to whole person care includes addressing a variety of social determinants of health, including housing, economic stability, and nutrition among other factors. We understand that without access to affordable healthy food, the health and well-being of our members is negatively impacted. For example, researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that food insecurity is associated with obesity among US adults in Hawai'i and 11 other states.¹

AlohaCare has provided grant funding to Kokua Kalihi Valley and others to support this program, and we endorse continued State investment. The Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program is an innovative and successful solution, which supports local farmers, low-income families who receive double the purchasing power for Hawai'i-grown fresh fruits and vegetables, and our entire community by keeping dollars in the local economy. This program is particularly important during this time of rising costs for food among other necessities.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of HB1248 HD1**.

¹ [J Acad Nutr Diet. 2012 Sep; 112\(9\): 1403–1409.](#)



March 14, 2023

Testimony in Support of HB1248, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee,

We are writing to voice our strong support of HB1248 and the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

My name is Harmonee Williams, and I am the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Good Food Alliance (HGFA). Prior to joining HGFA staff, I served as the Executive Director of Sust'ainable Molokai, which is a founding organizational partner of HGFA. The other founding organizations are listed below. HGFA is a 501(c)(3) corporation formed by a statewide collaboration of organizations that are engaged in the production and distribution of food with the goal of rebuilding thriving community food systems. HGFA is a cross-sector network of food producers, food hubs, food banks, farmers markets, and healthcare providers from each major Hawaiian island. Our mission is that we join together—with a sense of urgency—to raise community voice and support one another in the belief that each and every person in Hawai'i can share in healthy, locally produced food.

DA BUX benefits the state's food system through three different ways. First, DA BUX offers a 50% discount on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables to low-income recipients of the SNAP program (formerly known as food stamps), allowing them to purchase more, healthy food. Second, DA BUX helps farmers increase their customer base and compete with imported produce. And third, DA BUX supports the local economy, generating increased revenue for the participating food retailers across 100+ statewide locations. Several of our member organizations offer DA BUX through their retail operations, allowing them to offer affordable local produce to all of their SNAP customers.

A \$3 million State investment will serve as significant match funds needed to unlock federal grant dollars from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). As the GusNIP only accepts proposals that secure 100% non-federal matching funds, a State investment will strengthen the program's FY '23 GusNIP application. State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide positive, lasting impact both for the economy and the well-being of individuals across the state.

Sincerely,



Executive Director, Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
harmonie@hawaiigoodfoodalliance.org, 808-646-1314

HGFA Founding Partners:

- The Food Basket
- The Kohala Center
- Kanaka Ha'aheo
- Maui Food Bank
- Sust'ainable Molokai
- Kōkua Kalihi Valley
- 'Elepaio Services, Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center
- MA'O Farms
- Kahumana Organic Farm & Food Hub
- Mālama Kaua'i

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Wednesday, March 15, 2023 – 2:00 p.m.
In Support: H.B. 1248 – Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of H.B. 1248 – Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives, which would appropriate funds to the department of agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program (also known as DA BUX) and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

DA BUX helps local producers thrive and sets beginning farmers up for success.

In FY21, DA BUX supported *470 farm producers and 8 distributors statewide* by incentivizing the sale of their farm products sold at participating farm direct retailers.¹ This support resulted in a 531% average increase in local produce sales at participating retailers.² DA BUX provides a new market for local producers and helped many keep their doors open during the pandemic when the tourism industry was no longer a viable customer. A study conducted by the USDA Economic Research Service found that beginning farmers accepting SNAP incentives were more likely to continue farming over time.³

Nutrition incentive programs are a lifeline to Hawai'i's struggling families.

The ending of the public health emergency and SNAP emergency allotments has resulted in *more than 83,000 of Hawai'i's low-income households* experiencing the greatest SNAP benefit cliff in history. With SNAP participating households losing at least \$95 per month (with some of our most vulnerable losing up to \$238), DA BUX has become even more vital to improve access to healthy food for these communities as their purchasing power decreases. Our emergency food system alone cannot fill this gap and meet the need.

