

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKALE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKALE

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

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKALE

February 3, 2026

TO: The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2208 – RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.**

Hearing: Thursday, February 5, 2026, Time 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the bill and provides comments. This bill establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program under the Department to alleviate food shortages in the State. DHS respectfully requests that the appropriation not replace or reduce budget priorities identified in the executive budget.

Most recently, to address the impacts of the 2025 federal government shutdown, DHS provided funds to the Hawaii Foodbank and its network to purchase and distribute food. DHS has also facilitated grants appropriated under Chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to community food bank organizations.

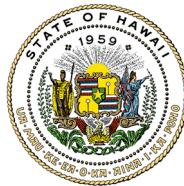
The Department recognizes that residents, including those who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, also rely on community organizations for food and other assistance to meet nutritional and other needs not met by government programs.

However, at this time, DHS is focused on implementing programmatic changes required by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBA), Public Law 119-21, and does not currently have sufficient administrative capacity and resources to initiate and oversee a new program. Should

this bill progress further, the Department will update the resources needed to implement this measure.

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STEPHEN F. LOGAN
MAJOR GENERAL
ADJUTANT GENERAL
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
KAHU HO'OMALU PŌULIA

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUĀ
HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
4204 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96816-4420

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2208,
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR
HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

February 5, 2026

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice-Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee:

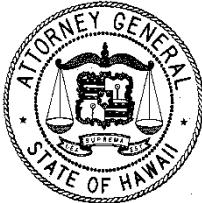
The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA) respectfully submits this testimony in **SUPPORT** of House Bill 2208, which establishes the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to provide funding for food banks to purchase, store, and distribute fresh, Hawai'i-grown or -produced food to food-insecure communities across the state.

HIEMA acknowledges the critical importance of this legislation in addressing food insecurity, a significant issue impacting many households in Hawai'i. Strengthening local food systems and supporting agricultural producers aligns with broader resilience and sustainability goals vital to the welfare of our communities, particularly during emergencies or times of economic hardship.

HIEMA is committed to supporting initiatives that enhance resiliency in Hawai'i, provided they do not adversely impact the Governor's Executive budget. We appreciate the Legislature's dedication to improving food security in our state and are prepared to assist and collaborate as appropriate - to ensure the success of these programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 2208.

James Barros: james.barros@hawaii.gov; 808-733-4300



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026**

**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:
H.B. NO. 2208, RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.**

**BEFORE THE:
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS**

DATE: Thursday, February 5, 2026 **TIME:** 9:30 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 329

TESTIFER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Erin L.S. Yamashiro, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Marten and Members of the Committee:

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

This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to establish and administer the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to fund food banks.

The bill provides an appropriation of public money (page 4, lines 4-10) to provide financial assistance to private food banks for the purchase, storage, and transportation of food. Article VII, section 4, of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii provides that "[n]o grant of public money or property shall be made except pursuant to standards provided by law." This bill appears to create a grant program that authorizes the distribution of public funds to private entities but may not include sufficient statutory standards by which the Department of Human Services is to award the funds to private food banks.

Accordingly, the Department recommends that the bill be amended to include sufficient standards to guide the Department of Human Services in distributing the appropriated funds as grants to food banks. Examples of existing statutes that provide sufficient standards for administrative grant programs include part II of chapter 9, and sections 10-17, 210D-11, and 383-128, Hawaii Revised Statutes. Additionally, we have attached draft standards to this testimony as a possible framework. The attached draft standards can be inserted after subsection (b) of the second new section to be added to

Testimony of the Department of the Attorney General

Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026

Page 2 of 5

the new part of chapter 346, starting on page 5, line 18. We are also available to work with the Committee to develop more specific standards as appropriate.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Testimony of the Department of the Attorney General

Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026

Page 3 of 5

POSSIBLE STANDARDS FOR THE GRANTS IN THIS BILL

(c) Requests for grants shall be submitted to the department in accordance with the rules adopted by the department. Each request shall at a minimum state:

- (1) The name of the food bank requesting grant funds;
- (2) The purpose for the grant;
- (3) The service to be supported by the grant;
- (4) The target group to be benefited;
- (5) The cost of the grant; and
- (6) That the grant shall be used for activities that are consistent with the purposes of the Hawaii farm to families program.

(d) A food bank applying for a grant under this section shall meet the following standards; specifically, the grant shall only be awarded if:

- (1) The applicant is licensed or accredited, in accordance with federal, state, or county statutes, rules or ordinances, to conduct the activities or provide the services for which a grant is awarded;
- (2) The applicant agrees to comply with all applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, creed, sex, age, sexual orientation, or disability;
- (3) The applicant agrees to comply with applicable federal, state, and county laws;
- (4) The applicant agrees that the grant shall not be used for purposes of entertainment, or lobbying activities;

Testimony of the Department of the Attorney General

Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026

Page 4 of 5

- (5) All activities undertaken with funds received shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and county statutes, regulations, rules, and ordinances necessary to conduct the activities or provide the services for which a grant is awarded;
- (6) The applicant agrees to allow the department, legislative committees and their staff, and the auditor full access to their records, reports, files, and other related documents and information for purposes of monitoring, measuring the effectiveness, and ensuring the proper expenditure of the grant;
- (7) The applicant agrees to comply with any additional requirements imposed by the source of funds; and
- (8) The applicant meets any additional standards prescribed in rules adopted by the department.

(e) Each application for grant funds shall be reviewed in accordance with this section. Applications shall be submitted to the department on forms prescribed by the department and shall contain, at a minimum, the information required under this section. The department shall review each application to determine eligibility for grant funds and make a final decision on each request. The department shall inform each applicant of the disposition of the application's request. Any applicant denied grant funds may appeal the denial in accordance with the department's rules.

(f) The department shall not disburse grant funds approved unless a written contract is executed between the department and the recipient. The department shall develop and determine, in consultation with and subject to the review and approval of the attorney general, the specific contract form to be used.

Testimony of the Department of the Attorney General

Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026

Page 5 of 5

(g) Every department grant contract shall be monitored by the department to ensure compliance with this part. Every department grant contract shall be evaluated annually to determine whether the grant attained the intended results in the manner contemplated.

(h) Any recipient who withholds or omits any material fact or deliberately misrepresents facts to the department shall be in violation of this part. In addition to any other penalties provided by law, any recipient found by the department to have violated this part or the terms of its contract shall be prohibited from applying for any department grants for a period of five years from the date of termination.

(i) As used in this section, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

"Applicant" means a food bank applying for a grant.

"Recipient" means a food bank receiving a grant.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:03:18 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele McLean	Maui County Council Chair Alice Lee	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I serve as Maui County Council Chair Alice Lee's representative on the Board of the Maui Food Bank, and ask for your support of this important measure. With our housing crisis being foremost in everyone's minds, we cannot fail to also address our food security crisis -- which includes 34 percent of our keiki experiencing food insecurity!

HB2208 -- the Farm to Families Bill -- is a win-win-win-win: it provides access to fresh food for food insecure families; it invests in local farmers and growers; it strengthens our community food systems; and it improves our health and resiliency.

- If we invest in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods and thus create more resilient and sustainable food systems.**
- If we provide a steady market for local produce, then farmers can plan for future growth.**
- If we provide healthy food options, we provide essential nutrients to individuals, thus fighting hunger and promoting long-term health and wellness.**

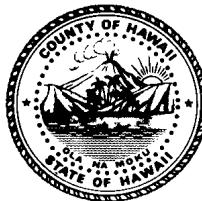
Please give HB2208 your whole-hearted support!

Mahalo for your consideration.

Michele McLean, Office of Maui County Council Chair Alice Lee and Board Member of the Maui Food Bank

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor

William V. Brilhante, Jr.
Managing Director



Benson Medina
Director

Dennis Lin
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

25 Aupuni Street, Room 1301 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-4252
(808) 961-8366 • Fax (808) 935-1205
E-mail: chresdev@co.hawaii.hi.us

February 2, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

THURSDAY, February 5, 2026
9:30 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 329

TESTIMONY ON HB 2208 Relating to Food Security

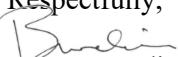
Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds and Members of the Committee,

I am Benson Medina, Director of the Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai'i. One of the agricultural objectives of this department is to support collaboration, innovation, resource development, and programmatic sustainability throughout the food system to reduce food waste, improve producer viability and resilience, develop workforce development pathways, or increase access to locally produced food among low-income residents.

The County of Hawai'i provides written testimony in **SUPPORT of HB2208**, to establish the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Hawai'i County faces the highest rates of food insecurity in the State, with 43% of Hawai'i County households reporting food insecurity in a 2025 report by Hawai'i Foodbank. The Food Basket (TFB), Hawai'i Island's food bank is at the forefront of Farm to Family initiatives, pioneering efforts to connect local farmers with communities in need. In 2025, our department collaborated with TFB to award \$500,000 in federally-funded grants to 29 food access organizations, prioritizing projects that increase cold, dry, or freezer storage, as well as equipment and supplies that expand the capacity and resilience of existing programs and services. This investment improved the ability of food access programs around the island to receive and store fresh Farm to Families produce.

The Farm to Families program improves emergency food access, boosts local agriculture, and strengthens Hawai'i's food system during the ongoing economic crisis that is affecting so many families across the state. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of HB2208**.

Respectfully,

Benson Medina
Director

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 2:16:17 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Thomas Carlisle, MD, MPH	Hawaii Academy of Family Physicians (HAFP)	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair

Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair

Date: February 2, 2026

From: Hawai'i Academy of Family Physicians Legislative Committee (HAFP)

RE: HB 2208; Hawai'i Farm to Families Program**Position: Support**

Thank you for allowing testimony on HB 2208. The Hawai'i Academy of Family Physicians Legislative Committee (HAFP) recognizes that access to quality nutrition is vital to the health of the people of Hawai'i. HAFP also recognizes that ensuring sustainable access to and distribution of healthy, local food with our most in need is vital. HAFP supports funds for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages and support a sustainable future.

Given that the bill is directed to the health of our keiki, keeping the focus on food other than coffee may be reasonable.

Thank you for allowing testimony on this vital bill to assure the basic needs of the people of Hawaii.

Robert Thomas Carlisle, MD, MPH
Chair, Legislative Committee

Hawai‘i Academy of Family Physicians

advocacy@hafp.info



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND HOMELESSNESS

Thursday, February 5, 2026 — 9:30 a.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports HB 2208, Relating to Food Security

Dear Chair Marten and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono supports HB 2208, which establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Over the last few years, one of the most pressing issues for many local families has been food insecurity. With many out of work and surviving on government unemployment support, communities have relied on the efforts of food banks and local food producers to meet their basic need to eat.

In response to the COVID pandemic, federal monies injected into Hawai'i through county initiatives helped grow a local farm-to-food bank effort, in which food banks were able to purchase local products for distribution to communities in need. This effort was a win-win-win, in that local food producers had a market to sell their products when hotels and restaurants shuttered their doors, local families received fresh and nutritious food products made locally island-wide, and food banks that were struggling to purchase shelf-stable food due to nationwide shortages were rescued by Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers who provided local food to their communities.

These farm-to-food bank efforts across the state led to many important foundational relationships between local farmers, ranchers, and community feeding organizations that helped struggling communities cope with the social and economic consequences of the COVID pandemic. Unfortunately, natural disasters, food supply chain disruptions, and state emergencies have become a harsh, consistent reality for our local communities. Food banks across the state regularly organize food drives to sustain these vital community resources, which depend increasingly on donations and local producers for consistent supply. Meeting these food security challenges will require ongoing support, and strengthening partnerships between farms and food banks is a valuable investment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Vice President of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i

999 Bishop Street, Suite 1202 | Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813 ☎ 808.544.8960 ☎ 808.432.9695 | www.ulupono.com



P.O. Box 392, Kilauea, Kauai, HI, 96754

PHONE: (808) 212-4765 • FAX: (808) 828-2027 • E-MAIL: bbrody1@hawaii.rr.com • WEB SITE: www.getfitkauai.com

Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

Thursday, February 5, 2026 – 9:30 AM

Testimony in Strong Support of HB2208 / SB2427 - Relating to Food Security

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Get Fit Kaua'i, I am writing in strong support of HB2208/SB2427, which establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services.

