

**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKAI

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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Friday, February 6, 2026
9:01 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of
HB2459
RELATING TO THE FOOD AND PRODUCT INNOVATION NETWORK.

Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

The Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT) strongly supports HB2459.

This measure strengthens the statutory framework for the Food and Product Innovation Network (FPIN) and directly advances Hawai'i's long-term economic diversification strategy outlined in Redesigning Hawai'i's Economy for Resilience.

Hawai'i's economy remains highly concentrated and vulnerable to external shocks. DBEDT's statewide strategy calls for a structural shift toward value-added manufacturing, export-oriented growth, workforce alignment, and regional production hubs that reduce import dependence and increase economic resilience.

HB2459 provides the operational structure needed to move FPIN from a set of facilities into a coordinated statewide economic system.

DBEDT's framework for economic resilience integrates four core pillars:

- 1) Curriculum-to-career pathways
- 2) Infrastructure and facilities
- 3) Policy alignment, and
- 4) Layered incentives.

HB2459 directly advances all four.

1. Infrastructure & Facilities → From Pilot to Commercial Scale

DBEDT's strategy identifies a major gap between early-stage production and commercial-scale manufacturing, the "valley of death" where businesses fail due to lack of compliant facilities, equipment, and support systems. FPIN sites are designed to bridge this gap.

HB2459 strengthens this role by requiring:

- Integrated food safety and regulatory frameworks
- Technical assistance for labeling, testing, and certification
- Coordination with DOH, CTAHR, and regulatory agencies

This ensures FPIN facilities are not just kitchens, but industry-ready commercialization platforms.

2. Workforce Alignment - Embedding Compliance and Industry Skills

DBEDT's resilience model connects education, training, and industry through cradle-to-career pathways. HB2459 embeds regulatory compliance and food safety education into workforce programs offered through the network.

This links FPIN to:

- CTE programs
- Community college pathways
- Industry-recognized credentials, and
- Strengthens workforce readiness in value-added food manufacturing – a priority sector for diversification.

3. Export & Market Access – Shifting Hawai'i Toward Value-Add Growth

DBEDT's strategy emphasizes that future growth must come from export-oriented value-added sectors, not just local consumption.

HB2459 requires ADC to develop a coordinated market access strategy with:

- Transportation
- Tourism
- Airlines and harbors
- Logistics providers

This connects production to distribution, tourism channels, and international markets – turning Hawai'i-made food products into economic drivers beyond our shores.

4. Policy Alignment & Branding – Maximizing Hawai'i's Competitive Advantage

The bill aligns and harmonizes “Hawai'i Made” and “Hawai'i Grown” branding initiatives. DBEDT's economic framework highlights Hawai'i's brand as a core export advantage; fragmentation weakens its value.

Brand alignment:

- Reduces duplication
- Improves market clarity
- Increases producer returns, and
- Supports the State's mandate to grow value-added production and exports.

5. Performance Accountability – Results-Based Governance

HB2459 establishes measurable performance indicators including:

- Businesses graduating to commercial operations
- Growth in value-added output
- Export expansion
- Workforce credentials
- Contributions to food security
- Leveraged private and federal funds

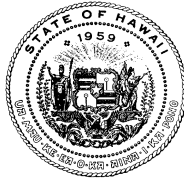
This mirrors DBEDT's shift toward data-driven, outcome-based economic development, ensuring FPIN delivers measurable economic impact.

6. Incentives Layering – Enterprise Zones

DBEDT's strategy emphasizes that facilities alone are insufficient; incentives must be layered to support commercialization and growth. By directing evaluation of Enterprise Zone expansion to support FPIN, HB2459 links infrastructure to tax and incentive tools that help businesses scale.

This bill helps transform FPIN into a statewide food innovation and manufacturing system aligned with Hawai'i's food security goals, export growth, and economic resilience priorities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2459
RELATING TO THE FOOD AND PRODUCT INNOVATION NETWORK**

REPRESENTATIVE CORY M. CHUN, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Hearing Date, Time and Room Number: 02/06/2026, 9:01 am, 325

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health ("Department") requests that this measure be
2 considered so long as it does not supplant the priorities and requests outlined in the Governor's
3 executive budget request.

