

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI A KIA'I MEAOLA
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
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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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**FEBRUARY 23, 2026
2:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 308 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1707, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No.1707, HD1 that establishes a Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) to reimburse eligible ranchers and farmers a portion of their costs to transport livestock, livestock products, agricultural commodities, and certain supplies, under certain conditions. Establishes a position to administer the Program. The Department supports the bill.

The Department agrees the costs incurred to transport agricultural commodities is increasing and acknowledges that shipping and transportation costs is a leading barrier to farmers' and/or ranchers' ability to expand operations and supports a program to reimburse costs incurred for intra- and interisland movement and not duplicate the provisions of the federal Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment (RTCP) that provides reimbursement for a percentage of the costs incurred for transportation of agricultural commodities or inputs to Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1707-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 4:39:28 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn Sako	R&D, County of Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Department of Research and Development, County of Hawaii supports HB1707. Thank you.



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 23, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 1707, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, 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 1707, HD1, which establishes a Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to help offset the high cost of transporting agricultural products and essential supplies.

Transportation costs remain one of the most significant barriers facing Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers. Hawai'i's geographic isolation and interisland shipping realities place local producers at a competitive disadvantage, particularly for neighbor island operations that must ship both inputs and finished products to reach markets. Each increase in shipping, wharfage, fuel, or handling costs directly impacts farm viability, and these costs often cannot be passed on to consumers.

HB 1707, HD1 directly addresses these challenges by creating a targeted reimbursement program to assist eligible agricultural producers, cooperatives, and food hubs with a portion of their transportation costs. By including livestock, agricultural commodities, nursery products, and necessary supplies, the bill reflects the full scope of real-world agricultural operations in Hawai'i.

We appreciate that HB 1707, HD1 includes clear eligibility criteria, reasonable reimbursement caps, and annual reporting requirements to ensure accountability and transparency. Establishing a dedicated position within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to administer the program is also critical to ensuring timely reimbursements, consistent implementation, and effective outreach to producers statewide.

For many farmers and ranchers, transportation costs determine whether expansion is possible, whether products can reach market, and whether local agriculture can remain competitive. Programs like this help level the playing field, support neighbor island producers, and strengthen Hawai'i's agriculture and food system by reducing one of the most persistent structural barriers to growth.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-1707-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 2:29:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Blazak	Hilo County Farm Bureau	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

As the chapter president of the Hilo County Farm Bureau, I write in strong support of the proposed measure on behalf of our Board of Directors and our members.

This measure addresses the ever-present challenge of rising freight costs in our state. Increasing transportation costs create barriers to markets for agricultural producers, especially for those located on neighbor islands. This bill is responsive to the needs of local farmers and ranchers and will deliver immediate benefits for agricultural businesses.

Hilo County Farm Bureau urges you to pass this bill. Thank you for hearing this measure.

Megan Blazak
Chapter President
Hilo County Farm Bureau

HB-1707-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 7:12:40 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Warren Watanabe	Maui County Farm Bureau	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Maui County Farm Bureau supports HB1707 HD1 establishing a Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and a position to administer the program. Mahalo.

**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair**

**Monday, February 23, 2026, at 2:00PM
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference**

RE: HB1707 HD1 Relating to Agriculture

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 1707 HD1 (HB1707 HD1), which establishes a Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to reimburse eligible ranchers and farmers a portion of their costs to transport livestock, livestock products, agricultural commodities, and certain supplies. It also establishes a position to administer the program.

HB1707 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for 21st Century Agriculture. This policy pillar emphasizes sustainable local food production and economic viability for producers. The result of these systemic improvements is increased food system security and resilience. By lowering transportation costs for farmers, ranchers, producers, and food hubs, this bill lowers the cost of living for those who purchase food, lowers the cost of doing business for those producing and selling food, and improves the quality of life for all stakeholders involved.

The Chamber appreciate this bill's intent towards equity, providing additional support for small and medium scale farmers. Further, with food costs rising as it gets transported between islands, this bill helps to lower food costs for communities that are further from Oahu, where much of the State's food supply is sent. For the reasons of equity promotion, lowering the cost of living, and lowering the cost of doing business, the Chamber stands in strong support of this measure.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill 1707 HD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 308
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2026 AT 2:00 P.M.**

To The Honorable Representative Chris Todd, Chair
The Honorable Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Finance

SUPPORT HB1707 HD1 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

The Maui Chamber of Commerce supports HB1707 HD1 as it addresses a longstanding barrier for local ranchers and farmers: the high cost of transporting goods and supplies across islands and within the state. By establishing a reimbursement program for transportation costs, this bill has the potential to make local agriculture more viable and competitive.

