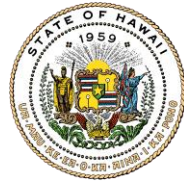


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

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
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI A KIA'I MEAOLA
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9560 FAX: (808) 973-9613

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

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026
10:03 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 211 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1707, HD1 SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

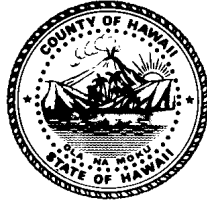
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No.1707, HD1 SD1 that establishes a Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) to reimburse eligible ranchers and farmers a portion of their costs to transport livestock, 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. Neighbor Island farms and ranches often face increased transportation costs first for incoming supplies, inputs, feed and equipment then for outbound shipping of products to market. The Department 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.

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor

William V. Brilhante, Jr.
Managing Director



Benson Medina
Director

Dennis Lin
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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

March 30, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

WEDNESDAY, April 1, 2026
10:03 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 211

TESTIMONY ON HB1707 HD1 SD1 Relating to Agriculture

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee,

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

The County of Hawai'i provides written testimony in **SUPPORT of HB1707 HD1 SD1**, 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, and appropriates funds.

The proposed Local Agricultural Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program would significantly support Hawai'i Island producers in their efforts to feed the State. Hawai'i County is home to 3,638 farms, and our producers make up 43% of state agricultural sales (NASS, 2022). Producers are motivated to overcome challenges to meet statewide goals to at least double local food production. Two-thirds (66.9%) of producers in Hawai'i with at least \$50,000 in estimated gross production have expressed interest in expanding operations within 6-9 months, and the third leading barrier of expansion cited by these farms was cost of shipping and transportation (NASS, 2021). The proposed program in HB1707 addresses this barrier to improve producer viability.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of HB1707 HD1 SD1**.

Respectfully,

Benson Medina
Director, Research and Development
County of Hawai'i

HB-1707-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 2:16:32 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Shapiro	Testifying for Hawai'i Ulu Producers Cooperative	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

The Hawai'i Ulu Producers Cooperative (HUC) strongly supports **HB 1707**, which proposes the establishment of a Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

As a cooperative representing over 215 member-producers across four islands, we witness firsthand the significant financial strain that inter-island and local transportation costs place on our farmers. For the breadfruit industry specifically, moving perishable "Grade A" fruit from diverse farm sites to central intake and processing facilities is a major operational hurdle. Transportation costs frequently act as a barrier to market entry for small-scale and start-up farmers, directly impacting Hawai'i's goals for food self-sufficiency and sustainable agroforestry.

The provisions in HB 1707 are particularly vital for the following reasons:

- **Support for Cooperative Models:** By including "cooperative aggregators and food hubs" as eligible entities, this bill recognizes that a centralized, collaborative approach to transportation is the most efficient way to scale local food production.
- **Economic Relief Amidst Rising Costs:** With the recent 4.1% increase in wharfage and pipeline toll rates, local producers are facing unprecedented overhead. This reimbursement program offers a necessary offset to keep local produce competitive with imported goods.
- **Encouraging New Producers:** The inclusion of "start-up" farmers with proof of commercial intent ensures that the next generation of ulu producers can enter the industry without being sidelined by the high cost of moving their first harvests.

Increasing the accessibility and affordability of transporting local agricultural commodities is essential to the long-term sustainability of our islands. The Hawai'i Ulu Producers Cooperative urges the committee to pass HB 1707 to provide this critical infrastructure support for our farmers.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Hawai'i 'Ulu Producers Cooperative

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 10:03 AM
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference**

RE: HB1707 HD1 SD1 Relating to Agriculture

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

My name is **Monty Pereira of Watanabe Floral, Inc.** and I serve on the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii's **Public Policy Committee**. I am providing testimony in my personal capacity. My comments reflect my own views and are informed by the priorities outlined in the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii.

I am writing in **SUPPORT of House Bill 1707 House Draft 1 Senate Draft 1 (HB1707 HD1 SD1)**, which establishes a Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. Hawaii's agricultural producers face uniquely high transportation costs that significantly impact their ability to operate, compete, and grow. As an island state, the movement of livestock, agricultural commodities, and essential supplies is not optional. Rather, it is a fundamental cost of doing business.