Get Fit Kaua'i is the Healthy Eating Active Living coalition of Kaua'i County, representing more than 100 members across community organizations, health systems, farms, schools, and local businesses. Our coalition works to improve access to nutritious foods and support the health and resilience of our island communities.

Hawai'i continues to face significant food access challenges, with many families struggling to afford fresh, healthy produce. At the same time, local farmers often encounter unstable markets and limited distribution channels. The Farm to Families Program addresses both issues by purchasing locally grown food and distributing it to households in need. This approach strengthens our agricultural economy, keeps resources circulating locally, and ensures that Hawai'i-grown produce nourishes Hawai'i families.

By establishing a permanent program and providing dedicated funding, HB2208/SB2427 helps alleviate food shortages, reduces reliance on imported foods, and builds a more resilient statewide food system. The required reports to the Legislature in 2027 and 2028 will support transparency and guide continuous improvement.

For Kauai and all islands, Farm to Families is more than a food access initiative — it is an investment in community health, farmer viability, and long-term food security.

For these reasons, Get Fit Kaua'i respectfully urges the Committee to pass HB2208/SB2427.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

BBrody

Bev Brody
Get Fit Kauai – Director
H.E.A.L. (Healthy Eating Active Living) Community Coalition of Kauai County
(808) 212-4765

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 6:36:53 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steve Ulene	Maui Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

2/1/2026

Testimony in Support of Farm to Families

Aloha,

I live in Hawai'i on the Island of Maui and I am Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Maui Food Bank.

I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai'i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.
1. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
1. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Our goal at Maui Food Bank is to end food insecurity on Maui, Moloka‘i and Lāna‘i.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Thank you,

Steve Ulene

Makawao, Maui

Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Maui Food Bank

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:47:05 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jim Albertini	Malu 'Aina	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our organization strongly supports HB2208. We are a non-profit farm and peace organization that has been growing food to share with people in need for 45 years. We have served as an emergency food pantry before there was a food Bank/Basket.

We need to reverse the current percentage of food imported to Hawaii -- 90%. We need to make 90% of the food consumed in Hawaii to be homegrown. Help restore the ahupua'a system, of people taking care of the land so the land can take care of the people of Hawaii.

Mahalo.

Jim Albertini, president of Malu 'Aina



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for HB 2208 – Relating to Food Security
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness
Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 9:30AM

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2208, which would support a Farm to Families program. This bill would appropriate additional funds to alleviate food shortages in the State by ensuring fresh produce is directed to families in need.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of food equity and resiliency, which is why we support instituting a Farm to Families program at the state level. This legislation would strengthen local food supply chains, from supporting the local agricultural economy to guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, to reducing farm food waste.

Fresh, local produce is essential for improving community health, yet is often out of reach for many families struggling to afford life in Hawai‘i. This program would help make healthy, whole foods available to more people, thereby alleviating hunger and preventing long-term health issues like diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and depression.¹

Farm to families not only strengthens Hawai‘i’s food supply chain but also provides a backup, or “safety net” market for local farmers during times of economic crisis or natural disaster. When these events strike, the emergency food system becomes a lifeline both for families seeking food, and for farmers seeking markets when tourism plummets. During the recent federal shutdown, as the state worked toward alleviating the pause in SNAP benefits, federal workers without paychecks, SNAP recipients, and those struggling to put food on the table were pointed to the food banks. Once again, the food banks and distribution partners stepped in—stitutions that historically have relied almost entirely on charitable contributions.

By strengthening the partnerships between local farmers and our food banks, we are setting up a food system that is not as reliant on imports and puts back money in our local economy. Our state has set goals to double our local food production by 2030; passing this bill is one step to getting us there.²

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2208. We are pleased that the Hawai‘i legislature is paying attention to improving food security. By investing in this initiative, we can create a stronger, healthier, and more equitable Hawai‘i for generations to come.

¹ Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), “Hunger & Health: The Impact of Poverty, Food Insecurity, and Poor Nutrition on Health and Well-Being,” FRAC, December 2017, p. 1-2.

² <https://alohachallenge.hawaii.gov/pages/local-food-production-and-consumption>

To: House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness
Re: **HB2208 – Relating to Food Security**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
February 5, 2026, 9:30 AM

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB2208**. This bill establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State and requires reports to the Legislature prior to the Regular Sessions of 2027 and 2028.

According the Hawai'i Food Bank, one third (34%) of children in Hawai'i are living in households in which one or more of them are food insecure.¹ Especially with the highest cost of living and most expensive groceries in the nation,² it is nearly impossible for the low-income families in Hawai'i to afford to buy healthy food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

In addition, it is well established that the stresses of childhood poverty have both immediate and long-term effects on keiki's physical and mental health, behavioral self-control, academic achievement, and earnings as adults.³

That's why it's so important to support Hawai'i's food banks and farmers by providing state funds to Hawai'i food banks to secure consistent supplies of locally produced or grown food for hungry families.

Food banks and their partner agencies help ensure that struggling families with keiki do not go hungry by distributing millions of pounds of food per year to those in need in our state. The recent years of high inflation, especially for groceries, the devastating wildfires, and federal layoffs and cuts have led our state's food banks to struggle with continual rising demand.⁴

This program would have the added plus of supporting our local farms. Farm to families is a win-win, by providing local food to those who need it, supporting local farmers, and strengthening local food systems.

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

Thank you,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ <https://hawaiifoodbank.org/food-insecurity/>

² <https://meric.mo.gov/data/cost-living-data-series>

³ <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/children-families>

⁴ <https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/10/hawaii-food-banks-and-farmers-are-in-real-trouble-with-federal-cuts>



To: Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 5, 2026

Re: Testimony in Strong Support of HB2208

From: Andrew Ogata, Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

Aloha Chair Martin, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Andrew Ogata, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (H3RC) in strong support of HB 2208.

Food insecurity continues to be one of the most pressing issues facing the communities we serve. Many of our clients are already dealing with housing instability, chronic health conditions, and limited income. When access to food is unreliable, everything else becomes harder. Managing health, staying housed, and even showing up for services can quickly fall apart when people are skipping meals or going days without eating.

H3RC provides low-barrier, harm reduction-based services to individuals living with or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, mental illness, and homelessness. Food access is a consistent need we see across all of our programs. It is not just about hunger. It directly affects health outcomes, medication adherence, and overall stability.

We have partnered with the Hawai'i Foodbank for many years to help address this need. During the pandemic, we helped distribute more than 500,000 pounds of food across O'ahu. Today, even with fewer emergency supports in place, demand remains extremely high. We currently distribute over 140,000 pounds of food each year, and the need continues to grow.

HB 2208 is an important step toward addressing food insecurity in a sustainable way. By supporting food banks' ability to purchase and distribute fresh, Hawai'i-grown food, this bill improves access to nutritious food for families while also supporting local farmers and strengthening our local food system. This kind of investment helps communities now and builds resilience for the future.

We respectfully urge the Committee to support HB 2208.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Andrew Ogata
Director of Development
Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:45:08 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
audrey metzman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Audrey and I am the Community Food Security Project Coordinator at The Food Basket, Hawai‘i Islands food bank. I am submitting this testimony as an individual community member.

Part of this project is getting feedback from community members on their vision for the future of food and challenges they face gaining greater food security. We have connected with hundreds of community members through in-person meetings and online surveys to involve them in this planning process.

Supporting local agriculture has come up again and again and again as a main goal and guiding star. The community is craving this investment and anything that contributes to the flourishing of our local food system and our superhero farmers. Thank you for your continued work in this space.

Me ke aloha,

Audrey



Maui Food Bank
Nourishing Lives, Feeding Futures

February 5, 2026

RE: Support for HB 2208, Relating to Food Security

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Maui Food Bank, I express our strong **support for HB 2208 Relating to Food Security** which establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State.

For over 30 years, Maui Food Bank has provided daily and emergency assistance to those facing food insecurity in Maui County. Maui Food Bank distributes food to families and individuals on Maui, Molokai and Lanai through direct service programs and through our network of **148 agency partners**. Last fiscal year, we served on average 40,000 people each month, distributing a total of **7.6 million pounds** of nutritious food, including **2.9 million pounds of fresh produce**. Of those served, 35% are children and youth.

With 1 in 3 households in the entire State of Hawai'i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- 1. Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
- 2. Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
- 3. Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.



Maui Food Bank
Nourishing Lives, Feeding Futures

As an example, in FY25 the Maui Food Bank:

- Purchased 650,000 pounds of locally grown/produced food from 29 farmers/ranchers
- Generated \$1.1 million in revenue for local food producers and \$3.5 million for other Maui County food industry businesses.
- Collected 2.6 million pounds of surplus food from 78 business donors

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation. HB 2208 empowers food distribution organizations to forge stronger partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families experiencing food insecurity. These collaborations between local farms and food organizations deliver benefits to both our communities and the economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony,

Lisa H. Paulson
CEO, Maui Food Bank



Date: February 5, 2026

Subject: Hawai'i Foodbank in Strong Support of HB 2208 Relating to Food Security

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our STRONG support for HB 2208, Relating to Food Security. This bill establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State. It also requires reports to the Legislature before the Regular Sessions of 2027 and 2028.

As the state's largest hunger-relief organization, Hawai'i Foodbank has been committed to ensuring no one in Hawai'i goes hungry since 1983. We work with over 250 hunger relief partners on O'ahu and Kaua'i to distribute food, and programs like Food 4 Keiki and 'Ohana Produce Plus provide nutritious meals to children and families. In addition to addressing daily needs, our organization mobilizes during emergencies to provide immediate relief and aid long-term recovery efforts.

Hawai'i Foodbank's Farm to Families program provides fresh, healthy food to those in need while also supporting local farmers and producers. Launched in 2020, it has already demonstrated its impact by investing \$13 million into more than 40 local farms and food hubs, distributing over 10.5 million pounds of Hawai'i-grown produce and proteins. HB 2208 will expand this initiative by strengthening the supply chain, ensuring fresh, Hawai'i-grown food reaches food-insecure households while supporting local agriculture.

Increased funding for Farm to Families is critically needed. The "State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i 2024-2025" report revealed that 32% of households in our state experience food insecurity. Thirty-four percent (34%) of children experience food insecurity, up from 29% in 2023; and in households with children food security among adults was a staggering 45%, up from 38% in 2023. These figures highlight the urgent need for a sustainable solution to hunger in Hawai'i.

Hawai'i Foodbank is currently serving more than 160,000 people a month – as many people as during the height of the pandemic and twice as many people as we served prior. Given recent federal cuts, these numbers will only go up. Now, more than ever, we must increase our investment in our local food systems, building resilience for local farmers and families.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this vital measure and for your dedication to supporting our communities through initiatives like HB 2208.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank



2026 Network Members

Aloha Harvest
Aloha United Way
Chef Hui
City and County of Honolulu
County of Hawai'i
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA)
Hawai'i Appleseed
Hawai'i Children's Action Network
Hawai'i Dept. of Agriculture
Hawai'i Dept. of Health
Hawai'i Food Bank
Hawai'i Food Bank - Kaua'i Branch
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Kōkua Kalihi Valley
Lanakila Pacific
Mālama Kaua'i
Maui Department of Agriculture
Maui Food Bank
Parents and Children Together
Supersistence
The Food Basket
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i Together
Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center

hawaiihungeraction.org

Human Services & Homelessness

Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 9:30AM

RE: Support for HB 2208, Relating to Food Security

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, would like to express strong support for the proposed "Farm to Families" program under HB 2208.

Our network is intimately familiar with the toll disasters can take on communities, and many of our members are at the frontlines of response efforts. Whether it is in response to wildfires, a pandemic, a government shutdown, a hurricane, flood, volcano eruption—or just the day-to-day emergency of needing to put food on the table in an economy when many families are one paycheck away from financial devastation—our emergency food partners are there to respond to the community's needs. And they often do this on very stretched and limited resources.