DA BUX sustainability requires state investment, which the federal government can match.

A \$3 million state investment will provide significant match funds required to unlock federal grant dollars from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP), which the state applicant—The Food Basket—has successfully applied for and received previously. With an economic multiplier of 2.3 for every \$1 spent in Hawai'i on incentives, a \$3M investment by the state will result in \$12.6M generated in Hawai'i's local economy.⁴

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HAWAII
**HUNGER
ACTION
NETWORK**

Aloha Harvest

County of Hawai'i

Hawai'i Alliance for
Community-Based Economic
Development

Hawai'i Appleseed

Hawai'i Children's Action
Network

Hawai'i Food Bank

Hawai'i Good Food Alliance

Hawai'i Public Health Institute

Kōkua Kalihi Valley
Comprehensive Health Center

Lanakila Pacific

Malama Kaua'i

Maui Food Bank

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network is composed of advocates statewide dedicated to connecting communities and taking action to ensure all people in Hawai'i have enough food to live healthy, dignified, productive lives.

¹ [double up food bucks - 2020-2021 outcomes report](#)

² [double up food bucks - 2020-2021 outcomes report](#)

³ [Economics Of Healthy Food Incentives At Michigan Farmers Markets: Study Highlights](#)

⁴ [Expanding Healthy Food Incentives Across Hawai'i: The Return on Investment](#)



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

March 14, 2023

To: The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chairman
The Honorable Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chairman
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

From: Kristin Frost Albrecht
Executive Director, The Food Basket, Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

Subject: **Testimony in Strong Support of HB1248 HD1, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST ALBRECHT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ANN EBESUNO BOARD CHAIR

MARK KRZYZANOWSKI VICE-CHAIR

Aloha Chair Gabbard and Vice Chair Richards,

We are in strong support of HB1248 HD1 and the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Hawai'i Healthy Food Incentive Program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks, or DA BUX.

DENNIS LIN TREASURER

JULIA ZEE SECRETARY

In keeping with The Food Basket's (TFB) overarching mission to "end hunger", we are the statewide administrator for DA BUX. TFB established DA BUX as a statewide program upon receiving a \$985 K federal grant through the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). Additionally, we secured the 100% non-federal matching funds that GusNIP requires. We scaled the program in 2021 after receiving two additional GusNIP awards totaling \$7.6 MM in federal dollars. Today, TFB administers DA BUX at 57 food retailers across 100+ locations statewide, including grocery stores, farmers markets and food hubs. DA BUX partner retailers continue to offer 50% discounts on Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables solely to low-income customers paying with SNAP food dollars (formerly known as food stamps).

STEPHEN UEDA

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA COLLINS

Philanthropy has largely carried the weight of our GusNIP match needs over the years; however, we cannot expect philanthropy to meet this need over the long term. We are humbly requesting the State to invest \$3 MM per year in DA BUX to support program sustainability and continuous affordable healthy food access to SNAP recipients. Furthermore, a State commitment will be leveraged in our FY '23 GusNIP application to

WWW.HAWAIIFOODBASKET.ORG

Administration and East Hawai'i Warehouse
40 Holomua Street, Hilo, HI 96720
808-933-6030 Phone | 808-934-0701 Fax

West Hawai'i Warehouse
73-4161 Ulu Wini Place, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740
808-322-1418 Phone | 808-322-7373 Fax



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

unlock \$3MM in federal funds to meet the grant's requirement of a 100% non-federal match.

While a wide range of financial support and programs were available during the pandemic, Hawai'i's low-income residents are perhaps now more in dire need of this support as pandemic relief wanes and inflation rates have soared above historical averages. Sustained high participation in SNAP above pre-pandemic levels and climbing food insecurity in Hawai'i are indicative of the widespread economic hardship residents continue to face. The Food Basket remains steadfast in our commitment to ensuring DA BUX savings for local fruits and vegetables will be continuously available for these households.