UHERO's *Beyond the Price of Paradise* report from February underscores that Hawaii's high cost of living is driven in part by the added cost of transporting goods across and between islands¹. For local farmers and ranchers, these challenges are even more pronounced, directly impacting their ability to operate, compete, and scale production. Strategic investments like this program are critical to offset these structural barriers, strengthen local production, and reduce long-term cost pressures on Hawaii's families and economy.

This measure directly advances the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii, a data-driven framework to strengthen the state's long-term economic resilience, competitiveness, and cost structure. Within the 2030 Blueprint's 21st Century Agriculture pillar², improving transportation systems, reducing interisland shipping costs, and strengthening market access are identified as critical actions needed to scale local production and modernize the sector.

Hawaii's agricultural industry operates within a uniquely high-cost environment, where geography and fragmentation across islands create persistent inefficiencies in moving goods to market and securing essential inputs. These constraints limit economies of scale, suppress

¹ University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO), *Beyond the Price of Paradise: Economic Challenges and Opportunities for Hawai'i*, February 2026. University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Available at: <https://uhero.hawaii.edu>

² 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii, 21st Century Agriculture, March 2026. Available at: <https://www.cochawaii.org/2030-blueprint/21st-century-agriculture/>

productivity, and restrict the ability of producers to expand and compete. By directly addressing transportation costs (one of the most significant structural barriers), this program enables producers to operate more efficiently, reinvest in their businesses, and increase overall output.

This investment is also complementary to broader efforts to strengthen Hawaii's agricultural infrastructure, including initiatives such as the Food & Product Innovation Network being developed by the Agribusiness Development Corporation to expand processing capacity and market opportunities. However, the ability to move goods reliably and affordably across islands remains foundational. Without addressing transportation costs, producers will continue to face barriers in accessing markets and fully utilizing these types of investments.

By strengthening this critical link in the supply chain, this program helps ensure that local production can scale, reach markets, and generate greater economic value across the state. In doing so, it supports job creation, strengthens rural economies, and advances Hawaii's long-term efforts to diversify its economy and reduce reliance on imports.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask to **PASS House Bill 1707 House Draft 1 Senate Draft 1**. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 10:03AM
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference**

RE: HB1707 HD1 SD1 Relating to Agriculture

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, 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 House Draft 1 Senate Draft 1 (HB1707 HD1 SD1), 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 necessary supplies, under certain conditions. Establishes a position to administer the Program.

HB1707 HD1 SD1 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. 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 House Draft 1 Senate Draft 1. 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.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

HB1707 HD1 SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

April 1, 2026, 10:03 AM
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB1707 HD1 SD1** 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





**THE SENATE
KA 'AHA KENEKOA
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026**

**COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, April 1 2026 10:03am
Conference Room 211
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street**

RE: HB1707 HD1 SD1 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) **SUPPORTS HB1707 HD1 SD1** 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

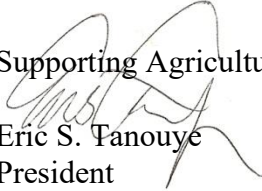
This bill will help our geographically disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and support all of agriculture in Hawaii. This will help farmers grow and deliver products, while reducing the transportation cost of inputs and bringing the products to market. It will give Hawaii growers a much needed boost to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



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

April 1, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON HB 1707, HD1, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
10:03 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwake, 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, SD1, 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, SD1 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, SD1 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.



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 211
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026 AT 10:03 A.M.**

To The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

SUPPORT FOR HB1707 HD1 SD1 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

The Maui Chamber of Commerce supports HB1707 HD1 SD1 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.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our support of HB1707 HD1 SD1.

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.



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |
Honolulu, HI 96813
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info@hawaiiifood.com

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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*

LATE

TO: Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: April 1, 2026
TIME: 10:03am

RE: HB1707 HD1 SD1 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.



Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce

1321 Kino'ole Street - Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

Phone (808) 935-7178 - Fax (808) 961-4435 - Email exec@hicc.biz - www.hicc.biz

Executive Officer

Carla Kuo

2025-2026

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Randy Kurohara

Geoli Ng

Matthew Pickett

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Tracie Yoshimoto

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Wednesday, April 1, 2026 at 10:03 AM

LATE

RE: HB HB1707 HD1 SD1 – Relating to Agriculture - SUPPORT

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce, representing more than 350 businesses and individual members on the east side of Hawai'i Island, submits this testimony in strong support of House Bill 1707 HD1 SD1, which establishes a Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

Hawai'i's agricultural producers face uniquely high transportation costs that directly impact their ability to operate, compete, and grow. As an island state, moving livestock, commodities, and essential supplies is not optional, it is a fundamental cost of doing business. These challenges are especially significant for local farmers and ranchers, limiting their ability to scale production and access markets.