A strong emergency food system is a critical pillar of resiliency, not just because of its role in a disaster, but also in its potential to strengthen local food supply chains and our island's agricultural economy. This program would be a powerful step toward achieving this outcome, by guaranteeing that nutritious food is available to more families, supporting local farmers, and even reducing farm food waste.

Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of this important legislation.

With aloha,
Hawai'i Hunger Action Network membership

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 1:21:29 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Fox	Malama Kaua‘i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We support this measure.



February 3, 2026

To: Chair Lisa Martin, Vice Chair Ikaika Old and the House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

Subject: **HB2208**, Relating to Food Security

Aloha,

I am writing in **support of HB2208** which establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in Hawaii. Hawaii's high cost of living (both housing costs and food) and reliance on food shipped from out of state have left as many as one-third of the population food insecure. Furthermore, the limited amount of fresh, local food leaves many of the population reliant on ultraprocessed food which is increasingly shown to be deleterious to health. The extended difficulty of food acquisition during the pandemic and the more recent federal government shutdown have demonstrated the precarious nature of fresh local food availability. This bill would strengthen the connection between local farmers and community food systems, and furthermore, encourage the continued expansion of locally-grown fresh food. By funding the purchase of locally grown food for the food banks within Hawaii, both the residents of Hawaii and the local farmers would be able to benefit from this support.

I urge this committee to pass HB2208 which establishes and appropriates funds for the Farm to Families program which would provide fresh, locally grown foods to Hawaii food banks. Support to local farmers AND Hawaii's families goes a long way to alleviating food insecurity and hunger in the Hawaiian Islands. This bill would also continue to provide encouragement to the local farming sector to grow and reduce the reliance of Hawaii on Mainland food.

Mahalo,
[LEAD ADVOCATE] & 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 2026, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food 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.



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

Executive Officers

Kit Okimoto, Okimoto Corp., *Chair*
Jayson Watts, Mahi Pono, *Vice Chair*
Jill Tamura, Tamura Super Market, *Secretary/Treas.*
Lauren Zirbel, HFIA, *President and Executive Director*
Paul Kosasa, ABC Stores, *Advisor*
Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, Odom, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Advisor*
Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 5, 2026

TIME: 9:30am

RE: HB2208 Relating to Food Security

Position: Support

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

HFIA is in support of this measure. Injecting state funding into our local food systems has a range of benefits. First and foremost this measure helps address the growing issue of food insecurity in our state. Far too many Hawaii families are facing food insecurity and they need your support. This measure will help provide healthy fresh food to families who utilize foodbanks in our state.

This measure also provides a consistent buyer to support our local agricultural producers. Having consistent buyers encourages growth in our local agricultural sector and helps make locally grown food more accessible and competitive for us all. This helps diversify our economy, creates agricultural jobs, and ensures that there is more local food for everyone to enjoy. This measure is good for families who will utilize it, it's good for our local farmers, it's good for our food systems, and good for Hawaii.

We believe that in order to improve food security, local food production, and resiliency in Hawaii it's vital for the State to support programs like this which support our food industry. We thank you for the opportunity to testify.



COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair
Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair

HB2208 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Thursday, February 5, 2026, 9:30am
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council supports HB2208 which establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Food security is a base need for our community. No family should go hungry. We support this bill that will help feed our community as well as support local agriculture. Providing funds to our food banks to purchase local food is a win-win and encourages producers to increase local food production. Ranchers are always generous with their donations, but this program can ensure that bee

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Ranchers produce a high-quality protein and are the stewards of almost 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or nearly 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director



HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:20:21 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Helen Cox	Kauai Climate Action Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

Kauai Climate Action Coalition, a group of more than 150 Kauai residents, strongly support HB2208. This bill will address food insecurity while at the same time assisting farmers, clearly a win win. Food insecurity is a major issue among lower income families in Hawaii. This bill is an important step in trying to ease this burden. And the bill will also increase local, healthy food production. Please support and pass HB2208. Mahalo.



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

February 5, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2208
RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

Conference Room 329 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice-Chair Olds, 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 2208, which establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State while supporting local agricultural producers.

Hawai'i continues to face persistent food insecurity challenges, with many families lacking consistent access to fresh, nutritious food. At the same time, local farmers and ranchers often struggle with unpredictable markets, high distribution costs, and limited access to stable buyers. The Farm to Families Program addresses both challenges by connecting locally grown food with community feeding programs and households in need.

Since 2020, HFB has partnered with Hawai'i's food banks to help source fresh, locally grown food for community distribution. Through these partnerships, the Hawai'i Foodbank, Maui Food Bank, Kaua'i Foodbank, and the Hawai'i Island Food Basket work with hundreds of agency partners statewide to distribute safe, nutritious food to food-insecure individuals and families. These collaborations have demonstrated that purchasing local agricultural products strengthens food access while supporting Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers.

HB 2208 builds on this proven model by providing a structured, state-supported program that creates a reliable market for local producers while improving access to fresh, locally sourced food for vulnerable populations. Investing in local agriculture through programs like Farm to Families helps reduce reliance on imports, strengthens Hawai'i's food system

resilience, and ensures that public resources support both community well-being and local economic activity.

We appreciate the placement of this program within the Department of Human Services, recognizing food security as both a human services and agricultural issue. By aligning social support programs with local food production, HB 2208 represents a practical, collaborative approach to addressing hunger in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Christian Zuckerman
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents

Kelii Gannet
Kohala, Hawai'i

East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Ka'ū, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawai'i

Gina Lind
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahālāwai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Moloka'i

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Rachel LaDrig
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i



Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the House Human Services & Homelessness Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports HB2208.**

HB2208 represents an innovative approach to addressing food insecurity in Hawai'i by fostering a direct link between local agricultural producers and families in need. This legislation not only provides immediate relief to the significant number of households experiencing food shortages but also strengthens the local agricultural economy by ensuring that family farmers have a stable, reliable outlet for their products. By facilitating the flow of Hawai'i-grown produce through purchase and transportation costs, the bill helps overcome challenges that can deter small-scale farmers from participating in food assistance programs.

The establishment of the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under HB2208 ushers in a new era of food assistance that operates as an economic driver for the state. By investing in the infrastructure needed to get local products from farms to food banks, this measure ensures that food assistance dollars serve a dual purpose: alleviating hunger while simultaneously supporting the sustainability and growth of Hawai'i's agricultural sector. This proactive economic model benefits not just those who receive food assistance, but also empowers farmers by creating a dependable market for their goods, contributing to a more resilient and self-sufficient food system in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heaivilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



Hawai'i Aquaculture & Aquaponics Association

Hawai'i Cattlemen's Council

Hawai'i Farm Bureau Federation

Hawai'i Farmers' Union United

Hawai'i Food Industry Association

Hawai'i Food Manufacturers Association

Kohala Center

Land Use Research Foundation of Hawai'i

Maui Farm to School Network (Maui F2SN)

Ulupono Initiative

College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience - University of Hawai'i at Manoa

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

Thursday, February 5, 2026 – 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

HB 2208 – RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee:

The Local Food Coalition **SUPPORTS** HB 2208, which establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Food security should be a top priority for the state. With uncertainty in the flow of federal funding, we have an obligation and an opportunity to further bridge Hawai'i agricultural producers' fresh, locally grown food to families in need.

HB 2208 will help stabilize demand for local products, provide farmers and ranchers with a reliable market, and reduce the State's dependence on imported food by investing directly in our communities. By leveraging existing food banks and community partners, this program can move local, Hawai'i-grown or Hawai'i-produced food to households that are struggling with the high cost of living, ensuring that public dollars support both local agriculture and vulnerable residents.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



To: The House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness (HSH)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Thursday, February 5, 2026, 9:30am

In strong support of HB2208

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and HSH Committee members;

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org is in **strong support of HB2208** that establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State.

One in three households in Hawaii faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. This critical measure will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii farm to families program to fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food. By doing so, this program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger.

Many families in Hawaii struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB2208 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Moreover, efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawaii's resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB2208 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

Please pass HB2208 so that we all may reap these benefits.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of this important legislation.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

SUPPORT HB 2208: RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY

TO: House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: Thursday, 02/05/26; 9:30 am; CR 329 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Shellie Niles, Vice President of Mission at Catholic Charities Hawai'i. We respectfully submit this testimony in **strong support of HB2208**.

With one in three households in Hawai'i experiencing food insecurity, including 34 percent of children, decisive action is needed to ensure families have consistent access to safe, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food. HB2208 represents a meaningful and practical solution to this urgent challenge.

This measure creates a win-win opportunity for Hawai'i by simultaneously addressing hunger and strengthening our local food system. By supporting partnerships between local farmers and food organizations, the bill expands access to fresh, healthy food for food-insecure families while investing in Hawai'i's agricultural community.

Specifically, HB2208 will:

- **Strengthen Hawai'i's food supply chain** by increasing local food production and reducing reliance on imported goods, helping to build a more resilient and sustainable food system.
- **Support local farmers and growers** by providing a reliable and fair market for locally grown produce, enabling farmers to plan for growth and stability while feeding their neighbors in need.
- **Enhance nutritional access and health outcomes** by increasing the availability of fresh, local produce for families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options—addressing both immediate hunger and long-term wellness.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i works daily with families struggling to make ends meet. We see firsthand how access to fresh, nutritious food can stabilize households, improve health, and strengthen communities. HB2208 aligns with these goals and reflects a thoughtful investment in both people and place. For these reasons, Catholic Charities Hawai'i **strongly supports HB2208** and respectfully urges the Committee to pass this important measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony. If you have any questions, please contact our Vice President of Mission, Shellie Niles, at (808) 527-4813.



February 3, 2026

Testimony in Support of H.B.2208 Relating to Food Security

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds and members of the Committee,
Mahalo for the opportunity for Aloha United Way to support H.B.2208.

Food insecurity in Hawai'i is increasingly a working-family issue, not solely a matter of poverty. In Hawai'i, approximately 40% of households are below the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) threshold. These are working families who earn above the federal poverty level but still cannot afford basic necessities. For many, food is one of the first expenses reduced when budgets are strained.

According to the *ALICE in Hawai'i 2024 Facts and Figures*¹ report nearly half (46%) of the households under the ALICE threshold have experienced food insecurity, and almost half of those families report purchasing less fresh food due to inflation. These trends have significant implications for health, educational outcomes, and overall family stability.

H.B. 2208 provides a practical, locally driven solution. By establishing the Hawaii Farm to Families Program within the Hawai'i Department of Human Services, the State can partner with food banks to purchase fresh, Hawai'i-grown food directly from local producers and distribute it to families at no cost. This approach improves access to nutritious food, supports local agriculture, and keeps resources circulating within Hawai'i's economy.

Investments that stabilize food access strengthen families, stabilizes ALICE households, and build long-term community resilience. For these reasons, Aloha United Way respectfully urges passage of H.B. 2208.

Mahalo,

Michelle Bartell
President & CEO
Aloha United Way

¹<https://www.auw.org/about/alice-initiative/alice-reports/>



HPCA

HAWAII PRIMARY CARE ASSOCIATION

Testimony to the House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

Thursday, February 5, 2026; 9:30 a.m.

State Capitol, Conf. Room 329

Via Videoconference

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 2208, RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, 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 THE INTENT** of House Bill No. 2208, RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.

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.

The measure, as received by your Committee, would establish the Hawaii Farm to Families Program (Program) to fund food banks in the State to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food to food insecure communities. In addition, the bill would appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2026-2027, for the administration of the Program and provision of food to Food Banks through the Program.

The bill would take effect on July 1, 2026.

The HPCA acknowledges that pursuant to Act 213, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, the Hawaii State Legislature established a five-year Food Hub Pilot Program to provide eligible applicants with financial assistance to establish and expand food hub operations on a scale to meet local demands. The Legislature further found that additional funding was necessary to facilitate the intended goals of the Food Hub Pilot Program by enacting Act 185, Session Laws of Hawaii 2025, to appropriate \$1,500,000 in general funds for fiscal 2025-2026 and the same amount for fiscal year 2026-2027.