4 **Department Position:** The Department supports HB2459.

5 **Department Testimony:** The Environmental Health Services Division, Food and Drug Branch
6 ("EHSD-FDB") provides the following testimony on behalf of the Department:

7 HB2459 strengthens the Hawai'i Food and Product Innovation Network ("FPIN") through
8 adopting statutes to refine governance and integration among key state agencies, sets forth key
9 performance indicators, and increases market access, branding alignment, and growth
10 opportunities for Hawai'i businesses. HB2459 builds upon the framework established by Act
11 237, Session Laws of Hawaii ("SLH") 2025.

12 The mission of the Department is to protect and improve the health and environment
13 for all people in Hawai'i. Investing in the FPIN, which will increase access to local, safe, and
14 nutritious foods, supports the Department's mission. Access to safe and nutritious food is a
15 social determinant of health and the Department notes that both physical and mental health
16 outcomes improve when healthy food options are available to the public for consumption.

1 The Department appreciates the continued opportunity to participate in the FPIN,
2 primarily through its food regulatory programs. By working together with sister agencies, the
3 Department has been able to educate local manufacturers on food safety regulations up front.
4 Continued coordination will be critical as the industry evolves and new technologies emerge.

5 The Department defers to the Agribusiness Development Corporation (“ADC”) as to the
6 implementation and substantive matters of this measure. However, the Department is ready
7 and willing to partner with ADC and other agencies identified in this measure to incorporate a
8 coordinated food safety and regulatory framework to ensure that food products developed
9 through the FPIN are safe and comply with the Department’s food safety and food
10 manufacturing regulations.

11 **Offered Amendments:** None.

12 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Friday, February 6, 2026 at 9:01 a.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience
and
Vassilis Syrmos, PhD
Interim Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2459 – RELATING TO THE FOOD AND PRODUCT INNOVATION NETWORK

Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony offering comments on HB 2459 relating to the Food and Product Innovation Network.

The measure requires the Food and Product Innovation Network (FPIN) to integrate a coordinated food safety and regulatory framework. Requires the Agribusiness Development Corporation to establish performance indicators for the FPIN, develop a market access strategy, align and harmonize state branding initiatives, and report certain data to the Legislature. Requires the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to evaluate or adopt enterprise zone initiatives to all counties.

University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) faculty have expertise in the fields of food safety, food science, human nutrition, regulatory compliance education and aspects of food innovation. CTAHR supports the State's food security and economic diversification goals and looks forward to its continuous collaboration with Hawai'i Department of Education's Regional Kitchen program and assisting agricultural entrepreneurs grow and create value-added products for local and global consumption. The appropriation in HB 2459 will support statewide community assets.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



WENDY GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LATE

STATE OF HAWAII
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
HUI HO'OU LU AINA MAHIAI

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
February 6, 2026
9:01 AM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

HOUSE BILL NO. 2459
RELATING TO THE FOOD AND PRODUCT INNOVATION NETWORK

Chairperson Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) **supports** HB2459. HB2459 amends ADC's statutes to strengthen its role in developing a coordinated and performance-driven food and product innovation system for Hawai'i. The measure clarifies ADC's authority to support an integrated food safety and regulatory framework, establish performance indicators for the Food and Product Innovation Network (FPIN), develop a market access strategy, align state branding initiatives, and improve data reporting to the Legislature.

ADC's statutory mission is to promote diversified agriculture and value-added agricultural enterprises. HB2459 modernizes this mission by recognizing the growing importance of food processing, innovation facilities, and export-ready products. The bill strengthens ADC's ability to coordinate infrastructure, regulatory navigation, and market access for food and product manufacturers.

HB2459 advances a framework aligned with applicable federal and state food safety laws, regulations, rules, and food codes. This coordination is essential for ADC-supported shared-use facilities and innovation hubs that serve multiple producers. The bill promotes coordination with the Department of Health,

the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, CATERS, and other relevant agencies to streamline permitting, inspections, and certification while maintaining public health protections.

