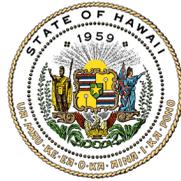


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

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
Phone: (808) 973-9560 FAX: (808) 973-9613

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. 2155, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2155, HD1. 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 department of agriculture. Due to limited staffing, this function has not been as robust and comprehensive as the Department envisioned. Further exacerbating this has been the recent downsizing from 850 to 550 staff at US National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) that included the retirement of the one remaining NASS Hawaii based federal statistician. The Department relies on the availability of the Regional NASS Office, currently under reorganization, for support.

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.

The Department respectfully requests that staffing levels be similar to those proposed in SB2318, SD1 which includes 2 (FTE) agricultural economist positions and 4 (FTE) research statistician positions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Monday, February 23, 2026 at 2:00 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

HB 2155 HD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony offering comments on HB 2155 HD1 which requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to revitalize and enhance the Agricultural Statistics Program to collect data on local agricultural interests, and appropriate 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 Hawaii'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 HB 2155 HD1 will support statewide community assets.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



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 2155, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

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 2155, HD1, 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.

HB 2155, HD1 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-2155-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 7:17:33 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 HB2155 HD1 requiring the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to revitalize and enhance the Agricultural Statistics Program.



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Christian Zuckerman
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents

Kelii Gannet
Kohala, Hawai'i

East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Ka'u, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawai'i

Gina Lind
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahālāwai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Moloka'i

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Rachel LaDrig
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Finance 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 HB2155.**

HB 2155 establishes the critical data infrastructure necessary to modernize Hawaii's agricultural sector by formalizing a permanent Agricultural Statistics Program.

For decades, Hawaii maintained a robust system for tracking farm-level data, inter-island commerce, and market dynamics. This system provided the essential insight required for effective crop planning and market stability. However, following the severe budget cuts to the Hawaii Agricultural Statistics Service (HASS) in 2008 and 2009, many vital reports were either reduced to annual snapshots or discontinued entirely.

In hindsight, it is clear that this lack of insight has forestalled our farmers' ability for foresight. Today, as the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) shifts its focus toward national-level data, Hawaii is left in a data vacuum. Reliable agricultural data is not a luxury; it is the foundation of economic development. If we are to meet our mandates for Farm to School and Farm to State procurement, and if our commitment to food security is to be more than rhetorical, this bill must be passed. We cannot navigate toward a future we cannot see.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



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

February 20, 2026

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

Re: Testimony in Support of HB2155 HD1, Relating to Agriculture

Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the economic viability and long-term sustainability of Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers through technical assistance, resource coordination, business education, and policy support. In our work with producers statewide, **we consistently see how the lack of reliable, Hawai'i-specific market data limits business planning, investment decisions, and risk management.**

From a fiscal perspective, agricultural data is core economic infrastructure. Producers, lenders, insurers, investors, and policymakers all rely on accurate market information to allocate resources efficiently. When that data is incomplete or outdated, it increases financial risk, reduces competitiveness, and can lead to inefficient public and private investment. Hawai'i's agricultural statistics capacity declined significantly following the 2008 financial crisis, and recent federal reductions to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) have further eroded available data. This creates an information gap at a time when farmers are navigating volatile input costs, supply chain disruptions, and climate-related production risks. HB2155 HD1 represents a strategic investment in rebuilding that capacity to help improve business decision-making for producers.

For a relatively modest state investment, this bill strengthens the economic foundation of Hawai'i's agricultural sector and improves the effectiveness of future public expenditures.

Reliable agricultural data is not a luxury—it is essential infrastructure for economic resilience and food security. We respectfully urge your support for HB2155 HD1 as a prudent investment in Hawai'i's long-term agricultural and fiscal stability.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

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



February 21, 2026

To: Chair Representative Chris Todd, Vice Chair Representative Jenna Takenuchi, and the members of the House Committee on Finance

Subject: **HB2155 HD1**, Relating to Agricultural Statistics

Aloha,

I am writing in **support** of **HB2155 HD1**. This measure aims to revitalize the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) Agricultural Statistics Program.

Reliable agricultural statistics are essential to making informed decisions at every level within our food system– from farmers and what they should be growing, to policy-makers deciding what bills should be passed. Looking at the Market Analysis and News Branch (MANB) reports currently, they provide a good base level understanding of agriculture in Hawai'i, based on data from the USDA's *nationwide* statistics¹. However, having statistics produced locally by DAB can give us an even closer look at the status of our food production, not basing decisions on whatever data makes it up to the national level.

To further the economic growth of our local food production and to identify new market opportunities for our farmers, consistent and reliable statistics are fundamental to making such decisions.

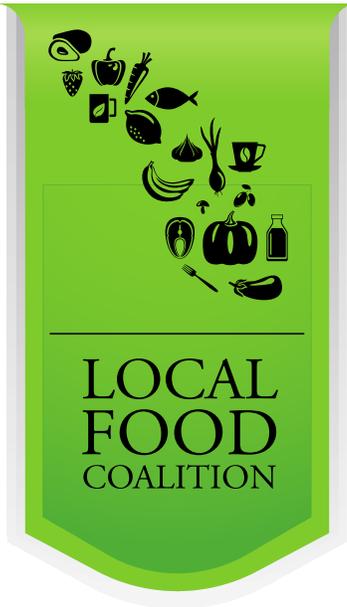
I urge this committee to pass HB2155 HD1, which will help DAB produce important data for all to make informed decisions in the context of our food system.

Mahalo,
Sydney Haas & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

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

In 2026, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.

¹ *Market analysis and news branch*. (n.d.). Market Analysis and News Branch. Retrieved February 9, 2026, from <https://dab.hawaii.gov/add/market-analysis-news-branch/>



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

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

HB 2155 HD1 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

SUPPORT

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

The Local Food Coalition supports HB 2155 HD1, which requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to revitalize and enhance the Agricultural Statistics Program to collect data on local agricultural interests.

Accurate, timely agricultural data is essential for producers, distributors, and institutional buyers working to expand Hawai'i's local food system. Improved data collection and analysis will help the State meet its Farm to School and Farm to State purchasing goals, support market development, and provide producers with the information they need to scale operations.

This measure modernizes the State's data infrastructure and strengthens long-term planning for local food production and distribution.

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.



**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: HB2155 RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS.

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.

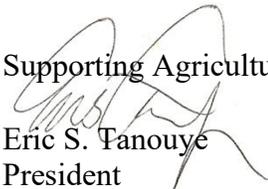
The Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association (HFNA) **STRONGLY SUPPORTS House Bill 2155** which requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to revitalize and enhance the Agricultural Statistics Program to collect data on local agricultural interests.

It is important that the Agriculture has the statistics and information available to see how we fare and need to improve as an industry.

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

HB-2155-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2026 4:27:10 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

Proposed to use UHM and/or UHWO students as a volunteer or course credit, instead of a paid position for the first 2 years.

2155 HB RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS.

HB-2155-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2026 8:19:27 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:

SUPPORT!!!

HB-2155-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 2:31:18 PM

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

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

Comments:

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

As a constituent of House District 2, I strongly support the proposed measure. Agricultural statistics are an essential source of data to guide policymaking, investment, and market development decisions for federal, state, and county agencies as well as stakeholders in the private sector. Please pass this measure. Thank you.