

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
AND THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026
3:30 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 AND VIDEOCONFERENCE**

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 41 / SR 31

**REQUESTING CERTAIN STATE AND COUNTY AGENCIES, IN COORDINATION
WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE
STATEWIDE FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY.**

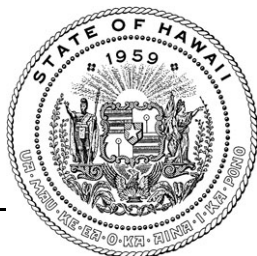
Chairs McKelvey and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Gabbard and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HCR 41 / HR 31 that requests certain state and county agencies, in coordination with community-based organizations, develop a comprehensive food security strategy.

The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity ("Department") supports this resolution. The resulting comprehensive food security strategy should include milestones and a timeline to meet the six data-driven, equity-focused items listed to be the work of the agencies, organizations, leaders, coalitions, and stakeholders as they develop a comprehensive statewide food security strategy.

This resolution represents another step to move Hawaii towards food security.

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



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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
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Statement of
James Kunane Tokioka
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
and the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Wednesday, April 1, 2026
3:30 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
SCR 41 / SR 31
**REQUESTING CERTAIN STATE AND COUNTY AGENCIES, IN COORDINATION
WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE
STATEWIDE FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY.**

Chairs McKelvey & Gabbard, Vice Chairs Gabbard & Richards, and members of the Committees:

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) offers **comments** on SCR 41 / SR 31 to strengthen the statewide food security strategy.

Hawai'i's food security challenge is not only a social issue, but fundamentally an economic development issue. As noted in SCR 41 / SR 31, approximately thirty-two percent of households experience food insecurity, with disproportionate impacts on vulnerable communities. Addressing this challenge requires a shift from isolated programmatic responses to a systems-based economic strategy.

DBEDT's strategic framework, Redesigning Hawai'i's Economy for Resilience, recognizes food security as a core pillar of economic diversification. The State's ability to increase local food production, stabilize costs, and build resilience is directly tied to its ability to develop, acquire, and invest in enabling infrastructure, facilities, and land. A comprehensive statewide food security strategy should explicitly recognize that:

1. Infrastructure, facilities, and land are foundational economic inputs

- a. Food production cannot scale without irrigation systems, aggregation hubs, processing facilities, cold storage, and access to agricultural lands. These are public goods that require coordinated state investment and, where appropriate, acquisition to ensure long-term control and resilience.

2. Food security depends on viable market pathways for producers

- a. Farmers and ranchers must have multiple, reliable outlets for their products. This includes:
- i. Value-added manufacturers and processing facilities;
 - ii. Institutional buyers such as the Department of Education, healthcare systems, and correctional facilities; and
 - iii. Private sector markets including retail, hospitality, and export channels.

Without these pathways, increased production will not translate into economic viability or improved food access.

3. The food system must be treated as an integrated ecosystem

- a. Production, processing, distribution, and consumption must be aligned. Investments in one segment without the others will not achieve the desired outcomes of affordability, accessibility, and resilience.

DBEDT further emphasizes that the statewide strategy must be aligned with and advance existing statutory mandates, including:

- Act 151 – Doubling local food production;
- Act 175 – Integration of local foods into school meal systems; and
- Act 176 – Strengthening local procurement and food system resilience.

These mandates collectively establish a clear policy direction, Hawai'i must increase local production while simultaneously building the infrastructure and institutional demand necessary to sustain it. The statewide strategy requested in this resolution should serve as the coordinating framework to operationalize these laws.

Finally, DBEDT recommends that the strategy prioritize:

- Identification of priority infrastructure and facility investments statewide;
- Coordination of land access and irrigation systems to support production;
- Expansion of value-added and processing capacity through networks such as the Food and Product Innovation Network (FPIN);

- Alignment of institutional procurement (e.g., DOE under Act 175) with local supply through commodity mapping; and
- Clear performance metrics tied to production, cost reduction, and food access outcomes.

A successful statewide food security strategy must move beyond planning and into implementation through capital investment, asset acquisition, and coordinated execution across agencies.

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



SIERRA WHITESIDE
CHAIRPERSON

DAINTRY BARTOLDUS
EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA
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1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
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April 1, 2026

The Honorable Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair
Senate Committee on Government Operations
The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair McKelvey, Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: SCR41/SR31 – Requesting a Certain State and County Agencies, in Coordination with Community-Based Organizations, to Develop a Comprehensive Statewide Food Security Strategy

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities offers its **SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS** for SCR41/SR31, which requests the development of a comprehensive, statewide food security strategy.