Testimony on House Bill No. 2208
Tuesday, February 3, 2026; 9:30 a.m.
Page 2

The HPCA has supported the Food Hub Pilot Program since its creation in 2022 and had also supported the provision of addition funding for that program in 2025.

In November 2025, the federal government shutdown stopped the provision of SNAP benefits to Hawaii's citizens. This placed an enormous strain on Hawaii's social safety net to prevent catastrophic outcomes for our most vulnerable communities. This crisis demonstrated how fragile Hawaii's food distribution system is and that the need for additional mechanisms to support nonprofit organizations throughout the State is prevalent and acute.

To the extent that the program proposed by this bill will provide additional resources to nonprofit organizations such as the Food Bank, the HPCA wholeheartedly supports this measure. However, we also note that the manner in which State resources are provided to nonprofits must be carefully examined.

We note that for measures seeking to appropriate funds to non-governmental agencies, the Attorney General had opined that such efforts may conflict with Article VII, Section 4 of the Hawaii Constitution. (See, House Bill No. 1468, Regular Session of 2019, among others.). We acknowledge that the authority to issue grants is solely that of the Legislative branch so how state funds are distributed to food banks must comply with Chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, among others.

Be that as it may, we urge your favorable consideration of this measure to further discussion.

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@hawaiipca.net.



PO Box 42
Waimānalo, HI 96795-0042
waimanaloag@gmail.com

Waimānalo Agricultural Association

February 4, 2026

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness,

The Waimānalo Agricultural Association is a community organization representing approximately 100 farmers and supporters of agriculture predominately located on the East side of O'ahu. The Waimānalo Agricultural Association **STRONGLY SUPPORT HB 2208**, relating to food security to establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State.

The Waimānalo community experiences one of the highest rates of food insecurity in Hawai'i. This bill would help create a consistent market for our agricultural producers, supporting the economic viability of local farmers while increasing access to fresh, locally grown food for our community.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Haley McKinnon
President
Waimānalo Agricultural Association



House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Strongly Supports: HB 2208

February 5rd, 2026 at 9:30am; Conference Room 329

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds and members of the committee,

As a member of the Hawaii Hunger Action Network, HAPA strongly supports HB2208 which seeks to allocate additional funds to increase the impact of the Farm to Families program.

With **one in three households in Hawaii experiencing food insecurity** and that two-thirds of these families experiencing the most extreme version of this – reducing food intake, skipping meals, or going whole days without eating – this farm to family measure would help provide means to feeding our communities' families with nourishing, locally grown food. This additional funding and support would also support the local procurement minimums introduced through Act 175, SLH 2021. This economic stimulation is beneficial to the local economy and local business owners/operators, and increases financial support for the establishment and support of local infrastructure, production, and procurement.

Through the operating budget for the state's executive branch following the 2025 Hawai'i legislative session, \$500,000.00 per year for two years – 2026-27 and 2027-28 for a total of \$1,000,000.00 (one-million dollars) – was appropriated under the Department of Labor & Industrial Relations beyond the legislative vehicles of bills HB425 (2025) and companion SB1250 (2025) each requesting \$2,000,000.00 (two-million dollars) in appropriations.

The initial legislative requests sought to allocate an amount necessary for the farm to families program. HB 2208 will build on the progress made last session to meet that actual need our communities face. The legislature found that to bridge the gap between the State's food banks and their partners to bring fresh, Hawaii-grown produce to families, the food banks have partnered with five hundred seventy-five local farms and food hubs to create a consistent market for Hawaii agriculture producers. Additionally, the Hawaii Foodbank invested over \$11,000,000 in Hawaii-grown produce over the last five years as of 2025 reporting data, which using the local foods economic multiplier, equates to an investment of nearly \$19,000,000 in our local economy. Please support HB2208. Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne Frederick".

Anne Frederick,
Executive Director



Farmer owned, 'āina grown

Testimony In Support of HB 2208 Relating to Food Security

Department of Human Services; Food Security; Hawai'i Farm to Families Program; Reports;
Appropriation
February 4th, 2026

Testimony of Dana Shapiro
Chief Executive Officer
Hawai'i Ulu Producers Cooperative

The Hawai'i 'Ulu Producers Cooperative strongly supports HB 2088 Relating to Food Security. We formed our cooperative in 2016 to build a network of small-scale, diversified farms and to improve community access to nutritious, culturally relevant foods. With 1 in 3 households in Hawai'i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action. This bill represents a "win-win" for our islands by providing fresh food to those in need while simultaneously investing in the local growers who strengthen our food systems.

We are living proof that farm-to-institution partnerships work. From 2018 to 2020, we served as a primary local supplier for the DOE's 'Aina Pono program, and we are happy to share that this school year our products are back on the regular breakfast and lunch menus as part of DOE's renewed commitment to increasing local procurement! We have seen firsthand how this relationship benefited both the community and our economy:

- Farmer Growth: Our partnership enabled us to grow our volumes from 20,000 pounds in 2017 to nearly 615,000 pounds by 2025. This month, we surpassed almost 3,000,000 lbs of produce purchased from local farmers since our inception.
- Student Connection: We have seen children's excitement when they recognize 'ulu in schools, proving that when fresh food is accessible, it changes the way the next generation views nutrition.

By supporting this program, we achieve three vital goals:

1. Strengthening the Food Supply Chain: We reduce dependence on imported goods and create a more resilient, self-sufficient island state.



Hawai'i 'Ulu Producers Cooperative

79-1017 E Honalo Rd, Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740 | 808-238-8869 | eatbreadfruit.com | info@eatbreadfruit.com

2. Supporting Local Agriculture: This bill provides a steady, fair market for our 200+ small-scale family farmers on Hawai'i Island, Kaua'i, O'ahu and Maui, allowing them to plan for future growth.
3. Enhancing Nutritional Access: For families who lack access to healthy options, this bill provides essential nutrients that promote long-term wellness and combat hunger.

We firmly believe that by appropriating the necessary funds and resources, Hawai'i can meet its goal of a healthier, more resilient food system. We urge you to pass HB 2088 to ensure our neighbors are fed and our farmers can continue to flourish.



Dana Shapiro
Hawai'i 'Ulu Cooperative Co-founder and CEO





THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAI'I ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

February 2026

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST
ALBRECHT

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

ANN EBESUNO
BOARD CHAIR

MARK
KRZYZANOWSKI
VICE-CHAIR

JASON COHN
TREASURER

JULIA ZEE
SECRETARY

STEPHEN UEDA

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA
COLLINS

CASEY HALPERN

LAUREN ZIRBEL

JEREMY CHONG

Mahalo for the opportunity to share my strong support for Farm to Families with HB 2208

Hawai'i Island continues to experience the highest food insecurity rates in the state. According to the 2025 State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i Report:

- 43% of Hawai'i Island households are food insecure, and
- 62% of Hawai'i Island keiki experience food insecurity, levels far above the statewide average.

These numbers reflect our daily reality: families working multiple jobs yet unable to afford basic groceries; kūpuna choosing between medication and meals; and children whose long-term health is at risk from inconsistent access to nutritious food.

HB 2208 is a critical and strategic response to these urgent needs. It is a true win-win, supporting both vulnerable households and the local agricultural economy that is essential to Hawai'i's long-term resilience.

Why Farm to Families Matters:

- **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** Investing in local agriculture reduces dependence on imports and increases our ability to withstand disasters and supply disruptions. A farm-to-foodbank model helps build a stronger, more stable, and more resilient food system for every island.
- **Supporting Local Farmers and Growers:** HB2208 creates a predictable, mission-aligned marketplace for Hawai'i's farmers. When growers know their produce will feed their own communities, they can expand production, diversify crops, and stabilize income, strengthening rural economies across the state.



THE FOOD BASKET

HAWAII ISLAND'S FOOD BANK

- **Improving Nutritional Access for Food-Insecure Families:** Fresh, local, and culturally relevant food is often out of reach for families facing economic hardship. This bill delivers high-quality fruits and vegetables that support long-term health while honoring Hawai'i's diverse food traditions.

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

KRISTIN FROST
ALBRECHT

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

ANN EBESUNO
BOARD CHAIR

MARK
KRZYZANOWSKI
VICE-CHAIR

JASON COHN
TREASURER

JULIA ZEE
SECRETARY

STEPHEN UEDA

WARREN LEE

SAMANTHA
COLLINS

CASEY HALPERN

LAUREN ZIRBEL

JEREMY CHONG

Our Experience on Hawai'i Island:

For more than three decades, The Food Basket has partnered with Hawai'i Island farmers including, small, mid-sized, Native Hawaiian, and first-generation growers—to connect local agriculture to families in need. During the pandemic, these partnerships sustained farms and fed tens of thousands of residents. We have seen firsthand that when agriculture and community food organizations are resourced together, the entire island benefits.

HB 2208 builds on this proven success. This legislation is not just a food bill; it is a resilience bill.

Mahalo for your leadership, service, and for your commitment to a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. The Food Basket respectfully urges your passage of HB 2208.

With deepest aloha,

Kristin Frost Albrecht

Executive Director

The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

LATE

Aloha Hawai‘i State Legislature,

We are writing in **strong support of increased funding for the Farm to Families program** under the Department of Human Services.

Thirty-two percent (32%) of all households in Hawai‘i are food insecure, including 34% of all children. In 11% of households children are going hungry. It is critical that we take action NOW to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food.

Farm to Families legislation represents a meaningful opportunity to advance both food security and community resilience across the state. By increasing our investment in locally grown food for distribution to households facing hardship, Farm to Families improves access to fresh, nutritious meals while supporting Hawai‘i farmers. This connection between agriculture and food assistance builds resilience for both families and farmers in times of crisis.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. We are deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Mark Willman
Kauai Bible Church

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:53:50 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaohimanu Dang Akiona MD	Kohala Coast Urgent Care/Moloka'i Family & Urgent Care	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of Farm to Families

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Esteemed members of the committee,

My name is Ka`ohimanu Dang Akiona, I am a rural, independent, family medicine physician, mother and active part of the Hawai`i Island and Moloka`i healthcare communities. I provide direct patient care to patients of all ages across Hawai`i and Maui County and support my colleagues and partner organizations on Oahu as well.

I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai`i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai`i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- Strengthening Hawai`i's Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai`i.
- Supporting Local Farmers: The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai`i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
- Enhancing Nutritional Access: Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Hunger affects the health, development and achievement of our keiki, the wellbeing of our kupuna and the stability and safety of our communities. As a physician, I understand that access to healthy foods and a concentrated effort to address and end hunger is a very basic necessity

and right for ALL. More and more of my patients have reported needing to make difficult decisions regarding bills, healthcare and putting food on the table. This should not be a choice our ohana, friends and community should have to make. Please help us as address hunger and take every step we can to improve the health and well being of all Hawai‘i.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

‘O au iho no me ka ha`aha`a, Humbly,

Ka`ohimanu Dang Akiona MD

Family Medicine Physician and Founder, Kohala Coast Urgent Care & Mobile Health/ Moloka‘i Family & Urgent Care

Hilo/Kohala, Hawai‘i Island and Kaunakakai, Moloka‘i

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:14:31 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marsha Fahir	Maui Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm Marsha Fahir (Sharpe) Board Chair of Maui Food Bank.

I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai'i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
1. Supporting Local Farmers: The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
1. Enhancing Nutritional Access: Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Thank you,

Marsha Fahir (Sharpe)

Kula, HI

Board Chair, Maui Food Bank

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:59:14 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gil Keith-Agaran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds:

I strongly support this measure to fund the farm to families program. I am a member of the Maui Food Bank board.