Reducing transportation expenses directly supports small and mid-sized producers, who often face disproportionate logistical challenges due to Hawaii's geographic isolation. Lowering these costs can help keep more locally grown food in our communities, decrease reliance on imports, and enhance food security. Additionally, by supporting the economic sustainability of agriculture, the bill aligns with broader efforts to preserve open space and rural landscapes, which provide environmental and cultural benefits.

We respectfully recommend that the final version of this measure include provisions for regular program evaluation and stakeholder input, to ensure that reimbursements are distributed fairly and that the program adapts to changing industry needs. We also encourage coordination with existing agricultural support initiatives to maximize efficiency and impact. Thank you for considering this important step toward a more resilient local food system.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.



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info@hawaiiifood.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 Finance
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 23, 2026

TIME: 2pm

RE: HB1707 HD1 Relating to Agriculture

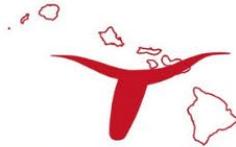
Position: Support

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 to establish a local agriculture transportation cost reimbursement program to ensure that certain local agricultural producers receive support to offset the high costs of transporting goods to market and to obtain necessary supplies. As the measure notes, increasing local agricultural production is essential to the long-term sustainability and food security of the State. However, local agricultural producers face significant economic challenges, particularly with the high costs of transporting agricultural products and necessary supplies across the State.

Our local agricultural sector and food manufacturing sector has tremendous potential for growth. When the state takes steps to support these businesses it helps create an economy that is more locally focused, more diverse, more resilient, and stronger for us all. We would support expanding this program, now or in the future to include transportation cost reimbursements for all food producers and other local manufacturers.

We encourage the Committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

HB1707
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Monday, February 23, 2026, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB1707 HD1** which establishes a Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to reimburse eligible ranchers and farmers a portion of their costs to transport livestock, livestock products, agricultural commodities, and certain supplies, under certain conditions. Establishes a position to administer the Program.

The nature of our island counties means transportation costs can often be a necessary, but prohibitive, expense. In order to grow agriculture and increase local food production, the state must recognize the high transportation costs required to provide for all our communities. In the case of beef, the majority of cattle are produced on neighbor islands, while the dense population of consumers are on Oahu. In addition, transportation is required when selling animals for increasing herds and improving herd genetics. We support a cost reimbursement program for transportation to assist in the transportation expenses of ranching and farming operations.

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





Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Christian Zuckerman
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
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Chapter Presidents

Kelii Gannet
Kohala, Hawaii

East Hawaii

Puna, Hawaii

Ka'u, Hawaii

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawaii

Gina Lind
Hana, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahalawai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Molokai

Negus Manna
Lana'i

India Clark
North Shore, Oahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, Oahu

Rachel LaDrig
Waimanalo, Oahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, Oahu

Natalie Urminska
Kauai

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Finance Committee,

The Hawaii 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 HB1707.**

HB1707 is a proactive approach to addressing the logistical and financial challenges faced by Hawaii's agricultural community. By establishing the Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program, the bill especially provides a much-needed relief for neighbor island farmers, who are currently burdened by exorbitant double shipping costs. These expenses arise from the need to import essential production inputs and subsequently transport finished goods to primary markets. Reducing transportation costs will enable farmers to allocate resources more efficiently, thereby increasing their capacity to produce and deliver fresh, local produce to Hawaii's communities.