We respectfully ask your committee to pass this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kristin Frost Albrecht

Kristin Frost Albrecht
Executive Director

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST
ALBRECHT

BOARD OF
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JULIA ZEE
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STEPHEN UEDA

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA
COLLINS

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808-322-1418 Phone | 808-322-7373 Fax



Date: March 14, 2023

To: The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Senator Tim Richards, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment

Re: Testimony in support of House Bill 1248, Relating to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Incentives.

Please accept this letter in support of HB 1248, relating to the appropriation of funds for the continued administration of the Healthy Hawaii Food Incentive Program, otherwise known as DA BUX Double-Up Food Bucks, or more simply, DA BUX.

DA BUX benefits the state's food system through three different ways. First, DA BUX offers discounts on Hawaii grown fruits and vegetables to low-income recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, allowing them to purchase more, healthy food. Second, DA BUX helps farmers increase their customer base and compete with imported produce. And third, DA BUX supports the local economy, generating increased revenue for 57 participating food retailers across 100+ statewide locations.

Since launching DA BUX in Sept 2017, KTA has seen transactions associated with the DA BUX program significantly increase at our seven locations. We see this as a positive sign that DA BUX is motivating families to purchase and consume more healthy fruits and vegetables and that this increased demand will drive increases in agricultural production for the state.

DA BUX has proven to be beneficial for Hawai'i's economy. According to a study conducted by Colorado State University, each program dollar used to incentivize the purchase of local produce contributes approximately \$2.10 to Hawai'i's economy. Additionally, if DA BUX was further scaled to food retail locations statewide, the potential economic contribution would be \$14-\$22 million in one year.

A \$3 million State investment in this program would serve as a significant "matching fund" needed to unlock federal grant dollars from the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). As the GusNIP only accepts proposals that secure 100% non-federal matching funds, a State investment will strengthen the program's FY '23 GusNIP application.

State investment is critical to the long-term sustainability of DA BUX and its ability to provide positive, lasting impact both economically and for the well-being of individuals across the state.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Toby B. Taniguchi", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Toby B. Taniguchi
President

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 2:03:23 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maya Maxym	Testifying for Hawai'i Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As pediatricians caring for keiki across the State of Hawai'i, we see daily the impact of food insecurity and hunger on children's health and well-being. The DaBux program has significantly improved children's access to healthy, locally grown, and fresh food, ensuring they can access the vitamins and other nutrients they need to grow and stay healthy.

Please allocate at least \$3 million for the DaBux program to qualify for a federal match, which will benefit our economy, our farmers, and above all our keiki and families.

Thank you,

Maya Maxym, MD FAAP on behalf of the Hawai'i Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Director

Before:
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Herbert M. “Tim” Richards, III, Vice Chair

March 15, 2023
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference

Re: HB 1248, HD1 Relating to Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program Incentives.

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1248, HD1, which appropriates funds to Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawaii healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i SUPPORTS HB 1248, HD1.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i is one of the nation’s largest not-for-profit health plans, serving 12.6 million members nationwide, and more than 269,000 members in Hawai‘i. In Hawai‘i, more than 4,200 dedicated employees and more than 650 Hawai‘i Permanente Medical Group physicians and advance practice providers work in our integrated health system to provide our members coordinated care and coverage. Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i has more than 20+ medical facilities, including our award-winning Moanalua Medical Center. We continue to provide high-quality coordinated care for our members and deliver on our commitment to improve the health of our members and the 1.4 million people living in the communities we serve.

Food insecurity and poor nutrition remain problems for many of our residents. Research shows that SNAP benefits are often not adequate to last a family the entire month. SNAP recipients who are eligible for work do so while on the program, underscoring that many recipients are using the program to overcome underemployment or temporary job loss.

Addressing food insecurity is a critical focus area for Kaiser Permanente. Kaiser Permanente Hawai‘i supports policies that ensure all Hawaii residents have access to affordable, high-quality health care. Further, Kaiser Permanente supports “whole-person care,” including the provision of access to services and resources that address beneficiaries’ physical health, mental health and social needs. Food security means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic

access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy lifestyle.