One in three households in Hawai‘i face food insecurity, including 34% of all children. This measure provides concrete action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. In addition to addressing food insecurity for many families, this bill also invests in local farmers and growers. In short, this program fosters a healthier, more resilient Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Gilbert Keith-Agaran

Kahului, Maui, Hawaii

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 2:06:07 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jean Butel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in **strong support** of the establishment and appropriation of funds for the **Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program**, which would provide funding to food banks across the State to purchase, store, and transport **fresh, Hawai‘i-grown or -produced food** to food-insecure communities.

Food insecurity remains a critical issue in Hawai‘i, disproportionately affecting low-income families, kūpuna, keiki, and residents of rural and neighbor island communities. At the same time, Hawai‘i farmers and food producers continue to face barriers accessing stable markets, particularly during economic disruptions and climate-related events. The Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program directly addresses both challenges through a locally driven, mutually reinforcing solution.

By investing in food banks’ capacity to purchase local agricultural products, this program:

- **Improves access to fresh, nutritious foods** for individuals and families experiencing food insecurity;
- **Strengthens Hawai‘i’s local food system** by providing farmers with reliable, in-state markets;
- **Keeps food dollars circulating locally**, supporting agricultural livelihoods and rural economies; and
- **Enhances food system resilience** by reducing dependence on imported foods and strengthening local supply chains.

Food banks are trusted community institutions with established infrastructure and relationships that allow them to efficiently distribute food statewide. However, many lack sufficient resources to consistently procure, store, and transport fresh local produce, proteins, and value-added products. Dedicated funding through the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program would allow food banks to expand cold storage, improve logistics, and increase the volume and diversity of Hawai‘i-grown foods reaching those most in need.

Beyond addressing hunger, this program supports broader state priorities, including public health, disaster preparedness, climate resilience, and local economic development. Increased access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and locally produced foods contributes to improved dietary quality and long-term health outcomes, helping to reduce healthcare costs and health disparities across the State.

The Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program represents a smart, strategic investment that aligns with Hawai‘i’s commitment to food security, agricultural sustainability, and community well-being. I respectfully urge the Legislature to support the establishment of this program and to appropriate sufficient funds to ensure its success and long-term impact.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this testimony and for your continued leadership in strengthening Hawai‘i’s food system and supporting our communities.

Respectfully submitted

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 2:23:46 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Waters	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Writing in strong support of this important bill that will increase food security in our state. Mahalo for your time.

February 2, 2026
Testimony in Support of Farm to Families

Aloha,

My name is Lindsay Domantay from Kapolei, Hawaii.

I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai'i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- 1. Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
- 2. Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
- 3. Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

I am fortunate to have been born and raised in Hawai'i, with the notion that community is our kuleana, instilled in me. No one should go hungry. Basic needs— healthy food, clean water, and shelter are essential for survival. This bill will help support local farmers and help build a sustainable food system here in the islands, while ensuring that nutritious food will be made accessible to our neighbors in need.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Thank you,

Lindsay Domantay
Kapolei, Hawai'i

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:13:42 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Molly Mamaril and I'm a Kaimukī, O'ahu resident and foodbank volunteer writing in strong support of Farm to Families.

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai'i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain: By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
1. Supporting Local Farmers: The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
1. Enhancing Nutritional Access: Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Molly Mamaril

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:17:50 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of. Thank you.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:46:07 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support the **HB 2208: Farm to Families** bill. It can help to alleviate hunger while simultaneously supporting local farmers and overall having an impact on investment in expanded local food produciton. This is a win-win kind of bill.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:49:33 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Koki Atcheson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2208 The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your consideration of this testimony!

Koki Atcheson

96791

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:52:51 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members:

I write in strong support of HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your consideration and this opportunity to testify.

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:54:05 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kencho Gurung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:57:34 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Andrew Isoda
Lahaina, Maui

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:04:05 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lory Ono	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your attention,
Lory Ono

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:07:48 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kimdonghyeon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:12:47 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:33:15 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Thank you

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:49:08 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keili McEvilly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Ke‘ili and I live in Waimanalo. Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo nui,

Ke‘ili

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:51:50 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cristina Holt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai'i experiencing food insecurity, it is absolutely imperative that we work to pass any and all legislation aimed at lessening that burden on families. We must work to gain independence from importing all of our foods, and we must be responsible for the land and water so we can cultivate an aina that is able to hold and care for us all.

The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis, of which we are seeing more and more in shorter periods of time.

We must plan for the next seven generations, starting right now.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:52:55 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya Aynessazian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 6:48:06 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcia Kemble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Committee Members,

Please support HB 2208. An extremely high percentage of households in Hawaii are experiencing food insecurity. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy by giving farmers reliable access to markets while providing our communities with nutritious food. We really need to work toward food security in the long term by increasing local food production. Food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Marcia Kemble
Makiki

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 7:12:15 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Hagan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

I urge you to support this measure.

Mahalo,

Erin Hagan

Waialua

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 7:22:04 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jodie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawai‘i report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 7:45:29 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gabriela Schneider	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds and members of the Committee on Human Services and Homelessness:

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. As a former North Kohala Food Hub manager, I personally witnessed the toll that food security takes on families. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. This is a win win for helping families and the local economy stay resilient.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Gabriela Schneider, North Kohala (Kapaau, HI 96755; stereogab@gmail.com)

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:00:24 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hayley Peter-Contesse	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a resident of Makaha, I see the realities of food insecurity every day. I see the health problems caused by lack of access to nutritious, affordable food and I see the lines of cars stretching down the street with families waiting for food boxes. I see people in the checkout line at Waianae store with only a couple cans of food in their wagons instead of a cartful of food to get them through the week. I also know many beginning farmers locally who want to help and who would benefit from this legislation.

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:23:09 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill. This takes care of those in need of nutrition, farmers, and our goals for increasing local food supply.

Mahalo

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:51:45 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Meehan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2208.

This bill does the important task of supporting food bank sourcing locally grown food and establishes the Hawaii Farm to Family Program.

Please support this important bill. Thank you.

Ted Meehan

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:14:27 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jasmine Balangitao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha chair and members I'm writing to you in support of this bill. We need more locally grown food access. And less dependence on food that is shipped to out islands. It would be nice to be able to feed us local families more locally grown food. Please help us thank you , Jasmine Balangitao

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:45:22 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cecilia Wang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2208. As a physician practicing lifestyle medicine in Hawai‘i, I see how access to fresh, whole food directly affects health outcomes. Food insecurity drives chronic disease, emergency visits, and long-term suffering that are preventable.

HB2208 allows food banks to purchase Hawai‘i-grown food, supporting local farmers while getting nutritious food to families who need it most. This is a smart, upstream investment in health, dignity, and community resilience.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:51:32 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carmela Resuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:59:09 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
An Vo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is An and I'm a public health college student on O'ahu. I support HB2208 because farmers are underappreciated, and they take a lot of time to grow food which can go bad if a natural disaster strikes, eradicating crops that took months to grow. Moreover, 1/4 of families on O'ahu are food insecure while 1/3 of families in all the Hawaiian Islands are food insecure, and that's because Hawai'i's food is mostly imported. If importers cut off the food supply when they get mad at Hawai'i in the future, Hawai'i will be doomed to starve because we aren't ready to produce enough food locally.

Please support HB2208.

Mahalo,
An

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 12:38:16 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Marten, Vice Chair Representative Olds and Members of the Committee on Human Services and Homelessness.

Please support HB 2208. It's my understanding that this bill, in establishing the Hawaii Farm to Families Program, would help local farmers by providing funding to buy produce from them and opening up a local market for them, and would help families by improving emergency food access.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:42:05 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dita Škalic	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:39:28 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Maitino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2208. 1/3 of Hawaii's families have food insecurity. We need our local food banks to access and supply, local food. Hawaii's heavy dependent on imported Food Will become a crisis when There is a problem getting those foods to Hawaii. We need to support our local Farmers Who we can rely on If they know that their local food production Will be used. If Food banks can provide local foods, this will promote Increasing production of or access to local food for families.

thank you.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:36:38 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Morgan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2208. This bill would help both food insecure families and farmers in Hawaii. With our current significant increase in food prices, this bill is important to protect our keiki from lack of healthy food. With its provision to supply funds to buy produce from local farmers to distribute at food banks, it will also help our farmers.

Please vote in favor of HB2208.

Mahalo.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:25:48 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maureen Copeskey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Maureen Copeskey and I live in Honolulu, Hawaii. I have been a resident of O'ahu for almost 14 years and am a volunteer with the Food Bank. I was recently informed of a bill to support and am happy to share my testimony.

I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai'i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- 1. Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
- 2. Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.

3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Thank you,

Maureen Copeskey

Honolulu, Hawaii

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:46:49 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kodie Solis-Kalani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha nui,

My name is Kodie Solis-Kalani and I am a mahi‘ai and community coordinator. I support HB2208. Not only would the Hawaii Farm to Families Program increase food access to Hawaii ohana, it would do so by also supporting local food production.

Mahalo.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:49:09 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patty Tran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

I strongly support the measure establishing and funding the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services.

This program strengthens Hawai‘i’s food security by connecting local farmers with families who need access to fresh, healthy food. It reduces dependence on imports, supports local agriculture, and keeps resources circulating in our communities. The required reports in 2027 and 2028 will ensure transparency and guide future improvements.

This is a practical, high-impact investment in both our food system and our most vulnerable residents. I respectfully urge you to pass this measure.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Patty Tran, DO

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:00:44 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support this bill before we face another disaster proving we did too little, too late.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:08:50 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:09:52 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This should be a no-brainer. Hawaii needs food security. Please vote to support food security in Hawaii!

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:22:23 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Travis Tsuda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Appreciate your time in reading,

With the cuts in community support from the fed and outright elimination of any sort of climate change mitigation, feels more important to broaden our options to respond to potential food shortage events at the local level. I ask that you all please support this bill

Thank you

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:12:21 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kana Maeji Carter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kana Maeji Carter and I support funding the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program. I am a family medicine physician, and I see firsthand how food insecurity harms the health of my patients, especially children, kūpuna, and those with chronic illness.

This program connects local farmers with families in need, providing fresh, nutritious food while strengthening Hawai‘i’s food system and local economy. It is a practical way to improve both public health and food security.

I appreciate the requirement for legislative reports to ensure accountability and long-term success. This measure is an important investment in the well-being and resilience of our communities.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:12:49 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Hello Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nanea Lo. I submit this testimony in strong support of HB 2208, which would establish the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program to help alleviate food shortages across our state.

I offer this testimony as a board member of the Hawai‘i Workers Center and as a member of the Honolulu Tenants Union. Through this work, I see firsthand how rising food costs, housing instability, and economic pressure are deeply connected for working families across Hawai‘i.

The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households report experiencing food insecurity, and nearly half—46 percent—of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for both our communities and local farmers.

Local farmers often struggle with access to stable markets. This program would strengthen Hawai‘i’s agricultural economy while ensuring that families have reliable access to nutritious, locally grown food. As the cost of imported food continues to rise, investing in our local food system is essential to improving long-term food security and resilience.

Food banks play a critical role in disaster preparedness and response, yet they rely almost entirely on private donations and grants, even as local governments depend on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families Program would provide dedicated funding to purchase food from local farmers, improve emergency food access for families, and create dependable local markets for farmers during economic downturns.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 2208.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Hawai‘i Workers Center Board Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:17:07 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of funding for farm to families. The cost of living rises exponentially on a continuous basis, meaning many of the families we work with in the community feel forced to make decisions about things like paying rent or putting food on the table. Community based agricultural access to fresh foods is more important to make sustainable than ever. As a licensed clinical social worker in this state, I see every day the difference that access to adequate and sustainable sources of food make for our community members and families.

Respectfully,

Cynthia L. Kim, LCSW

Director of Behavioral Health

University of Hawai‘i Family Medicine Residency Program

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:33:26 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathryn Braun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families. I am a long-time teacher with the Hawai‘i system testifying as an individual.

As a teacher, I have witnessed food insecurity among my students. And every year, I donate to various food banks. I know the money is helpful, but I worry that food banks do not have good access to fresh foods, especially produce.

It is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai‘i.

