

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
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**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY**  
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**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson  
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

**DEAN M. MATSUKAWA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

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

**FEBRUARY 4, 2026  
3:00 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2318  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2318. This bill establishes the Agricultural Statistics Program in Statute to revitalize and enhance the program. The bill provides an appropriation. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) strongly supports the bill.

Agricultural statistics and analysis are a fundamental function of departments of agriculture. Due to limited staffing this function has not been as robust and comprehensive as the Department envisioned. Further exacerbating this has been recent cuts at US National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) including the only Hawaii based federal statistician.

The revitalization of the program along with the additional staffing is key to development of a robust and resilient agricultural sector that can make informed economic decisions. In addition, the identification of key agricultural activities that will be on a structured rotation provides guidance to the program.

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  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.

By

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

#### SB 2318 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

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

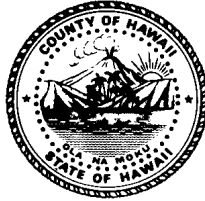
Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony offering comments on SB 2318 which establishes the Agricultural Statistics Program in statute, and appropriates funds.

We respectfully offer the following comments that College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) has increased its capacity in agricultural economics with new agricultural economists and new food and agricultural marketing faculty. With this expanded expertise and the opportunity to involve Extension Agents and undergraduate and graduate students in targeted data collection and analysis, CTAHR is planning to build a center on Food and Agricultural Marketing, Business and Economic Systems. CTAHR Dean has briefly discussed with Hawai'i Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) Board Chairperson the possibility of collaborating. DAB and CTAHR will work together to identify specific roles for each in building a comprehensive and impactful agricultural statistics program for the state

CTAHR believes that the unique climate and agricultural practices of Hawai'i make it critical to collect specific agricultural data. Accurate and up-to-date agricultural statistics are crucial for all stakeholders in the Hawaiian agriculture sector to make informed decisions, develop effective policies, and monitor effective programs that will have large and far-reaching impacts. A revitalized and enhanced Agricultural Statistics program could allow CTAHR to better respond to and serve the following needs of Hawai'i's agricultural sector.

As Hawai'i strives to increase food security within the islands, having accurate data on Hawai'i's agricultural production will be key to achieving greater food security as we will need up-to-date production and consumption data. The appropriation in SB 2318 will support statewide community assets. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.  
*Mayor*



Benson Medina  
*Director*

Dennis Lin  
*Deputy Director*

**County of Hawai'i**  
**DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**  
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February 3, 2026  
HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
WEDNESDAY, February 4, 2026  
3:00 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

TESTIMONY ON SB 2318  
Relating to Agricultural Statistics

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

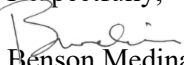
I am Benson Medina, Director of the Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai'i. One of the agricultural objectives of this department is to "support research, development, control, and education that improves agricultural production, quality, resilience, and producer viability."

The County of Hawai'i provides written testimony in **SUPPORT of SB2318** to establish the Agricultural Statistics Program in statute and appropriate funds.

Access to comprehensive agricultural statistics and market data would have a significant positive impact on Hawai'i's agriculture industry. The 2021 Hawai'i County Agriculture and Food Systems Study identified the need for increased market research and value chain analysis to better understand consumer demand and guide marketing efforts for producers. Stakeholders expressed frustration over the lack of available data on market demand, which makes it difficult for farmers to plan production. At the same time, without accurate and timely data, State and County agencies are unable to track statewide progress towards key local food systems goals.

Ultimately, this initiative strengthens the economic stability of Hawai'i's agricultural sector by equipping producers with actionable data to optimize their business strategies. Additionally, SB2318 provides State and County policymakers and decision-makers with information needed to direct public resources to benefit the agricultural sector and the public and track progress on statewide goals. This increased efficiency helps ensure that agriculture remains a reliable source of income; SB2318 supports both the agricultural community and the broader economic well-being of Hawai'i.

Thank you for championing agriculture in Hawai'i and for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of SB2318**.