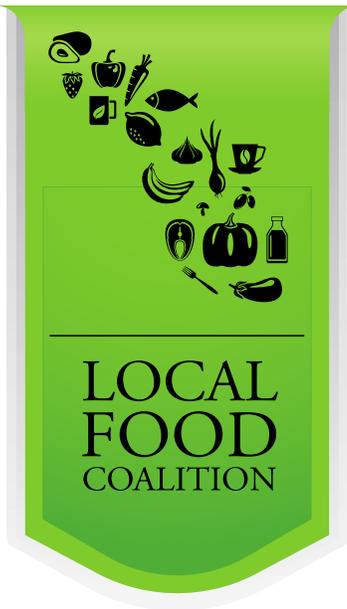
While HFU fully supports the intent of this measure, the current draft leaves the term "necessary supplies" undefined, which risks administrative inconsistency and may exclude vital materials. To ensure this program is robust and predictable for farmers, we recommend aligning the state's language with the established federal Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment (RTCP) program (7 CFR § 755.2). Specifically, we propose the following amendment to SECTION 2 of the bill:

"Necessary supplies" includes chemicals, feed, fertilizer, fuel, seeds, plants, supplies, equipment parts, and other inputs as determined by the department of agriculture and biosecurity.

Adopting this definition provides the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity with a clear, functional framework while maintaining the flexibility to adapt to evolving agricultural needs. By adopting these established federal standards to explicitly include critical inputs like fuel and equipment parts, the legislature will ensure that this program is both administratively seamless and capable of addressing the true, comprehensive cost of farming in an island state.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawaii Farmers Union



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Monday, February 23, 2026 – 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

HB 1707 HD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

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

The Local Food Coalition supports HB 1707 HD1, which establishes a Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to reimburse eligible ranchers and farmers a portion of their costs to transport livestock, livestock products, agricultural commodities, and certain supplies, under certain conditions.

Transportation remains one of the most significant barriers to expanding local food production. Rising inter-island shipping costs limit producers' ability to reach markets and compete with imported goods. By offsetting a portion of these costs, this measure directly supports farmers, ranchers, food hubs, and cooperatives working to strengthen Hawai'i's food system.

Reducing transportation burdens will help increase local production, improve market access, and support statewide food security goals.

The Local Food Coalition is an organization comprised of farmers, ranchers, livestock producers, investors, and other stakeholders united by a shared commitment to building a robust and self-sufficient food system for Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-1707-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 10:31:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa Thompson	Thompson Ranch	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1707.

Mahalo,

Theresa Thompson, Kula, Maui



Date of Hearing: 23 February, 2026

To: Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance

Subject: **HB1707 HD1**, Relating to Agriculture

Aloha,

Hawai'i Food+ Policy **supports** HB1707 HD1 which establishes a Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DoAB) to help offset the high costs local farmers, ranchers, and food hubs face when transporting agricultural products and essential supplies within the state and we want to acknowledge the amendments made stating that an agricultural producer must provide proof of commercial internet.

According to findings cited in the bill and local reporting, thirty-nine percent of participating local ranchers and farmers identify shipping and transportation costs as a leading obstacle to expanding production, limiting their ability to compete and reducing the overall productivity of the agricultural sector. Additional strain on local producers is expected as the tariff for wharfage and pipeline toll rates is set to reflect a 4.1 percent increase.

National data from the United States Department of Agriculture shows that rising transportation and fuel costs directly increase the cost of bringing food to market for all farmers, with trucking costs reaching record highs in recent years.² Each of these factors contribute to increased costs to procure goods. These impacts are particularly severe for producers in geographically isolated areas who lack alternative transport options.² In Hawai'i, this burden is even greater due to the state's reliance on interisland shipping and cargo transport, where a lack of competition can lead to significant rate hikes with no alternative options to receive required goods.

Local reporting from Civil Beat further documents how Hawai'i farmers face disproportionately high shipping costs for both products and essential inputs like sugar and jars, making local agriculture less competitive than cheaper mainland imports.¹

We respectfully urge you to pass HB 1707 HD1. Providing targeted transportation cost relief will strengthen local agriculture, support small-scale producers, improve food security, and help Hawai'i move toward greater self-sufficiency. This bill addresses a clear and documented barrier with a practical solution that supports our farmers while strengthening our local food system.

Mahalo for your consideration!
Brandon Kinard & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

[1] Eichenstein, A. (2023, August 9). USDA program helps Hawaii farmers offset high shipping costs. Honolulu Civil Beat.

[2] Mulik, K. (2025, April). Impact of rising diesel prices and truck-driver availability on food transportation and distribution (Summary). U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service. <http://dx.doi.org/10.9752/TS450.04-2025>

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.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Chair

Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

HB1707

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

DATE: Monday, February 23, 2026

TIME: 1:00 PM

COMMITTEE: AEN

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

I **support HB1707** which establishes a Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to reimburse eligible ranchers and farmers a portion of their costs to transport livestock, livestock products, agricultural commodities, and certain supplies, under certain conditions. Establishes a position to administer the Program.