Thank you, Kathryn Braun, Punchbowl

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:46:15 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Komal Soin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support this wonderful bill to grow and provide our local produce to our communities

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:50:51 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Chun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee,

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term. Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo for your support in this urgent matter,

Malia Chun

Educator, Mother and Community Advocate

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:51:28 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support Farm to Families legislation. The need is urgent. 1 in 3 households in Hawai‘i face food insecurity, including 34% of all children.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

- **Strengthening Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.
- **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
- **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

February 3, 2026

Testimony in Support of Farm to Families

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

My name is Jordan and **I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.**

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai‘i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai‘i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

As a volunteer at food distributions on O‘ahu, I regularly see how gaps in our safety net affect working families, kūpuna, and people with disabilities. Many households’ seeking food assistance are employed but still cannot keep up with Hawai‘i’s high cost of living.

Hunger in our communities is not a lack of effort. It is a lack of access and affordability. Policies that strengthen food security improve health outcomes, reduce strain on emergency services, and help families remain stable. This bill is an important step toward addressing hunger in Hawai‘i in a practical and preventative way.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Thank you,

Your name
Jordan Smith
Honolulu, Hawai‘i

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:59:03 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Simonds	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I hope you will support HB2208. This program, like DaBux, has a multi-pronged effect: it subsidizes local food production which encourages production, supports farmers, and reduces food dependence, and also provides fresh, nutritious, and relevant foods to the people who need them most. Let's pass this bill and then put our money where our mouths are by funding it appropriately.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 11:25:18 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gloria Spondike	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 3, 2026

Testimony in Support of Farm to Families

Aloha,

My Name is Gloria Spondike, I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.

Many of Hawai‘i families are facing food insecurity, this includes children and Kupuna which is why it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai‘i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai‘i’s Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i.

1. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
1. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

So many young people go hungry or even senior citizens who have to go back to work because they have to chose between eating or getting their meds, please consider ensuring that our most vulnerable are protected and have the ability get proper nourishment without having to worry.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Thank you,

Gloria Spondike

Honolulu, HI

Aloha Hawai‘i State Legislature,

We are writing in **strong support of increased funding for the Farm to Families** program under the Department of Human Services.

Thirty-two percent (32%) of all households in Hawai‘i are food insecure, including 34% of all children. In 11% of households’ children are going hungry. It is critical that we take action NOW to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food.

Farm to Families legislation represents a meaningful opportunity to advance both food security and community resilience across the state. By increasing our investment in locally grown food for distribution to households facing hardship, Farm to Families improves access to fresh, nutritious meals while supporting Hawai‘i farmers. This connection between agriculture and food assistance builds resilience for both families and farmers in times of crisis.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. We are deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Katie Crowe	Hawai‘i	Aina Exotics LLC
Sherry Pollack	Statewide	350Hawaii
Amanda Shaw	Statewide	Agriculture Stewardship Hawai‘i
Tim Munley	Kaua‘i	Aloha Church
Cathy Kerch	O‘ahu	Aloha Diaper Bank
Norma Atiga	O‘ahu	Alternative Structures International
Ayme Becnel	O‘ahu	Better Tomorrows
Asaka Herman	Kaua‘i	Boys & Girls Club of Hawaii
Aaron Tsang	O‘ahu	Calvary Assembly of God
David Worker	O‘ahu	Community People Ministries
Raymond Donato	O‘ahu	Crossfire Ministries
Coleene Ako	O‘ahu	Crossfire Ministries
Deanna Alquiza	Kaua‘i	EAH Housing
Neian Ponun	Hawai‘i	Elementary school
Joshua Uyehara	Kaua‘i	Family and Friends of Agriculture
Daynna Jones	O‘ahu	Franciscan Vistas Ewa
James DeJesus	O‘ahu	Fresh Aloha Direct/ Aloun Farms
Keith Yap	Kaua‘i	Gay & Robinson, Inc
Bev Brody	Kaua‘i	Get Fit Kauai - the Healthy Eating Active Living Coalition of Kauai County
Violette Ishikawa	O‘ahu	Giving Hope Hawaii
Leilani Lori Bishop	O‘ahu	Grace and Favor Church
Kari Hagedorn	Maui	Hana Farmers Market
Jodi Robinson	Statewide	Hawai‘i Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations (HANO)
Nicole Woo	Statewide	Hawai‘i Children’s Action Network Speaks!
Liza Ryan Gill	Statewide	Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rights

Nate Hix	Statewide	Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Lynne Wooddell	O'ahu	Hawai'i Foodbank
Brent Kakesako	Statewide	Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development
Anne Frederick	Statewide	Hawaii Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA)
Daniela Spoto	O'ahu	Hawai'i Appleseed
Elizabeth Damonte	O'ahu	Hawaii Food Bank Volunteer
Kelsey Amos	O'ahu	Hawai'i Food+ Policy
Tricia Coloma	O'ahu	Hawaii Foodbank
Evan Poole	O'ahu	Hawaii Foodbank
Amy Miller	O'ahu	Hawai'i Foodbank
Marcy Jackson	O'ahu	Hawaii Foodbank Board of Directors
Craig Shikuma	O'ahu	Hawaii Foodbank Board of Directors
Andrew Ogata	O'ahu	Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center
Dana Shapiro	Statewide	Hawaii Ulu Cooperative
Anna Marie Elderts	O'ahu	Hina Mauka Teen CARE
Rebecca Madrid	O'ahu	Honolulu Fil-am SDA Church
Paula Reeves	Kaua'i	Ho'okipa Food Pantry - Volunteer
Jasmin pullman	O'ahu	Hope Chapel Kahuku
ESTRELITA.	O'ahu	Jesus is Alive Fellowship
ANDRES		
Bernadette Tanalin	Kaua'i	Kauai Economic Opportunity, Inc.
Stephanie iona	Kaua'i	Kekaha Agriculture Assn
Aurora Mendoza	Kaua'i	Kings Lihue church
Martyn Benjamin	O'ahu	Kokua Kalihi Valley
Leslie Moody	O'ahu	Kroc Center Hawaii
Melissa Ka'onohip-Camit	O'ahu	Lāhui Foundation
Rachel Alexander	O'ahu	Lakeside Alliance
Yvonne Johnson	Kaua'i	Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry (Lihue); also small farmer on south shore (rural Koloa)
Gracie Albright	Maui	Lokelani 'Ohana Resource Center (Lokelani Intermeidate School)
Ricky Kang	O'ahu	Love & Light Ministries
Kilihune Meyer	Kaua'i	Malama Kauai
Chery Gourley	O'ahu	MARSH - Pyramid Insurance
Debbie Cabebe	Maui	Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.
Lisa Paulson	Maui	Maui Food Bank
Brandi Saragosa	Maui	Maui Food Bank
Marsha Fahir	Maui	Maui Food Bank - Board Chair
Steve Ulene	Maui	Maui Food Bank Board of Trustees
Michele	Maui	McLean
Nona Etse	O'ahu	Message of peace ministry outreach
Judy Guajardo	Maui	Na Hoaloha
Jason Brand	O'ahu	Nalo Farms LLC
Linda Seyler	O'ahu	North Shore Food Bank

Cynthia Archibald	O‘ahu	North Shore Nutrition
Laverne Suster	O‘ahu	OLPH Food Pantry Ministry
Nick Cambra	O‘ahu	Our Lady Of Mount Carmel Catholic Church
Mark Yen	O‘ahu	Our Lady of Sorrows
Marlow DeRego	O‘ahu	Retired
Lesah Merritt	Kaua‘i	Safeway; Hawai‘i Foodbank Kaua‘i Advisory Board
Jana Dove	O‘ahu	Saint Timothy's Episcopal Church Aiea
Addie Texeira-Browne	Maui	Self at Maui Food Bank
Alberta Patchen	Moloka‘i	St Damien Molokai Parish
Paul Patchen	Moloka‘i	St Damien Molokai Parish
Deann Megonnell	Kaua‘i	St Michaels Loaves & Fishes
Lauralee Kawamata	O‘ahu	St Timothy's episcopal church
Edward Van Houten	O‘ahu	St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Wahiawa, HI.
Thao Nguyen	O‘ahu	Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church
Kristin Frost Albrecht	Hawai‘i	The Food Basket Inc., Hawai'i Island's Food Bank
Jennine Sullivan	O‘ahu	The Pantry by Feeding Hawaii Together
Carrol smmons	O‘ahu	The Private Sector Charity
Mariailiana stark	O‘ahu	University of Hawaii at manoa
Brian Randle	O‘ahu	US Navy
Elizabeth Kekua	O‘ahu	Voice of God Ministries
Liliuokalani Coyle	O‘ahu	Voice of God Ministries
Moana Silva	O‘ahu	Waianae Baptist Church
Moana Silva	O‘ahu	Waianae Baptist Church
Fuli Soa	O‘ahu	Waimānalo Elementary & Intermediate School Family Resource Center
Cheryl Lum	Kaua‘i	YWCA of Kauai
Rik Masterson	Hawai‘i	
Caroline Azelski	Hawai‘i	
Emma Waters	Hawai‘i	
Jennifer Baxter	Kaua‘i	
Valerie Chang	Kaua‘i	
Lynda Antonio	Kaua‘i	
Charlie King	Kaua‘i	
Diane Decker	Kaua‘i	
Linda Estes	Kaua‘i	
Norman Van Vactor	Kaua‘i	
Keith Yap	Kaua‘i	
Christine Andrews	Maui	
Brandi Saragosa	Maui	
Lauren Nelson	Maui	
Natalie Hasegawa	O‘ahu	
Lane Daigle	O‘ahu	

Jodie Paulos	O‘ahu
Elise krause	O‘ahu
Norma Murayama	O‘ahu
Valline Schmidt	O‘ahu
Louise Wolcott	O‘ahu
Lilson Maile Laau	O‘ahu
Randy Junkman	O‘ahu
Lynda Messier	O‘ahu
Hervie Messier	O‘ahu
Kathryn Ellman	O‘ahu
Faith Faustorilla	O‘ahu
Caroline Wilhite	O‘ahu
Taylor Bair	O‘ahu
Diane Bruce	O‘ahu
Leilani Kim	O‘ahu
Nina Yopp	O‘ahu
Hans Van Tilburg	O‘ahu
Tricia Coloma	O‘ahu
Carlo Cayetano	O‘ahu
Allyn Kau	O‘ahu
Kiana Lee	O‘ahu
Michelle Frederick	O‘ahu
Reton Shiu	O‘ahu
Jonathan Wong	O‘ahu
Christine Evans	O‘ahu
Brittany Murray	O‘ahu
Jennifer Hudson	O‘ahu
Ann Stagnaro	O‘ahu
Tom Stagnaro	O‘ahu
Athens p	O‘ahu
Katherine Park	O‘ahu
Lori Yuh	O‘ahu
Kristen Hahn	O‘ahu
Sandra Pepée	O‘ahu
Marcos Cruz Ortiz	O‘ahu
Claudia Moreno	O‘ahu
Roy Kimura	O‘ahu
Ce’Lene Sakellis	O‘ahu
Aalia Meer	O‘ahu
John Kojima	O‘ahu
LaTrisha Granston	O‘ahu
Meredith Torres	O‘ahu
Franz Schnell	O‘ahu
Adriann Gin	O‘ahu
Christine Mitchell	O‘ahu
Leticia Calles	O‘ahu