This program addresses a significant structural barrier facing agriculture by helping offset transportation costs, enabling producers to operate more efficiently, reinvest in their businesses, and expand output. Reliable and affordable interisland transportation is essential to strengthening local supply chains and ensuring that agricultural goods can reach markets across the state.

By supporting local production, this measure will help strengthen rural economies, create jobs, and reduce Hawai'i's reliance on imports.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the passage of HB1707 HD1 SD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Carla Kuo
Executive Officer
Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce



LATE

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Wai'anae, O'ahu

Rachel LaDrig
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kauai

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means 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 and seeks to amend HB1707.**

Hawaii's agricultural producers face a logistical cost barrier unique to an island state. All local farmers pay to ship production inputs from the mainland, and neighbor island producers face the additional burden of inter-island shipping to reach markets on Oahu. Recent and proposed increases in shipping rates have made these costs even more prohibitive. By establishing the Local Agriculture Transportation Cost Reimbursement Program, HB1707 provides direct relief that helps local products compete on price with imported goods and keeps locally grown food affordable for Hawaii's families.

The majority of Hawaii's farms are small operations, and the program's design should reflect that reality. Extending eligibility to cooperative aggregators and food hubs enables small-scale producers to achieve the scale necessary for commercial competition by aggregating products from multiple farms. However, while HFU supports the gross receipts floor in Section 2(b)(3) as a reasonable measure of commercial intent, the bill lacks an income ceiling.

The federal RTCP program that this bill is modeled on caps eligibility at a three-year average adjusted gross income of \$900,000 (7 CFR Part 1400, Subpart F), ensuring that program funds are directed to producers who actually need the assistance. Without a similar ceiling, HB1707 risks directing limited program funds to large operations that can already absorb transportation costs. We recommend adding an AGI ceiling to Section 2(b) for individual producers, modeled on the federal standard. The ceiling should not apply to cooperative aggregators or food hubs, whose revenue reflects aggregated production from multiple small farms rather than a single operation's income. We propose adding a new paragraph (4):

(4) An agricultural producer who is not a cooperative aggregator or food hub shall not be eligible for reimbursement if the producer's adjusted gross income exceeds \$900,000. The department may require verification of income eligibility under rules adopted pursuant to subsection (e).

This is not difficult to administer. The federal program verifies AGI through a one-page self-certification (Form CCC-941), with the USDA retaining authority to verify claims against IRS records. The department could adopt the same approach using state tax returns or self-certification with audit authority under the rules adopted pursuant to Section 2(e).

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

HB-1707-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 7:51:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill as a good way to help our local farmers and ranchers make Hawaii food secure. Mahalo!

March 31, 2026

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1701 HD1, SD1 Relating To Agriculture

Aloha Chairman Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee,

My name is Karen Chang Barr, of Ho`onui LLC, a small business consultant, local producer advocate and community member in Hawai`i.

I am **writing in strong support of HB1707 HD1 SD1.**

Like many people in our state, I feel the high cost of living every day—especially when it comes to food. I try to buy local to support our farmers and ranchers, but I also know that for many families, local food can be too expensive.

A big part of that cost is transportation.

Our farmers and ranchers—especially on the neighbor islands—are doing their best while carrying the burden of high inter-island shipping costs. That’s a heavy challenge, and it can make it harder to sustain and grow local food production in Hawai`i.

This bill is a practical, meaningful solution. By lowering transportation costs, we can help producers survive and sustain their livelihoods, increase the availability of local food across the state, and make it so that local families trying to put food on the table can feel like they can buy local.

I respectfully ask you to consider two small amendments:

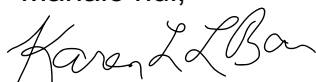
- Clarify “necessary supplies” in SECTION 2 (f) to include feed, fertilizer, fuel, seeds, plants, and equipment parts.
- Include honey in the definition of “agricultural commodity.”

By incorporating these amendments, it will offset costs of supplies for producers.

This bill supports the people who feed us—and all of us who depend on them.

Mahalo for your time and consideration in support of Hawai`i’s farmers, ranchers, and communities statewide.

Mahalo nui,



Karen (Chang) Barr