As a small rancher on the East side of Big Island, we often have to travel weekly for supplies, feed, purchases/drop offs of our cattle. Diesel is expensive and for a small ranch like us who doesn't have enough head of cattle for the feedlots to send a double decker to our ranch for free - it takes a big toll on expenses when having to make multiple trips across the island to haul our cattle. With support we can confidently continue operations and move toward increasing local food productions.

Thank you for your time,

Sharlei Iranon

President

Triple S Livestock LLC



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026**

**COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair**

**Monday, February 23, 2026
2:00 PM
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street**

RE: HB1707 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

My name is Eric S. Tanouye and I am the President for the Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association. HFNA is a statewide umbrella organization with approximately 350 members. Our membership is made up with breeders, hybridizers, propagators, growers, shippers, wholesalers, retailers, educators, and the allied industry, which supports our efforts in agriculture.

The Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association (HFNA) **STRONGLY SUPPORTS House Bill 1707** which establishes a Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to reimburse eligible ranchers and farmers a portion of their costs to transport livestock, livestock products, agricultural commodities, and certain supplies, under certain conditions.

This bill will help our geographically disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and support all of agriculture in Hawaii. This will help farmers grow and deliver products, while reducing the transportation cost of inputs and bringing the products to market. It will give Hawaii growers a much needed boost to compete with products coming from outside the state.

We ask that you support our industry and agriculture, so that we may continue to bring the beauty of Hawaii to others through flowers and ornamentals.



If you have any questions at this time, I would be happy to discuss them and can be reached by phone at 808-959-3535 ext 2627, cell 960-1433 and email eric@greenpointnursery.com.

Supporting Agriculture and Hawaii,

Eric S. Tanouye
President

Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association



Farmer owned, 'āina grown

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

This testimony provided on behalf of the Hawai'i 'Ulu Producers Cooperative is in **strong support of HB1707**, which establishes the Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program.

About Us

The Hawai'i 'Ulu Co-op (HUC) is an agricultural producer cooperative founded in 2016 with 9 small, family farmers around Hawai'i Island. We are a social enterprise created to provide a stable and reliable market for Hawai'i's 'ulu farmers, united in their belief that 'ulu (breadfruit) can and should be revitalized as a dietary staple for Hawai'i's food security, environmental resilience, cultural integrity, and sustainable economic development. Over the past 10 years, we have grown organically and now represent over 220 farmer-members across four islands (Hawai'i Island, Maui, O'ahu, and Kaua'i). Through the cooperative business structure, we have been able to aggregate economies of scale, develop minimal and value-added processing capabilities that comply with FSMA, and serve markets larger than any of our members would be able to reach on their own – including all 258 public schools of the Hawai'i Department of Education. Today, we are one of DOE's largest local suppliers. For us and other cooperative businesses in Hawai'i, ongoing access to development support resources including both funding and technical assistance is critical to our continued survival and success.

What is a Cooperative?

Because the cooperative model is often unfamiliar, it is helpful to define what it is: a business owned and democratically controlled by the people who use its services or do its work. Unlike traditional corporations that prioritize maximizing wealth for outside investors, a cooperative operates on a "one member, one vote" basis. It is a people-centered model that ensures the business remains accountable to the local community rather than distant shareholders.

Why HB 1707 is Necessary

For local producers, the "geographic tax"—the exorbitant cost of moving goods between islands—is a primary barrier to economic viability. Currently, it is often cheaper to ship produce from California to Honolulu than it is to ship from Hilo to Honolulu. HB 1707 addresses this systemic disadvantage by:



- Levelling the Playing Field: Reimbursing transportation costs allows local crops like ‘ulu to compete with subsidized, mainland-imported starches.
- Protecting Thin Margins: Our farmers operate on incredibly tight margins. This program provides the "breathing room" necessary for small businesses to survive market fluctuations.
- Scaling Institutional Supply: To continue feeding Hawai‘i’s keiki through the DOE, we must move large volumes of produce across islands. This bill directly supports the logistics required for statewide food distribution.