Holly Elder	O‘ahu
Lei-Anne Jones	O‘ahu
Michael Jones	O‘ahu
Nanami Jones	O‘ahu
Phyllis Krajewski	O‘ahu
Eduardo	O‘ahu
Fiaalii Filisi	O‘ahu
Rinka Shimizu	O‘ahu
Debra Kaawalaauole	O‘ahu
Connie Lu	O‘ahu
Jane George	O‘ahu
Fran Gendrano	O‘ahu
Delmar J Bayang	O‘ahu
Daniel Smith	O‘ahu
Bethany Ortiz-	O‘ahu
D'Amico	
Travis Hipolito	O‘ahu
Adele Tasaka	O‘ahu
Lori Watkins	O‘ahu
David Jones	O‘ahu
Veronica Sablan	O‘ahu
Mar Scott	O‘ahu
Cheryl Hunt	O‘ahu
Liz Okun	O‘ahu
Carol Kinoshita	O‘ahu
Lau	
Mary Ellen Rubio	O‘ahu
Alexis Davidson	O‘ahu
Laurie Nakama	O‘ahu
Sandra Schulman	O‘ahu
Kristi Hammond	O‘ahu
Raisa Kakigi	O‘ahu
Cindy Verdespina	O‘ahu
Dale Jensen	O‘ahu
michelle rainville	O‘ahu
Charlene Mancusi	O‘ahu
Dan Fong	O‘ahu
Carol Nakamura	O‘ahu
Polina Dineva	O‘ahu
Kaeo Kim	O‘ahu
Katina Marx	O‘ahu
ingrid jansson	O‘ahu
Ginger Matusiak	O‘ahu
Roger Breisch	O‘ahu
Charlotte Baker	O‘ahu
Michael Baker	O‘ahu

Malia Ellis	O‘ahu
John Todt	O‘ahu
Nina Lum	O‘ahu
Gary Rickard	O‘ahu
Kim Campbell	O‘ahu
Russell	O‘ahu
Angeline Santos	O‘ahu
Marion Berkline	O‘ahu
Lorraine Asano	O‘ahu
Marie Sode	O‘ahu
Elaine Allwine-	O‘ahu
Caspers	
Lauren Long	O‘ahu
Annie Green	O‘ahu
Lisa Kelliher	O‘ahu
Nina Jo-Ring	O‘ahu
carole richelieu	O‘ahu
Michelle Espinoza	O‘ahu
Lisa Shandoria	O‘ahu
Johnson	
Sandy Chen	O‘ahu
Jane Arnold	O‘ahu
Jessica Parayno	O‘ahu
Terrie Wehrli	O‘ahu
Terri Nakasone	O‘ahu
Glenna Morrissey	O‘ahu
Valerie Hashimoto	O‘ahu
Lillian Rodolfich	O‘ahu
Timothy K	O‘ahu
Blaisdell	
Diana Kellum	O‘ahu
Leslie Detor	O‘ahu
Claire Narimasu	O‘ahu
Angel Luong	O‘ahu
Jaclyn Maher	O‘ahu
Kathryn Kane	O‘ahu
Berna Rabutan	O‘ahu
Maureen Copeskey	O‘ahu
Tangela	O‘ahu
Manuelwatts	
Carolyn	O‘ahu
Robert and Jean	O‘ahu
Johnson	
Stacey Hendrickson	O‘ahu
Annika Seavey	O‘ahu

Kekua	O‘ahu
Kobashigawa	O‘ahu
Māhealani	O‘ahu
Kobashigawa	O‘ahu
Margaret Reager	O‘ahu
Monzell Davis	O‘ahu
Bridgetmarie	O‘ahu
Kaolulo	
Chelsea	O‘ahu
McDonough	
Noel Shaw	O‘ahu
Jordan Smith	O‘ahu
Lauta'amutafea	O‘ahu
Shen	
Jenna Hausvik	O‘ahu
Kailey Wilt	O‘ahu
Kimberly Golis-	O‘ahu
Robello	
Cristal Mortensen	O‘ahu
Rachel Reyes-	O‘ahu
Huynh	
Joyce Umali	O‘ahu
Perreira	
Lori Lynn Aoki	O‘ahu
Mitchell	O‘ahu
Matsumori-Kelly	
Jared Kawatani	O‘ahu
Mario Tabaquin	O‘ahu
Elna Nagasako	O‘ahu
Molly Mamaril	O‘ahu
Anne Chamness	O‘ahu
Rebecca Hartman	O‘ahu
Lindsay Domantay	O‘ahu
Leigh Ann Lopez	O‘ahu
Kyra Shells	O‘ahu
Tayla-Angel	O‘ahu
Jimenez	
Elizabeth	O‘ahu
Grossman	
Jayme Takaki	Statewide
Lisa Brenneman	Statewide
Carlyne Averell	Statewide
Laetitia Thibault-	Statewide
Santoro	
Julia Jay	Statewide
Genevieve Mumma	O‘ahu

Cyd Hoffeld	Hawai‘i
Annette Tashiro	O‘ahu
An Vo	O‘ahu
Christen Oliveira	O‘ahu
Ariana Hansen	O‘ahu
Debbie Millikan	O‘ahu
Charlene Hosenfeld	O‘ahu
Gayle Goodman	O‘ahu
Sharon Stehlik	O‘ahu
Ana Kia	O‘ahu
Vicky Crowder	O‘ahu
Lee Winter	O‘ahu
Grace Sherley	O‘ahu
Kyle Phillips	O‘ahu
Ramsvig	
Taylor Ka‘ili	O‘ahu
McKenzie	
Cailey G	O‘ahu

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 11:38:35 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pahnelopi mckenzie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for HB2208

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 12:33:33 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of HB2208. I fully support our food banks sourcing locally grown food for our community. Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 1:13:49 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edmar Castillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.

Aloha,

I grew up in Kalihi as a 2nd generation Filipino, and today I'm grateful to be happily married and looking forward to starting a family of my own.

With one in three households in Hawai'i experiencing food insecurity — including 34% of our keiki — the need for action is undeniable. Everyone in our community deserves reliable access to safe, healthy food. This bill moves us in the right direction. It expands access to fresh, culturally appropriate foods for families in need, while also supporting our local farmers and growers, who are essential to building stronger food systems and a healthier, more resilient Hawai'i.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by:

1. **Strengthening Hawai'i's Food Supply Chain:** By investing in local agriculture, we reduce our dependence on imported goods, creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai'i.
2. **Supporting Local Farmers:** The bill offers a direct benefit to Hawai'i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need.
3. **Enhancing Nutritional Access:** Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai'i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation

Mahalo

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 1:50:28 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:22:02 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeremy Burns	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha HSH members,

I am writing in support of HB2208. Developing mechanisms to incentivize community feeding community, supporting both local farmers and food-insecure 'ohana, is an excellent place to invest resources for the State and benefits both immediate need as well as more sustainable systems and cultural practices. Thank you for your consideration. Aloha Jeremy Burns

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 3:31:26 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pamela burrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha House members,

This is a very important bill for our farmers and our local people.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo,,

Pamela Burrell, Kalihiwai, Kaua'i

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 3:38:00 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Benjamin Narwold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

-- One in three households in Hawaii faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. I strongly support this critical bill that will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii farm to families program to fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food. This program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger in our state.

-- Many families in Hawaii struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB2208 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Moreover, efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawaii's resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB2208 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

Mahalo!

Benjamin Narwold, Kapaa, Hawaii

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:08:30 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and committee members

I SUPPORT HB 2208

Support HB 2208: Farm to Families

What Does This Bill Do?

Establishes the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program to alleviate food shortages in the State.

Why Is This Important? Sample Testimony:

Please support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering and understood by any of us who live here. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term. It is something we MUST do. Hawaii is unique in that many of our imports come from Asia and other places where tariffs have hit hard.

The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers.

Please support this bill HB 2208. Mahalo

Cheryl Burghardt

Nuuanu Oahu

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:10:22 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Liana Kobayashi, and I serve as a Family Medicine physician with a Master of Public Health. I am writing to express my unwavering support for **HB2208**. This bill is a vital public health intervention that addresses the alarming rates of food insecurity in our islands by leveraging our local agricultural strengths.

As a family medicine physician, I directly see the impacts of food insecurity in my patients. Nutrition is the most fundamental form of "preventative medicine", and affects patients of all ages – from the young children I see who are at increased risk of cognitive delay and behavioral problems, to adults and elderly who cannot afford healthful foods to care for their chronic conditions such as hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and type 2 diabetes.

From a public health standpoint, HB2208 addresses the **Social Determinants of Health** while bolstering our local economy.

- **Bridging the "Post-Pandemic Gap":** While pandemic-era supports have vanished, the need has not. Our food banks are operating at COVID-level volumes. HB2208 provides the necessary infrastructure to ensure these systems don't collapse.
- **Cultural & Nutritional Resilience:** By funding the purchase of **Hawaii-grown foods**—like kalo, ulu, and bok choy—we are providing culturally relevant nutrition that is statistically more likely to improve long-term health outcomes for our most vulnerable populations.
- **The Economic Multiplier:** Investing in our local farmers creates a "virtuous cycle." As noted in the bill, every dollar invested in local produce generates nearly 1.5x its value in our local economy. A healthy economy is a primary driver of a healthy population.

I urge this committee to pass HB2208 to ensure that no child in Hawaii has to go a whole day without a meal, and no local farmer lacks a market for their harvest.

Thank you for your time and commitment to the health of our community.

Liana Kobayashi, DO, MPH

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:29:08 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zachary Kubo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Zachary Kubo and I am testifying in support of HB2208. As a current resident of Hawai'i who has lived here all their life, I have seen the limitations of our current food systems, given that 85-90% of our food is imported from elsewhere. This inevitably will lead to food insecurity in times of economic crisis. Bills such as this will provide opportunities for local farmers to feed their communities and to maintain a healthier ecology between the land and people.

Mahalo Nui Loa

Zachary Kubo

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:59:08 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Dean	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We're on an island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, thousands of miles away from everywhere else. It's foolish to depend on others to feed us. We need to be self reliant, because you never know when someone you rely on will fail. This bill moves us in that direction.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:55:10 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

One in three households in Hawaii faces food insecurity, and our most vulnerable populations need our support. I strongly support this critical bill that will establish and appropriate funds for the Hawaii farm to families program to fund food banks to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawaii-grown or -produced food. This program ensures fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity, and helps alleviate hunger in our state.

Many families in Hawaii struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB2208 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Moreover, efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawaii's resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB2208 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

Mahalo!

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:39:48 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support of HB2208**.

With one in three households in Hawaii facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill will help provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawaii.

The Hawaii Farm to Families Program has the potential to greatly alleviate our food shortages.

I am an advocate for fire survivors with medical, access, and functional needs, and one of the most common themes throughout the community is food insecurity. Food insecurity is a problem for all of us but especially our most vulnerable.

Please pass HB2208.

Mahalo,

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:20:48 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alex Tam	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families.

With 1 in 3 households in Hawai‘i facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, we must take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill is a win-win. It will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai‘i.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:36:03 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
anna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

2208 HB RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.

To Committee Chair and Members,

My name is Anna Trent, and I am in support of this bill! I was not born nor raised here in Hawai‘i; I'm here for my college education. Since I've ignorantly moved here at the age of 17, not truly knowing about the ‘āina, I can admit I've learned so much, and still am, about the Hawaiian culture, people, lifestyles, and their problems. One of which is food security. I believe, as a haloe, it's only right I participate, volunteer, protest, and write to you, for a better Hawai‘i. This problem is a major crisis, with almost 50% of households facing this reality. 50% of households here in Hawai‘i could and would significantly benefit from this. I am saying yes to Bill 2208 HB. Donating funds to help sustain local farms that are actively supporting families, individuals, and communities is an action I agree on.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify. - Anna Trent

February 3, 2026

To: Chair Lisa Marten, Vice Chair Ikaika Olds, and the House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

Subject: **HB2208**, Relating to Food Security

Aloha,

My name is Sydney Haas and I am a farmer in Hale'iwa. I am writing in **support of HB2208**, which establishes and funds the Hawai'i Farm to Families Program to help alleviate food shortages amongst our communities.

Our communities deserve better than to be left struggling to feed themselves and their families. Food insecure individuals are pressured to choose between nutritious choices, if available, and what is affordable enough to feed themselves and their 'ohana. Many parents are forced to skip meals, go full days without food, or for-go their prescription medicine to afford food for their keiki. Those facing hunger experience higher rates of nutritional deficiencies, and physical and mental health disparities such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, anxiety, and depression. No family across the pae 'āina should need to experience this level of distress.