ADC supports the bill's requirement for measurable performance indicators aligned between governing boards and legislative oversight. These should include:

- number of businesses served and graduating from FPIN facilities;
- increases in value-added agricultural and food manufacturing output;
- job creation and business survivorship;
- time to regulatory approval and product launch; and
- market penetration into institutional, tourism, and export channels.

These metrics ensure that public investments are accountable and outcome driven.

HB2459 recognizes that production and processing must be paired with coordinated logistics and market access. ADC supports strategies that integrate aggregation, cold storage, distribution, tourism demand, and export infrastructure, including sustained international partnerships. Aligning and harmonizing state branding initiatives will strengthen consumer trust and improve the value of Hawai'i-grown and Hawai'i-made products.

The bill supports coordinated technical assistance for labeling, testing, validation, and certification requirements and coordination with regulatory agencies. Integrating regulatory compliance education into workforce development and training programs will ensure that Hawai'i's food workforce is prepared for regulated manufacturing and export markets.

HB2459 strengthens data collection and reporting through surveys, economic data, and automated systems using key performance indicators benchmarked against other states and countries. This supports evidence-based policymaking and continuous improvement.

HB2459 advances the objectives of **Act 175** by strengthening food safety coordination, processing capacity, and market access so local producers can

reliably meet institutional procurement needs, including public school meal programs.

HB2459 is expected to improve coordination across agencies, reduce duplicative regulatory processes, and increase the effectiveness of public investments in food system infrastructure. While initial implementation may require staff coordination and system development, performance indicators and automated reporting will improve efficiency and accountability over time. These improvements are expected to support private-sector growth in value-added agriculture and food manufacturing.

HB2459 modernizes ADC's statutory authority and establishes a coordinated, accountable framework for Hawai'i's food and product innovation system. By aligning regulation, food safety, branding, logistics, market access, workforce development, and data reporting, the bill supports Act 175 and strengthens Hawai'i's food economy.

For these reasons, the Agribusiness Development Corporation strongly supports HB2459.



**HAWAII COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

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STERLING HIGA
CHAIRPERSON

CRAIG K. NAKAMOTO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Statement of
CRAIG K. NAKAMOTO
Executive Director
Hawai'i Community Development Authority
before the
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Friday, February 6, 2026
9:01 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

In consideration of
H.B. 2459
RELATING TO THE FOOD AND PRODUCT INNOVATION NETWORK.

Chairperson Chun, Vice Chairperson Kusch, and Members of the Committee.

The Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) respectfully offers **comments on H.B. 2459**, which requires the Food and Product Innovation Network to implement a coordinated food safety and regulatory framework; directs the Agribusiness Development Corporation to establish performance metrics, develop a market access strategy, align state branding efforts, and report data to the Legislature; and requires the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to evaluate or expand enterprise zone initiatives statewide.

H.B. 2459 clarifies that the Food and Product Innovation Network shall provide technical assistance to ensure compliance with testing, validation, and certification requirements. This includes collaboration with relevant agencies such as the Department of Health and the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. The network shall facilitate access to resources and expertise for businesses to meet federal and state food safety laws, regulations, and standards. In addition, integrating regulatory compliance education into workforce development and training programs to strengthen understanding and implementation of these requirements.

This is particularly critical for the High Pressure Processing Facility at the Central Oahu Agriculture and Food Hub, as it serves as a cornerstone for advancing food safety, extending shelf life, and supporting local producers in meeting compliance standards.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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February 6, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2459
RELATING TO THE FOOD AND PRODUCT INNOVATION NETWORK

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:01 AM

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice-Chair Kusch, 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 2459, which strengthens and expands the Food and Product Innovation Network (FPIN) within the Agribusiness Development Corporation to better support agricultural producers and food businesses through coordinated workforce development, regulatory navigation, value-added processing, market access, and performance accountability.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau has been a strong and consistent supporter of the Food and Product Innovation Network and its role in helping farmers, producers, and food businesses move beyond raw production into value-added processing, manufacturing, and expanded market opportunities. FPIN reflects years of collaborative work among ADC, educational institutions, industry partners, and State agencies to strengthen Hawai'i's food system and diversify the agricultural economy.