The Benefit to Hawai‘i’s Economy

Investing in agricultural transportation is far more than a simple subsidy for farmers; it is a strategic investment in Hawai‘i’s long-term economic resilience. By directly addressing the high costs of moving goods between islands, HB 1707 incentivizes "import substitution"—a critical shift for a state that currently imports nearly 90% of its food. Reducing these logistical barriers allows local produce to become more price-competitive, keeping millions of dollars circulating within our local economy that would otherwise leak out to mainland distributors and overseas corporations.

For our cooperative and the hundreds of families we represent, HB 1707 is a common-sense solution to a decades-old logistical problem. We urge the committee to **pass HB 1707** to ensure our local agricultural industry can thrive and continue to feed the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,



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

HB-1707-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 4:15:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this measure. Thank you.

Karen (Chang) Barr

karen@hoonui.net

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

FROM: Karen (Chang) Barr

DATE: February 22, 2026

RE: HB1707 HD1

POSITION: SUPPORT

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

My name is Karen (Chang) Barr. I am a Honolulu resident, small business consultant and popup vendor who promotes Hawai`i-made products at Hawaiian festivals in Washington state. I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of HB1707**.

HB1707 is a proactive and necessary step toward addressing the logistical and financial challenges faced by Hawaii's agricultural community. **Establishing the Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program** bill will provide a much-needed relief to neighbor island farmers, who are currently burdened by exorbitant double shipping costs.

Many producers face "double-shipping" expenses – importing essential production inputs and then transporting finished goods to primary markets. Consequently, these costs reduce already thin margins and, ultimately, increase prices for consumers. By reimbursing a portion of eligible transportation costs, this measure will help stabilize local food production, improve market access and strengthen Hawai`i's food security.

As someone who actively promotes and sells locally grown and manufactured products, I see firsthand how shipping costs are passed down the supply chain. When transportation costs rise, farmers, retailers, and consumers all bear the impact. If we are serious about supporting local agriculture and encouraging residents to "buy local," we must address the structural barriers that make local goods more expensive than imported alternatives.

That said, I humbly ask that you consider the following recommended clarification of the bill's language. The term "necessary supplies" is currently undefined, which may create administrative inconsistency or unintentionally exclude critical inputs required for agricultural production. To ensure predictability and fairness in implementation, I recommend aligning the definition with existing federal language under the Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment (RTCP) program (7 CFR § 755.2).

"Necessary supplies' includes chemicals, feed, fertilizer, fuel, seeds, plants, supplies, equipment parts, and other inputs as determined by the department of agriculture and biosecurity."

Adopting this definition provides the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity with a clear, functional framework while preserving the flexibility to adapt to evolving agricultural needs. Aligning the program with established federal standards – and explicitly include critical inputs like fuel and equipment parts – will help ensure that implementation is administratively consistent and that the program meaningfully addresses the full cost of farming in an island state.

HB-1707-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 4:13:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gary R Ueunten	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1707. As a neighbor island (Kauai) farmer, I am impacted by the high shipping cost to get supplies to Kauai. I recently purchased an orchard ladder from Hilo and the shipping (YB) cost was more than 50% of the cost of the ladder. Kauai is a small market for agricultural suppliers limiting and raising the cost of supplies.

HB-1707-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2026 8:18:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!!

HB-1707-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 5:35:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jimmy Gomes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill and stand with Hawaii Cattlemens Council testimony

HB-1707-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 7:35:26 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Woody Child	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1707.

HB-1707-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2026 4:24:36 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Comment

NO TRANSPORATION FROM ISLAND-TO-ISLAND OR OFF SHORES FOR THE FIRST TWO YEARS DUE TO COST AND TARIFF. PRODUCTION REMAIN ON ISLAND GROWER FOR THE FIRST 2 YEARS.

1707 HB RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

HB-1707-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 11:34:43 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

HB-1707-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 9:06:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frederick M. Mencher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

I support HB 1707 HD1, which helps offset the high cost of transporting agricultural products and essential supplies in Hawai‘i.

Transportation costs are one of the biggest challenges facing local farmers and ranchers, especially for neighbor island producers who must ship both inputs and finished products. These costs directly affect whether farming remains viable.

HB 1707 HD1 provides targeted, accountable assistance that helps level the playing field and strengthens Hawai‘i’s local food system.

Mahalo for your support of local agriculture.