To this end, Kaiser Permanente took action to increase enrollment in SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Using a national text-based outreach campaign to our members, we helped 95,000 people apply for the program. We also established innovative partnerships between health care systems and the public sector that identify families who may be eligible for SNAP to encourage enrollment.

We've piloted interventions using medically tailored meals to help people recuperate better at home, and partnered with Produce Rx, to help patients who have diabetes access fresh produce. By studying how these programs work and under what conditions they are successful, Kaiser Permanente is building an evidence base for future policy interventions that reduce health care costs and improve patient outcomes.

In 2021 Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i invested \$322,000 in grants to community-based organizations to improve food security in Hawaii by increasing availability of emergency food distributions and improving participation in federal food programs such as SNAP. We also carried out our own SNAP campaign to at-risk members. In additions, some of our investments leveraged matching funds for the Double Bucks and TEFAP programs. These grants went on to support programs that increased food security for pregnant and postpartum mothers in low-income, underserved communities. Finally, Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i distributed nearly 450,000 pounds of food to furloughed and displaced hotel workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i supports the HB 1248, HD1 because it will increase the buying power for low-income families to fresh fruits and vegetables. This helps reduce food insecurity while concurrently supporting our local farmers, food distributors and retailers.

We ask the committee to PASS HB 1248, HD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 7:21:08 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

The Da Bux program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawaii's food economy.

Even before the pandemic DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- It's putting more food on the tables of local families in need.
- It's providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food.
- It's strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in the Islands.
- It's improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.

The DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families have access to quality fresh food.

Please support HB1248.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 7:28:08 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samuel M Mitchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Da Bux program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawai's food economy.

Even before the pandemic DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- It's putting more food on the tables of local families in need.
- It's providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food.
- It's strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in the Islands.
- It's improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.

The DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families have access to quality fresh food.

Please support HB1248. Thank you for your consideration

Samuel Mitchell 1111 Wilder Ave Apt-16A Honolulu HI. 96822

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 7:38:01 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jari S.K. Sugano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Honorable Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment Program

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure. I strongly support the efforts of the SNAP in Hawaii. SNAP provides nutritional assistance to many underserved populations. Please support their efforts in meeting the needs of low income, eligible families in Hawaii double up their buying power of locally produced commodities.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 8:35:55 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Manali-Leonardo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a retired registered nurse who has worked for almost 40 years in public health and at community health centers all across the island.

Please provide the needed \$3M to support this important nutritional program.

Good nutrition is a basic human need for all age groups, keiki to kupuna, and for everyone from regular folks to local farmers.

I am in strong support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Nancy Manali-Leonardo

808-542-1556

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 9:06:56 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-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 10:04:11 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anna Marie Elderts	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1248! We all would like Hawaii to be sustainable by supporting our local farmers, grocers and especially the people of Hawaii who are most in need. This can be a win win for all of Hawaii.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 8:27:22 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Galloway	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill to help increase our local food supply and support our families and economy.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 8:34:07 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ezgi Green	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

The Da Bux program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods, and being locally sourced directly supports Hawaii's food economy.

Even before the pandemic DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways, including:

- It's putting more food on the tables of local families in need.
- It provides incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food.
- It's strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in the Islands.
- It's improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.

The DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families access quality fresh food.

Please support HB1248.