Respectfully,  
  
Benson Medina  
Director



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Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment 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 SB2318.**

SB2318 addresses a critical void in Hawaii's agricultural landscape by statutorily establishing and funding an Agricultural Statistics Program within the Department of Agriculture. For Hawaii to achieve its mandate of doubling local food production, the State must move beyond anecdotal evidence and rely on robust, timely, and localized data.

Currently, Hawaii's family farmers and ranchers operate at a significant data disadvantage. Reliable statistics on local production versus import volumes allow small producers to identify market niches, justify expansion, and avoid the market volatility caused by crop over-saturation in pocket markets.

This program can provide the necessary metrics to track our progress toward the 2030 goals, allowing for more precise allocation of state resources. Policymakers will be better equipped to design supportive policies and infrastructures, such as food hubs and cold chains, further advancing efforts toward sustainable and self-reliant agricultural practices. Through SB2318, we are not only enhancing our current agricultural capacities but are also aligning with our long-term aspirations for food self-sufficiency and economic vitality.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union



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February 4, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2318**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
3:00 PM

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

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

**The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 2318**, which establishes the Agricultural Statistics Program in statute and appropriates funds to revitalize and enhance the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity's agricultural statistics program.

Reliable, accurate, and timely agricultural data is essential for informed decision-making, sound public policy, and the long-term success of Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers. Agricultural statistics provide critical insights into production levels, market trends, land use, transportation, and supply chain dynamics that affect the movement of agricultural goods within and between islands. This information is vital for producers, policymakers, researchers, and industry stakeholders as they plan operations, allocate resources, and respond to emerging challenges.

SB 2318 strengthens Hawai'i's agricultural data infrastructure by modernizing data collection, analysis, and reporting capabilities. The bill expands the scope of agricultural statistics to include inter-island transportation of agricultural products and establishes a structured, sector-specific survey schedule to improve consistency and reliability across key agricultural sectors, including crops, livestock, aquaculture, horticulture, and agricultural tourism.

HFB appreciates the bill's emphasis on confidentiality protections for producers. Ensuring that individual farm data remains protected while allowing for aggregate reporting is critical to encouraging participation and building trust in the program.

Improved agricultural data will benefit not only individual farmers and ranchers but also state and county agencies as they work to better target investments, infrastructure development, and support programs. Enhanced data collection will also support initiatives such as Farm to School, Farm to State, food security planning, and efforts to strengthen local and inter-island supply chains.

We also support the bill's directive for DAB to collaborate with partners, including the USDA, CTAHR, UHERO, and other relevant agencies and stakeholders. Leveraging existing expertise and modern electronic systems will help ensure that the program produces timely, actionable information for Hawai'i's agricultural community

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



February 2, 2026

To: Chair Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair Herbert M. Richard III and the Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Environment

Subject: **SB2318**, Relating to the Revitalization and Enhancement of the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity's Statistics program.

Aloha,

I am writing in **support of SB2095** which revitalizes the State of Hawaii's Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity Statistics Program. Specifically, the bill will amend Chapter 148, Hawaii Revised Statutes, with distinct language to collect agricultural data, maintain electronic systems, and establish a schedule for sector surveys. In order to accomplish these objectives, 6 full time FTEs (2 agricultural economists and 4 research statisticians) and appropriate support structures (office space, equipment, and electronic data collection systems) will be funded.

The lack of timely and accurate data collection in the agricultural sector has provided a gap that makes long-term planning for the challenges the sector is facing and any alteration of crops grown or expansion of the sector difficult. Furthermore, the cutbacks in the Federal Government's collection of pertinent agricultural data further widens the gap of what data is necessary for State planning and support to the vital agricultural sector.

**I urge this committee to pass SB2318** to enhance the agricultural statistics program with the addition of full-time staff and support. Hawaii's agricultural sector needs to expand to meet the food needs of the Hawaii population, but in order for the sector to function and flourish, accurate and timely data is required. The enhancement of the agricultural statistics program will accomplish this objective.

Mahalo,

Carlin Rose McFadden & the Food+ Policy Team

#fixourfoodsystem

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**The Food+ Policy internship** develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 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.

**SB-2318**

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 10:28:29 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/4/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Blazak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

As a constituent of Senate District 1, I strongly support this measure.