Food security is foundational to health, independence, and community living. Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), aging caregivers, and households with access and functional needs (AFN) often face compounded barriers to consistent, nutritious food, including transportation limitations, physical access challenges, communication barriers, and increased reliance on caregivers or support systems.

The Council appreciates that this measure takes a data-driven, equity-focused, and cross-agency approach, recognizing the importance of culturally relevant, community-based solutions and coordination across state and county systems. This framework is critical to addressing the complex and interconnected nature of food insecurity in Hawai'i.

To strengthen this measure, the Council respectfully recommends:

- Explicitly including individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs (AFN) in the strategy, as these populations experience unique and often overlooked barriers to food access;

- Ensuring alignment with existing programs that serve these populations, including SNAP, Medicaid home and community-based services, and aging network supports, to reduce fragmentation and improve access;
- Incorporating emergency preparedness and disaster response considerations, recognizing that individuals with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by disruptions in food access during emergencies;
- Supporting community-driven solutions that promote independence, dignity, and long-term stability for individuals and families.

This measure aligns with Hawai'i's broader efforts to strengthen nutrition security, reduce administrative barriers, and bridge aging and disability systems. With the inclusion of disability and access needs, this strategy can serve as a strong foundation for equitable, resilient, and sustainable food systems across our state.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support offering comments** for **SCR41/SR31**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



Date: March 30, 2026

Subject: Support of SCR41/SR31 Requesting Certain State and County Agencies, in Coordination with Community-Based Organizations, to Develop a Comprehensive Statewide Food Security Strategy

Aloha Chair McKelvey, Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and members of the committees,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our support for SCR41/SR31, Requesting Certain State and County Agencies, in Coordination with Community-Based Organizations, to Develop a Comprehensive Statewide Food Security Strategy.

Food insecurity is a growing crisis in Hawai'i, with one in three households, including 100,000 keiki, struggling to access adequate, healthy food. One in five households have individuals who are skipping meals or going whole days without eating on a regular basis.

For over 40 years, Hawai'i Foodbank has provided daily and emergency assistance to those facing food insecurity in Hawai'i, distributing food to families and individuals on O'ahu and Kaua'i through direct service programs as well as through our network of 266 agency partners and pantries. Last year, we served an average of over 160,000 people each month, distributing more than 22 million pounds of nutritious food, including more than 7.1 million pounds of fresh produce.

With substantial cuts to federal support programs, the increasing frequency of federal government shutdowns, and severe weather events like the recent Kona Low storms, now more than ever we must come together to develop a comprehensive strategy to ensure that no one in Hawai'i goes hungry.

Thank you for your consideration of this important measure.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank



HAWAII APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for SR 31/SCR 41 – Requesting the State and County Agencies to Develop a Comprehensive
Statewide Food Security Strategy
Senate Committees on Government Operations and Agriculture and Environment
Wednesday, April 1, 2026, 3:30PM

Dear Chair McKelvey, Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SR 31/SCR 41, which requests the State and County Agencies, in coordination with community-based organizations, to develop a comprehensive Statewide Food Security Strategy.

At a time when nearly one in three households in Hawai‘i is experiencing food insecurity, the need for coordinated, strategic action has never been more urgent. Data from the Hawai‘i Foodbank’s most recent report paints a stark picture: families are skipping meals, keiki are going without adequate nutrition, and entire communities—particularly Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino households—are bearing a disproportionate burden.

Addressing this challenge requires more than isolated programs or short-term fixes. It demands a coordinated, equity-driven, and forward-looking strategy, and involves the work of many stakeholders, including emergency food providers, state and county agencies, farmers, food retailers, consumers, and community groups.

A comprehensive statewide food security strategy can help Hawai‘i better understand and address the root causes of food insecurity, strengthen local food systems, and ensure that all residents—regardless of where they live or who they are—have access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food. It also presents an opportunity to identify “win-win” solutions that both reduce food insecurity and support local agriculture, increasing resilience in the face of economic and climate-related disruptions.

We respectfully urge the Legislature to adopt this resolution, making a bold statement about the importance of ensuring that food security is treated as a fundamental priority for our state.



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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 Government Operations and Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: April 1, 2026

TIME: 3:30pm

RE: SCR41 SR31 REQUESTING CERTAIN STATE AND COUNTY AGENCIES, IN COORDINATION WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY.