HB 2459 builds on that foundation by improving coordination, accountability, and statewide integration of FPIN activities. The bill's emphasis on workforce development, regulatory navigation, market access, branding alignment, and performance measurement will help ensure that FPIN continues to provide practical, results-oriented support to farmers and food businesses seeking to scale up and enter new markets.

We also support efforts to integrate food safety education and technical assistance into FPIN. Food safety compliance is often one of the most significant barriers preventing farmers and processors from expanding their operations or accessing institutional and

export markets. Providing coordinated guidance and readiness support can help reduce confusion and improve compliance outcomes.

At the same time, it is important to clarify that ADC's role in food safety should remain one of coordination, education, and technical assistance, rather than regulatory oversight or auditing. Regulatory authority and enforcement appropriately reside with existing state, federal, and third-party entities. In addition, food safety requirements vary significantly depending on the type of crop or product, and implementation should remain flexible and risk-based so that small, diversified, and value-added producers are not unintentionally burdened by requirements that do not apply to their operations.

HB 2459 represents an important opportunity to strengthen FPIN as a statewide resource that connects agricultural production to processing, compliance, branding, and markets. With thoughtful implementation and continued coordination with industry stakeholders, the measure can further support local food production, economic diversification, and food system resilience.

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



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'u, 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 Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems 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 HB2459.**

HB2459 establishes the Food and Product Innovation Network to bridge the critical gap between harvest and retail, directly advancing local food goals by capturing market share currently lost to imports.

By mandating the Agribusiness Development Corporation to develop active market access strategies, this bill shifts state land use from passive leasing to intentional economic development, helping ensure local farmers profit directly from the value-added "Made in Hawaii" premium.

The integration of a coordinated food safety framework removes the prohibitive costs of independent compliance for individual smallholders, allowing family farms to enter institutional supply chains (DOE, DOH, PSD) that may otherwise be inaccessible due to regulatory barriers.

To ensure the sustained support of small farms, which represent the vast majority of agricultural operations in the islands, we recommend amending SECTION 2 §163D-B(b) to add a seventh performance indicator:

(7) The growth in revenue and market access for small-scale producers through the utilization of shared-use processing, branding, and distribution infrastructure.

This specific metric ensures that the network remains accountable to the broader agricultural community and that its success is measured by the economic empowerment of Hawaii's small-scale producers.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



LATE

02/05/2026

To: Chair Cory M Chun, Vice Chair Matthias Kusch and the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems.

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB2459, Relating to the Food and Product Innovation Network

Aloha,

We submit this testimony in support of **HB2459**, which strengthens the Food and Product Innovation Network by requiring the integration of a coordinated food safety and regulatory framework, establishing clear performance indicators, improving market access strategies, and aligning state branding initiatives. The measure also requires reporting to the Legislature and directs the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to evaluate or adopt enterprise zone initiatives across all counties.

Food safety regulations are essential to protecting public health and maintaining a resilient, sustainable food system. However, for many farmers and small-scale producers, Hawaii's current regulatory landscape can be difficult to navigate. By creating a more coordinated and accessible food safety and regulatory framework, this bill will help local producers move their products to market more efficiently while still upholding high safety standards.

In addition, aligning and harmonizing Hawaii-made branding initiatives is critical to protecting the integrity of locally produced goods. Strong and consistent branding helps ensure that products marketed as "Hawaii-made" truly support local farmers and producers, while preventing misuse of the brand by those who are not producing in Hawai'i.

HB2459 takes an important step toward supporting local food production, strengthening market access, and building trust with consumers; all while maintaining accountability through data collection and performance reporting.

We respectfully urge the committee to pass this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Mahalo for your consideration,

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.

HB-2459

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 11:08:11 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

This bill seems to be well focused. We need to strengthen our agricultural development and productivity. I urge the committee to **SUPPORT** this bill!

HB-2459

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:18:09 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

HB-2459

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 7:41:17 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry Support

2459 HB RELATING TO THE FOOD AND PRODUCT INNOVATION NETWORK.