I appreciate your consideration,

Ezgi Green, Kaimanu Place/Waiialua

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 8:50:11 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Kobayashi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support DaBux because it helps farmers, families and the local economy.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 10:10:04 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Cook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our Waimea community – as with communities across the state – has experienced an INCREASE – not decrease – in the number of people showing up at various free food distributions in recent months asking for help because of the increasing cost of food and housing. These are not “lazy” people – they are individuals and families who are working and doing their best to thoughtfully manage their money, but falling short and living with food insecurity. DA BUX has provided and would continue to provide assistance to support these individuals and families as well as our local farmers. Thank you for considering a YES vote. Patti Cook - Waimea, Island of Hawai'i

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 10:56:49 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
irene kloepfer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha DABUX is needed now more than ever with the federal government cut back of the Covid extra snap benefits. DA BUX has supported 470 farmers and 8 distributors and local sales have increased by 531% at Direct Farmers. As we move toward a sustainable future here and grow more produce here for local distribution, we need to increase and keep this growing. This puts more monies back into our economy and puts us on the path toward a self-sufficient local food supply for our state. If Hawaii allocates \$3M for the DA BUX program, it could apply for an additional \$3M in federal matching funding, totaling \$6M A win-win for our farmers, workers and families

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 12:25:22 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Nihipali	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Helps Families Eat Healthy

- A survey conducted among DA BUX participants (n=436) revealed that 59% of participants are food insecure (dabux.org).
- This program helps SNAP recipients buy more fresh fruits and vegetables by doubling their purchasing power.

Helps Local Farmers and Businesses – numbers are from dabux.org site

- DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors.
- Local produce sales increased 531% at Farm Direct Retailers.
- Helps to grow our local food supply and put more money into our economy.
- The general sentiment from recipient interviews was that DA BUX is giving farmers the opportunity to feed local residents (rather than exporting products to the mainland) and increases production toward a self-sufficient local food supply for the state.

Helps Hawai‘i’s Economy

- SNAP Benefits are shown to have a large multiplier effect. For every dollar that is spent by a SNAP recipient, an additional \$0.79 moves throughout the economy.
- Farmers use that money to pay workers or buy other goods and services, continuing the benefit of SNAP dollars down the line.
- A \$3M dollar investment in Double Up Bucks would result in over \$9.9M in economic activity.

Opportunity for Federal Match

- If Hawai‘i allocates \$3M for the DA BUX program, it could apply for an additional \$3M in federal matching funds, totaling \$6M.

Please support HB 1238

Thank you for your Consideration,

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 12:28:49 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Strong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT of [HB 1248](#), requesting \$3M in state funding to support this "triple win" program.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 1:36:11 PM

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 strong support of HD1. Thank you.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 4:25:16 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Stephens	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings,

As a snap recipient, I find it more affordable to shop for fresh fruits and vegetables with da bux program. Without this program I couldn't afford to ship and having diabetes I had to change my eating habits and having da bux program has made it possible for me to loose some weight and be a little healthier.

I beg for you consider keeping this program here in Hawaii.

Sincerely yours

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 5:51:16 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teresa Powell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Da Bux programs benefits so many! Local people who have a choice to eat healthier. Local farmers who can sell their produce close to home and easily. It greatly benefits the local economy and the people. Please continue to provide support for this wonderful program!

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 9:07:38 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
April Maile Cera Nunez	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I support this bill because it helps families afford to purchase and support local farmers. Farm to table!

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 9:07:47 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
K. McGlone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Promoting local fruits and vegetables promotes health and is good for Hawaii.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 12:15:46 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peggy Brandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB1248. I am a public health nutritionist and a member of this community who appreciates the need for more local agriculture - as well as the need for our low-income 'ohana to be eating the same quality of fruits and vegetables that those of us with means are able to access. Please support this bill for good food and good sense.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 1:18:16 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Stayton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Representatives,

The Da Bux program partners with food retailers to make Hawai'i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP-EBT cardholders. Through DA BUX, SNAP benefit dollars are doubled when they're spent on qualifying local food items at more than 70 participating retail locations statewide. Those items tend to be healthier produce and fresh foods and being locally sourced directly supports Hawaii's food economy.

Even before the pandemic DA BUX program was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways including:

- It's putting more food on the tables of local families in need.
- It's providing incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food.
- It's strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in the Islands.
- It's improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.

The DA BUX program works and should be continued and expanded upon where possible. The program is a tangible solution to supporting local food production and helping families have access to quality fresh food.

