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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 AND BIOSECURITY**

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2026
3:05 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2155, HOUSE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2155, House Draft 2. This bill establishes the Agricultural Statistics Program in Statute to revitalize and enhance the program. The bill provides an appropriation. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) strongly supports the bill.

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

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

The Department respectfully requests that adequate staffing and funds be appropriated to ensure that program will be able to conduct the required surveys and complete the necessary analysis of the data.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Monday, March 16, 2026 at 3:05 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 HD2 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony offering comments on HB 2155 HD2 which is to revitalize and enhance the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity's agricultural statistics program by statutorily establishing 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.

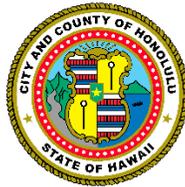
As Hawai'i strives to increase food security within the islands, having accurate data on Hawai'i's agricultural production will be key to achieving greater food security as we will need up-to-date production and consumption data. The appropriation in HB 2155 HD2 will support statewide community assets.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY
KE KE'ENA LOLI ANIAU MĀLAMA 'ĀINA A ME KE OLA LOA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



KEALOHA FOX, Ph. D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR &
CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
PO'O HO'OKŌ & KAHU OLA LOA

VACANT
DEPUTY DIRECTOR &
DEPUTY CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
HOPE PO'O & HOPE KAHU OLA LOA

TESTIMONY OF KEALOHA FOX, PH.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY AND
RESILIENCY AND CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT
Monday, March 16, 2026, 2:05 PM
Conference RM 224 and Via Videoconference

TO: Sen. Mike Gabbard, Chair, Sen. Tim Richards, Vice Chair, and Members of the
Committee on Agriculture & Environment

RE: SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2155 HD2, RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL
STATISTICS

The City and County of Honolulu's ("City") Office of Climate Change, Sustainability, and Resiliency ("Resilience Office") **supports** House Bill 2155 HD2, which requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to revitalize and enhance the Agricultural Statistics Program to improve the collection and availability of data on Hawai'i's agricultural sector.

The State has committed to increasing institutional purchasing of locally produced food through Act 175 (2021), Act 176 (2021), and Act 137 (2025). A robust and well-resourced agricultural statistics program is essential to understanding progress toward these goals, measuring the impact of public investments, and identifying opportunities to strengthen local supply chains in alignment with established benchmarks.

The City, through the O'ahu Good Food Program, is committed to supporting small- and mid-sized farmers and producers while expanding institutional markets for appropriately scaled, locally produced food. These efforts are designed to complement the State's Farm to School and Farm to State initiatives by supporting institutional purchasing among private and nonprofit institutions. Reliable, consistent agricultural data is therefore critical for guiding long-term decision-making, coordinating across sectors, and amplifying the impact of both State- and City-led institutional procurement strategies.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support** of HB2155 HD2.



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March 16, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON HB 2155, HD2
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
3:05 PM

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

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 2155, HD2, 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, HD2 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.

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair**

**Monday, March 16, 2026, at 3:05PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference**

RE: HB2155 HD2 Relating to Agricultural Statistics

Aloha e Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, 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 2155 House Draft 2 (HB2155 HD2), which establishes within the Department of Agriculture the Hawaii Agricultural Transportation Assistance Program, to consist of a reimbursement program and grant program, to assist certain farmers and livestock producers with transportation costs for agricultural products, inputs, supplies, and production and distribution of agricultural commodities.

HB2155 HD2 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for 21st Century Agriculture. The growth and strength of Hawaii's agricultural sector is crucial to strengthening local food resilience and reducing the state's reliance on imported foods. Data affords critical visibility into the status of Hawaii's agriculture sector. This data is key to quantifying progress towards the state's statutory goals for local sourcing and identifying areas for growth. Data reflecting the state of the sector helps business make decisions around areas of opportunity and helps legislators develop policy that supports the continued growth of the industry. Given the complexity of Hawaii's food system, a rich dataset is essential to segmenting across this system and developing sound industry solutions.

What is crucial in a data collection program is the protection of those farms involved in reporting. The Chamber appreciates the anonymity this bill provides protecting those farms that engage in data sharing with the state. This provision sets a positive precedent for future data collection programs, increasing stakeholder participation and supporting granular data collection.

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.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill 2155 House Draft 2. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports 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



MAUI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 224
MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2026 AT 3:05 P.M.**

To The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Environment

SUPPORT HB2155 HD2 RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

The Maui Chamber of Commerce recognizes the critical importance of accurate, timely agricultural data to inform policy, support local farmers, and strengthen Hawai'i's food security. Therefore, we support HB2155 HD2 which seeks to establish the Agricultural Statistics Program within the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, which directly addresses the longstanding need for systematic data collection on local agricultural production, trends, and challenges.

Comprehensive agricultural statistics are foundational for effective decision-making by policymakers, industry stakeholders, and community organizations. By institutionalizing this program, the State will be better equipped to identify emerging issues, allocate resources efficiently, and track progress towards increasing local food production. Such data also enhances transparency and accountability, supporting evidence-based approaches to agricultural development and environmental stewardship.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our support for HB2155 HD2. We ask that you move this bill forward.

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.



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

**COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair**

**Monday, March 16, 2026 3:05 PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street**

RE: HB2155HD2 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.

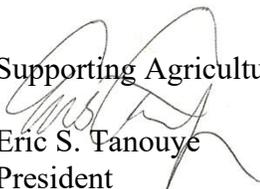
The Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association (HFNA) **STRONGLY SUPPORTS House Bill 2155HD2** which requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to revitalize and enhance the Agricultural Statistics Program to collect data on local agricultural interests.

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



March 14, 2026

To: Chair Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair Senator Tim Richards, and the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Subject: **HB2155 HD2**, Relating to Agricultural Statistics

Aloha,

I am writing in **support** of **HB2155 HD2**. 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.**

I urge this committee to pass HB2155 HD2, 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/>

HB-2155-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 8:29:38 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/16/2026 3:05:00 PM

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

Comments:

The Maui County Farm Bureau supports HB2155 HD2, Relating to Agricultural Statistics. Accurate data is critical in measuring the success of an industry or where improvement is needed. This information provides access to funding from various sources..The data also provides information for producers in their operational decision making. Please support HB2155 HD2. Thank you.