Recent cuts to federal funding are threatening the future of Hawai'i's food banks and their ability to adequately serve our communities and farmers. Food banks rely on these funds to purchase from local farmers and to operate programs like mobile markets, which help reach underserved communities. The demand for food bank resources has drastically increased compared to pre-pandemic data, and is still expected to continue rising. As demand grows, support fades. Funding for our food banks has been slashed, which has resulted in a loss of millions of dollars from federal sources. The money lost could have been used to support local farmers and provide quality, nutritious, and locally grown food for our communities. It is critical for the State to take on the initiative of equipping our food banks with the means to feed our people and keiki.

As a farmer, I understand how important the food bank's purchasing power is for local producers. For example, it allows the food bank to purchase in larger quantities than many other market outlets or customers are capable of doing. This is not only beneficial for farms by allowing them to have a reliable customer in their local food bank, but it also helps put more locally grown produce on peoples' plates, and contributes to Hawai'i's local economies.

I urge the committee to pass HB2208 to help reduce hunger within our communities and support the well-being of all growing keiki. Passing this measure can help compensate for the uncertainty of support from federal sources for our food banks, and provide a beneficial market for local farmers.

Mahalo to the committee for the opportunity to testify,

Sydney Haas

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:25:08 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Selina Chen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB2208
Relating to the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program

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

As a physician and a mahi‘ai, I strongly support HB2208, which establishes and appropriates funding for the Hawai‘i Farm to Families Program to enable food banks across the State to purchase, store, and transport fresh, Hawai‘i-grown or Hawai‘i-produced food for food-insecure communities.

This program addresses multiple critical needs facing Hawai‘i. First, it strengthens our food security by **increasing access to fresh, nutritious, locally grown foods**, rather than relying primarily on shelf-stable, highly processed canned goods that dominate many food banks.

While these foods address hunger in the short term, they do not adequately support long-term health. Increasing access to **fresh fruits, vegetables, and locally produced foods is essential to preventing and managing chronic disease**, as demonstrated by evidence-based lifestyle medicine research, particularly in communities already experiencing health disparities.

Second, HB2208 provides **meaningful and sustainable market opportunities for Hawai‘i’s farmers, especially small producers**. By allowing farmers to sell directly into the food system at fair and predictable rates, this program supports farm viability, helps stabilize farm income, and increases the sustainability of small farming operations—an essential step if Hawai‘i is serious about rebuilding local agriculture.

Third, the Farm to Families Program keeps **public dollars circulating within the State**, supporting local producers, food hubs, transporters, and storage providers, rather than exporting funds off-island. This investment strengthens Hawai‘i’s local economy while building infrastructure that benefits both farmers and communities.

Importantly, this program also helps **address food deserts by improving the availability of fresh, culturally appropriate foods in underserved areas**. Connecting local agriculture directly to food banks and community distribution sites ensures that those most impacted by food insecurity benefit from Hawai‘i’s agricultural abundance.

HB2208 is a strategic investment that **aligns food security, public health, economic resilience, and agricultural sustainability**. I urge you to support this measure and help ensure that Hawai‘i’s food system nourishes both its people and its farmers.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB2208.

Your local Pediatrician, Lifestyle Medicine certified practitioner, and mahi'ai,

Selina Chen, MD, MPH

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:39:54 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2208 as a common sense way to support our farmers.

Many families in Hawaii struggle to put food on the table on a consistent basis. HB2208 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Moreover, efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawaii's resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB2208 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

Mahalo,

Kathy Shimata

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:01:58 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kilia Purdy-Avelino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

As a homestead farmer and advocate towards food sovereignty, I strongly support this bill to fund more locally sourced food that will supply our food banks. Pre-COVID, I volunteered with the food bank and when COVID hit, I saw a drastic decline in food being shipped to Molokai while our household numbers being serviced simultaneously sky rocketed! Through collaborative community efforts, Hookuikahi Aloha Molokai, we were able to support our food bank with locally grown products, fish, farm-raised shrimp, and deer meat. Further, in comparison to general food that is distributed through food banks, these local foods are more healthy and nutritious for our people. Finally, by supporting local foods, this will also help to increase economic growth within our communities. I would strongly suggest that each island be given the freedom of purchasing from their own communities first.

Mahalo for your time and consideration!

ke aloha aina,

Kilia Purdy-Avelino

Hoolehua, Molokai

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:00:07 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am in strong support of HB2208.

Who wouldn't be? Every living being needs access to clean, healthy and life-sustaining food.

The Office of Dr. Joseph Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula

February 4, 2026

Re: Support for the "Farm to Families" bill

Aloha nui,

I am Dr. Joseph Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula, a Hawai‘i licensed clinical psychologist and professor and chair of Native Hawaiian Health at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

As a health disparities researcher, I know firsthand the negative impact food insecurity has on the health and well-being of people in Hawai‘i, especially among Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and other medically underserved populations. This is why I am writing with **an urgent request for your support of the "Farm to Families" bill, a pivotal piece of legislation that has the potential to transform our state's food security landscape.** This bill will allow food-distributing organizations to strengthen their partnerships with local farmers and food producers, ensuring that fresh, locally grown produce reaches families facing food insecurity.

The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy in several ways. First, it **strengthens Hawai‘i's food supply chain** by investing in local agriculture, thereby reducing our dependence on imported goods and creating a more resilient and sustainable food system for Hawai‘i. Second, by **supporting local farmers**, there can be a direct benefit to Hawai‘i's agricultural sector, providing a steady and fair market for local produce. Farmers can plan for future growth knowing their products will feed their neighbors in need. Finally, by **enhancing nutritional access**, fresh, local produce will provide essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This bill will help fight hunger and promote long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Mahalo nui for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation and stand ready to collaborate with you in any way that may be helpful.

Sincerely,



Joseph Keawe‘aimoku Kaholokula, Ph.D.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:07:59 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Kamau	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB 2208. I do not support this bill. All nonprofit agencies seeking taxpayer funding need to provide strict transparency, reporting and accountability on how the taxpayer funding will be spent. No more blank checks! Mahalo.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:54:03 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Breon Michel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support HB 2208. The statistics around food insecurity in Hawai‘i are staggering. One in three households in Hawaii report experiencing food insecurity. Nearly half (46%) of ALICE households lack consistent access to food. Increasing the ability of food banks to purchase locally grown food is a win-win for our communities and farmers. One major challenge local farmers face is access to markets. This will help grow our local food and agriculture economy while providing our communities with nutritious food. As the cost of imports continues to increase, investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

Preparing Hawai‘i’s families in the wake of disaster, food banks rely almost exclusively on private donations and grants, even though local governments rely heavily on them during times of crisis. The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

Mahalo,

Breon Michel

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:59:24 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl hendrickson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Farm to Families program would provide funding for purchasing from local farmers, improving emergency food access for families and opening up a local market for farmers during times of economic crisis.

investing in our local food economy will help bolster our local production and food security in the long term.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:04:18 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Marrack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

With one in three households in Hawaii facing food insecurity, including 34% of all children, it is critical that we take action to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food. This bill will help provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawaii.

HB2208 is an important step toward reducing hunger in our islands. Moreover, efforts to invest in local agriculture and support our farmers builds Hawaii's resiliency, and avoids the greenhouse gases that would have been emitted from shipping in food. HB2208 is a triple win for our families, our farmers, and our climate!

Mahalo,

Julia Marrack

Kamuela, 96743

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:23:42 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Leake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Anne Leake. I am the President of Kaumakapili Church and I am writing in strong support of Farm to Families. My church has had a food pantry in Kalihi-Palama for over 30 years and we are very concerned about food insecurity in our neighborhood.

This bill will provide critical access to fresh, culturally relevant foods for food insecure families, while also investing in local farmers and growers, who are critical to strengthening our community food systems and creating a healthier, more resilient Hawai‘i. The partnership between local farms and food organizations benefits families in our communities and our economy by strengthening Hawai‘i’s food supply chain, supporting local farmers and enhancing nutritional access. Fresh, local produce provides essential nutrients to individuals and families who may otherwise lack access to healthy food options. This not only fights hunger but also promotes long-term health and wellness in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. I am deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Mahalo,

Anne Leake PhD

Retired Family Nurse Practitioner

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:23:51 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Hoida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill that empowers our local farmers to provide fresh local produce to Hawaiian families in need!

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:11:33 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Kizer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill and ask my elected officials to approve/pass. Mahalo.

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair

Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato (Maui)

HEARING:

Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 9:30 am

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 329

Hawai'i State Capitol

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT : HB 2008 - RELATING TO FOOD SECURITY.

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, Rep. Amato of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a long-term resident of Wailuku, Maui. I write to you today in **strong support of HB 2208**, relating to food security. HB 2208 establishes and appropriates funds for the Hawaii Farm to Families Program under the Department of Human Services to alleviate food shortages in the State and requires reports to the Legislature before the Regular Sessions of 2027 and 2028.

I remember when my daughters were in elementary and middle school on Maui, they had a school garden. The students participated in a research project with Cornell University whereby they trialed different soil rehabilitation techniques, collected samples, and documented their results. I remember with pride my daughters speaking about the results of this project to a standing-room only meeting of the Hawaii Farmers Union United chapter at the Haiku Community Center. This experience really shaped my children and our choices as a family.

My youngest daughter went on to study environmental science at Vassar College. Her senior thesis focused on the subject of sustainability and food security in Hawaii. Her garden teacher went on to be executive director of Grow Some Good. After graduation, my daughter returned to Maui, and we make our weekly shopping trip to the Upcountry Farmers Market. We embrace fully a circular economy of depending on our farmers rather than imports. Venison stew made of locally-sourced axis deer by Maui Nui Venison is one of our favorites. My tenant is a teacher at Baldwin High School. He received grants to develop a hydroponic system for his classroom to produce tilapia and fresh produce. Farm to Families is modern Maui culture, and I have seen the benefits to health, well-being, community, and our economy from such efforts.

As a result of my lived experience with farm to families such as mine, I **strongly support HB 2008** and request that you do as well.

Mahalo nui for supporting Hawai'i students and families,

Christine L. Andrews, J.D.

Wailuku, Maui

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:37:21 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

LATE

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

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

My 'ohana (family) and I support this very HB2208 very strongly. When we all experienced the Government Shutdown and those of us who rely on the monthly SNAP Benefits, didn't get it until days later, we were all scrambling where we would go for food.

My 'ohana and I are from the Moku O Keawe also known as Big Island of Hawai'i and over the years we have noticed how many farms have closed down, how we are limited on even our own butcher shops due to many of our Cattle Ranch's, Domestic Pig, Chicken farms have also closed down, making us have to purchase and rely on Mainland Produce, Poultry, etc.

This HB2208 is very important for we are only 7-8 islands created by Lava Rocks smack in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and no other place to get our foods from but our 'āina (land), makai (ocean), and nā kahawai (river streams). So please pass this very important HB2208 because your 'ohana (family) relies on it maybe not today, but maybe in the near future of another Government Shutdown that they still have hanging over each and every one our heads. Mahalo nūnui loa (Thank you very much) for giving me this opportunity to share my 'ohana testimony.

Me ke aloha pumehana (with our sincerest aloha (love),

Elton & Elaine Makaio- SanJose 'Ohana

HB-2208

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:03:07 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susanna Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Hawai‘i State Legislature,

I am writing in strong support of increased funding for the Farm to Families program under the Department of Human Services.

Thirty-two percent (32%) of all households in Hawai‘i are food insecure, including 34% of all children. In 11% of households children are going hungry. It is critical that we take action NOW to ensure that everyone in our community has access to safe and healthy food.

Farm to Families legislation represents a meaningful opportunity to advance both food security and community resilience across the state. By increasing our investment in locally grown food for distribution to households facing hardship, Farm to Families improves access to fresh, nutritious meals while supporting Hawai‘i farmers. This connection between agriculture and food assistance builds resilience for both families and farmers in times of crisis.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our shared vision of a thriving, food-secure Hawai‘i. We are deeply grateful for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Susanna Ho