Please support HB1248.

Thank you for your consideration,

Susan Stayton, Lawai, Kauai, HI

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 1:27:27 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Shon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and the members of the Agriculture and Environment Committee,

I strongly support this effort to strengthen food security in Hawaii by increasing access to healthy food.

As a graduate student in Food Security/Food Policy who cares deeply about food systems, I have learned the importance of addressing multiple food system challenges simultaneously through effective policy.

Da Bux is a win for food security, public health, and equity. It increases access to healthy food for those who need it and can benefit from it the most.

Da Bux is also critical to furthering Hawaii's progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including:

- SDG #1: No Poverty
- SDG #2: No Hunger
- SDG #3: Good Health and Well-Being
- SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities

It also aligns with Aloha+ goals related to local food production and consumption, and sustainable smart communities.

Please support and boldly fund this important program. Mahalo.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 1:54:32 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Taylor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge the passager of HB1248 to lend needed support to families deperately in need

Thank you for the opportunity to lend my full and enthusiastic support for the passage of this very important Bill.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 3:04:11 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle K.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I am **strongly supportive** of this bill because many low income folks will continue to benefit when the DA BUX program is sustain to feed them while at the same time, encouraging healthy eating from consumption of fruits and veggies. In addition, local businesses including 470 farm producers and 8 distributors also benefit from this program. Please do the right thing by providing the \$3M in funding because this program is a win-win for everyone participating. Thank you for your kind consideration!

Mahalo,
Michelle K.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 5:02:54 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am requesting the state to support the DA BUX program with \$3M in funding to support families, local farmers, and our economy.

Helps Families Eat Healthy

- A survey conducted among DA BUX participants (n=436) revealed that 59% of participants are food insecure (dabux.org).
- This program helps SNAP recipients buy more fresh fruits and vegetables by doubling their purchasing power.

Helps Local Farmers and Businesses –

- DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors.
- Local produce sales increased 531% at Farm Direct Retailers.
- Helps to grow our local food supply and put more money into our economy.
- The general sentiment from recipient interviews was that DA BUX is giving farmers the opportunity to feed local residents (rather than exporting products to the mainland) and increases production toward a self-sufficient local food supply for the state.

Helps Hawai‘i’s Economy

- SNAP Benefits are shown to have a large multiplier effect. For every dollar that is spent by a SNAP recipient, an additional \$0.79 moves throughout the economy.
- Farmers use that money to pay workers or buy other goods and services, continuing the benefit of SNAP dollars down the line.
- A \$3M dollar investment in Double Up Bucks would result in over \$9.9M in economic activity.

Opportunity for Federal Match

- If Hawai‘i allocates \$3M for the DA BUX program, it could apply for an additional \$3M in federal matching funds, totaling \$6M.

Mahalo.--

Shay Chan Hodges

Maui, Hawaii

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 8:01:57 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Romaine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill because it truly is a win-win, for the local farmers and community residents. It creates a valuable incentive for families to eat more fresh, local produce.

Mahalo,

Nancy Romaine

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 8:08:37 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deb Marois	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

As an individual and long-time consultant in the public health sector, I am writing to urge strong support for the DA BUX program. DA BUX partners with food retailers across the state to make Hawai‘i grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for low-income recipients of federal food benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This program is a “triple win” for Hawai‘i: Low-income SNAP households are able to afford more healthy local produce; local farmers increase their sales to food retailers; and more federal SNAP dollars stay circulating in our state’s economy. Continued funding is needed to support this important program.

Each dollar reimbursed to participating DA BUX food retailers for their issued discounts on local produce has an economic multiplier of 2.1. This means each program dollar issued for local produce incentives contributes \$2.10 to Hawai‘i’s economy. Additionally, if DA BUX was further scaled to food retail locations statewide, the potential economic contribution would be \$14-\$22 million in one year. (reference: Dawn Thilmany et al., “The Economic Contributions of Healthy Food Incentives” (Fair Food Network, January 2021), <https://fairfoodnetwork.org/from-the-field/incentives-impact/>).