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. As the measure notes, the most recent data from the Hawaii Foodbank shows that our state has over 30% food insecurity on average, with some parts of the state experiencing food insecurity rates of close to 40%. Creating a comprehensive data driven food security strategy is an important step to fighting food insecurity.

HFIA would be happy to participate in this assessment and contribute any expertise and industry knowledge that will be helpful

We would also suggest that the plan assesses the impact of the continued taxation of groceries in Hawaii and compares this to over 40 other states which do not tax the sale of groceries and their relative food insecurity rates. Applying the General Excise Tax to groceries increases food prices by close to 5% and amounts to roughly the equivalent of



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Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

two weeks' worth of food budget lost to taxes each year for every Hawaii family. This is a relevant factor in understanding food affordability and accessibility in Hawaii.

SCR-41

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 11:19:05 AM

Testimony for GVO on 4/1/2026 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaili Swan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Kaili Swan and I support this resolution. Food is important for staying healthy and living independently, but people with disabilities often have a hard time getting it because of transportation, access, and needing help from others.

This plan is a good step, but please make sure people with disabilities are included, connect it to programs like SNAP and services we already use, and make sure we are prepared during emergencies so no one goes without food.

When you include us, the system works better for everyone. Thank you.

SCR-41

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 12:43:43 PM

Testimony for GVO on 4/1/2026 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Wassel Hardy	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Hawai‘i is facing a daily crisis of food insecurity—one that is often invisible, but deeply felt across our islands. The truth is, we are all food insecure because we rely on an import-dependent system that is increasingly vulnerable to disruption—as recent flooding has shown. In times of crisis, it is our neighbors and grassroots networks who respond first. They are not peripheral—they are the backbone of food security.

We must expand how we define food security. It is not just about how many pounds of food are produced and distributed. It is about investing in the social infrastructure that ensures food reaches people in ways that are accessible, dignified, and resilient—through trusted relationships, local networks, and culturally grounded practices.

To truly end hunger, we must act as one statewide community. Food insecurity does not stop at county lines, and neither should our solutions. A coordinated approach ensures resources and support reach those who need them most. Hawai‘i is not lacking food; we are lacking equity and access. When we frame food as a right—not a commodity—we create space for cross-sector solutions that go beyond agriculture or charity alone.

SR31/SCR41 is an opportunity to align the government with the communities already leading this work and to build a resilient, community-driven path toward zero hunger.

I respectfully urge your support. Mahalo for your time.



LATE

PO Box 4, Kunia, Hawaii, 96759 || 808-622-9026 || www.agstewardshiphawaii.org

March 31, 2026

Aloha Chair McKelvey, Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and members of the Senate Committees on Government Operations and Agriculture and Environment,

Re: Testimony in Support of SCR41 Comprehensive Statewide Food Security Strategy

On behalf of Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i, we submit this testimony **in strong support of** SCR41 (HCR 144/HR136), which requests state and county agencies, in coordination with community-based organizations, to develop a comprehensive Statewide Food Security Strategy.

Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i is a non-profit organization committed to improving the viability and sustainability of Hawai'i's agricultural producers and food system through technical assistance, resource coordination, stewardship-based business education, and policy work. Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i leads the [Statewide Food Systems Coordination Initiative](#) (HSFSC), launched in 2024 with philanthropic and gubernatorial support. HSFSC works to align agricultural stakeholders, address infrastructure barriers, secure federal resources, advance institutional procurement of local food, and support policy priorities that strengthen Hawai'i's food system.

There are **currently no statewide goals on addressing food insecurity or hunger in spite of our food insecurity crisis affecting one in three households**. This measure highlights the need for a comprehensive, data- and equity-informed approach to advancing solutions to eliminating hunger and supporting access to nutritious, culturally relevant food. The statewide food security strategy also aligns state efforts with existing county plans for a more coordinated and effective statewide response.

We respectfully request an amendment to identify the [Act 239](#) Interagency Food Systems Working Group co-chaired by the Department Of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT) Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) and Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (HDAB) be named as lead for this effort, based on the successful passage last session of SB1186 (2025). This group has an explicit interagency and multi-stakeholder mandate that could support successful implementation.

Mahalo nui for your time and consideration,

Dr. Amanda Shaw, PhD, Statewide Food Systems Coordinator
Email: amanda@agstewardshiphawaii.org, Tel: 808 429 5310