According to the Da Bux Outcomes report, this program not only gives families in need more buying power, it also has positively impacted the consumption of fruits and vegetables, helps educate keiki about nutrition and healthy eating and is an important component to addressing food insecurity statewide. Farmers also are able to feed local residents (rather than exporting product to the mainland) and increase production towards a self-sufficient local food supply for the state.

(https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bca7bc67eb88c2e986a5203/t/62f6dc8f8e3f8d1a809e2e9a/1660345536073/2020-2021_Outcomes_Report_0.9.8.pdf)

Mahalo for your consideration,

Deb Marois, Makawao

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 8:16:32 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Adriann Gin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and the Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

I am submitting testimony in support of HB 1248, which will help fund and grow the DA BUX program. Here are just a few reasons how:

Helps Families Eat Healthy

- A survey conducted among DA BUX participants (n=436) revealed that 59% of participants are food insecure (dabux.org).
- This program helps SNAP recipients buy more fresh fruits and vegetables by doubling their purchasing power.

Helps Local Farmers and Businesses – numbers are from dabux.org site

- DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors.
- Local produce sales increased 531% at Farm Direct Retailers.
- Helps to grow our local food supply and put more money into our economy.
- The general sentiment from recipient interviews was that DA BUX is giving farmers the opportunity to feed local residents (rather than exporting products to the mainland) and increases production toward a self-sufficient local food supply for the state.

Helps Hawai‘i’s Economy

- SNAP Benefits are shown to have a large multiplier effect. For every dollar that is spent by a SNAP recipient, an additional \$0.79 moves throughout the economy.
- Farmers use that money to pay workers or buy other goods and services, continuing the benefit of SNAP dollars down the line.
- A \$3M dollar investment in Double Up Bucks would result in over \$9.9M in economic activity.

Opportunity for Federal Match

- If Hawai‘i allocates \$3M for the DA BUX program, it could apply for an additional \$3M in federal matching funds, totaling \$6M.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Adriann Gin, Honolulu, HI 96821

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 9:37:53 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natasha Woodward	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

The double bucks program is so helpful for families who are receiving SNAP benefits... it helps people afford to eat healthy, which transfers to better public health in the community. It also helps to support local farmers at the markets... so please support this bill.

Aloha,

Natasha

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 10:14:33 AM

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

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

Comments:

The Hawai‘i Healthy Food Incentive Program—DA BUX double up food bucks program—first started with a pilot program in 2012 through Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services on O‘ahu and The Kohala Center on Hawai‘i island. The program provides a dollar-for-dollar match to supplemental nutrition assistance program beneficiaries who purchase locally grown fruits, vegetables, and proteins at participating farmers’ markets, grocery stores, and community-supported agriculture projects.

By the end of 2021, the pilot program was available at 57 food retailers across 98 market sites and pick-up locations that include grocery stores, farmers markets, community supported agriculture programs, and other farm direct retailers. From 2020–2021, DA BUX supported 470 farm producers and 8 distributors.

Each dollar reimbursed to participating DA BUX food retailers for their issued discounts on local produce has an economic multiplier of 2.1 times. This means that each program dollar issued for local produce incentives contributes \$2.10 to Hawai‘i’s economy. A \$3,000,000 investment by the state in this program would allow for a federal funding match that will contribute at least \$12,600,000 to our local economy annually.

This is a triple win for the state because it supports families, farmers, and the local economy. Please support HB1248 HD1!

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 11:15:07 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment,

I am writing in support of HB 1248 which requests \$3 million in state funding for DA BUX program for SNAP recipients. This program is a triple win for residents, farmers and the Hawai'i economy by ensuring that healthy, local produce is affordable for SNAP recipients, that farmers can stay in business and that our economy can keep more money in the local economy. Programs like this set forth a model of sustainability for other efforts and should be replicated and supported as Hawai'i comes out of the pandemic response and looks to proactively plan for the future of agriculture and food for our residents.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Molly Mamaril (Kaimuki resident)

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 11:57:04 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anita Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

I support HB 1248 to support DA BUX program with \$3M in funding.

DA BUX helps families eat healthy and doubles the purchasing power for SNAP recipients.

DA BUX supports local Farmers and Businesses to grow our local food supply.

DA BUX keeps money in our local economy and would allow Hawai'i to apply for an additional \$3M in federal matching funds.

HB 1248 is a triple win!

Please support HB1248.

Thank you,

Anita Anderson

PO Box 1175 Kilauea, HI 96754

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 8:13:50 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Cwynar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1248 is a win for food security, low income residents of Hawaii and for Small Farmers as well.

Providing access to affordable, local, nutritive food at accessible prices, promotes a healthy local food economy and the health of low income families.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 11:14:21 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elaine Warner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Absolutely support this bill. Hunger prevents students from learning and motivates people to do undesirable things. We are better than this. Please support!

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 1:27:36 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
MICHELE WEINHOUSE	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Michele Weinhouse, a farmer on Lana'i, and I am in full support of HB1248 HD1. Many of our multigenerational families need programs like SNAP and DA BUX to bring healthy food into their homes. As a farmer, I want to be part of the solution. This program helps grow and feed nutritional foods for and to Lanaians.

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 1:42:11 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Nelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in support of H.B. 1248**: Relating to the appropriation of funds to DOA for the continued administration of the Hawai'i healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

DA BUX has increased food access for thousands of underserved households across Hawai'i. The success of the DA BUX program and its positive impact on Hawai'i's Food System and economy has been documented consistently by the Food Basket, showing that each dollar reimbursed to participating DA BUX food retailers generates \$2.10 for Hawai'i's economy.

DA BUX supports local farmers, local families and our local economy, making healthy fresh food affordable to those who need it most. In a time where the cost of living and food prices are rising due to inflation, we cannot afford to pass on the federal grant match that DA BUX would providing, bringing \$12.6 Million into Hawai'i's economy. Please invest in Hawai'i's people, our farmers, and food system by passing H.B. 1248.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Lauren Nelson

Makawao, Hawai'i

HB-1248-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 1:51:45 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Kong	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Over the course of the last 3 years, I've been working with DA BUX to market and promote the program online. I've had a lot of time to think about the program, its mission, target market and, on a more fundamental level, if the program even works.

I've concluded that it is a worthy program, it brings value to the community through both helping to create healthier more vibrant people, but also as an economic stimulus to local food producers and retailers.

In a time where retail food is dominated by large corporations and maximum profits, it's clear that the cheapest, most affordable, and widely appealing foods are also the most unhealthy—loaded with sugars, salts and fillers to get people hooked and coming back for more.

Healthy options like fruits and vegetables are more expensive and already at a disadvantage when it comes to appeal. And with inflation, the cost of fruits and vegetables have increased dramatically—even more so for local food producers who don't have the cost savings that come when operating at scale.

All this means that local fruits and vegetables are even more out of reach for low income families than ever before. But it's not just more difficult for low income families, it's also more difficult for the local farmers to compete and sell their products.

I've seen first hand that the DA BUX program is an effective mechanism to give low income families the chance to participate in the local fruits and vegetables market, which puts more money into the hands of our local farmers, and of course encourages those families to eat healthier.

The number one complaint about the program that I've heard is that it's not available in more locations. And since onboarding new locations requires a significant amount of resources and funding, it's the main limiting factor to making DA BUX ubiquitous in Hawaii, which is what I think would be the best case scenario.

Encouraging our local community to buy local fruits and vegetables, especially our lower income folks, is an almost impossible sell when local produce is at a premium and there are so many less healthy, cheaper options available. DA BUX makes it a no-brainer.

I believe this is an indispensable program to have in our community and I would implore you to do what you can to keep it going. Thank you for your consideration and taking the time to hear a concerned member of the community.